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MONA OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Outline Biosecurity Protocol

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Image of an offshore wind farm

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Contents

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AA	Accredited Agent
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
ECoW	Ecological Clerk of Works
ES	Environmental Statement
GCN	Great Crested Newt
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan

Units

Unit	Description
°C	Degrees Celsius
kV	Kilovollts
m	Metres

1 OUTLINE BIOSECURITY PROTOCOL

1.1 Overview

1.1.1.1 This Outline Biosecurity Protocol is provided as an annex to the Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) (Document Reference: J26), which is secured as a requirement of the Development Consent Order (DCO). The Outline CoCP sets out the key management measures that will be implemented during the construction phase of the Mona Offshore Wind Project.

1.1.1.2 This Outline Biosecurity Protocol seeks to manage potential impacts that occur from the construction of the onshore and intertidal elements of the Mona Offshore Wind Project. These elements occur landward of Mean Low Springs (MLWS) and comprise:

- Mona Landfall
- Onshore Cable Corridor
- Onshore Substation
- 400kV Grid Connection Cable Corridor.

1.1.1.3 In addition to these elements, the Outline Biosecurity Protocol considers the temporary construction compounds, storage areas and accesses required to support the construction of the Mona Offshore Wind Project.

1.1.1.4 The onshore elements of the Mona Offshore Wind Project will be constructed within the local authority areas of Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council.

1.2 Purpose of the Outline Biosecurity Protocol

1.2.1.1 The purpose of this Outline Biosecurity Protocol is to set out the key management and monitoring procedures that will be adopted during pre-commencement site activities and construction of the onshore elements of the Mona Offshore Wind Project. These include measures to address the following:

- To prevent the spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) identified during field surveys within the Mona Onshore Development Area, including:
  - Japanese knotweed Reynoutria japonica
  - Himalayan balsam Impatiens glandulifera
  - Japanese rose Rosa rugosa
  - Rhododendron Rhododendron ponticum
  - Montbretia Crocosmia x croscosmiiflora.
- To identify and prevent the spread of other INNS which may be identified within the Mona Onshore Development Area during pre-construction surveys and monitoring
- To prevent the spread of notifiable animal disease, plant pests and plant pathogens.

1.2.1.2 This is an outline document that sets out measures that have been identified as part of the EIA process. These measures are to ensure that any potential environmental effects reported in the Environmental Statement and will either be avoided and/or

mitigated accordingly. These measures will be included as part of the detailed CoCP to be developed in general accordance with the Outline CoCP (Document Reference: J26) and secured as a requirement of the DCO.

1.2.1.3 This Outline Biosecurity Protocol also provides indicative mitigation measures to prevent the spread of animal disease between farms which may occur as a result of pre-commencement and construction activities.

1.2.1.4 This Outline Biosecurity Protocol should be read in conjunction with the Outline CoCP (Document Reference: J26) and Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) (Document Reference: J22) and their supporting annexes.

1.3 Scope of the Outline Biosecurity Protocol

1.3.1.1 The scope of this Outline Biosecurity Protocol applies to the onshore site preparation site works and construction of the Mona Offshore Wind Project located landward of Mean Highwater Springs (MHWS).

1.3.1.2 Onshore site preparation works required prior to construction of the onshore elements of the Mona Offshore Wind project comprise (as defined in the draft DCO (Document Reference: C1)):

- Site clearance
- Demolition
- Early planting of landscaping works
- Archaeological investigations
- Environmental surveys
- Ecological mitigation
- Investigations for the purpose of assessing ground conditions
- Remedial work in respect of any contamination or other adverse ground conditions
- The diversion and laying of utilities and services
- Site security works
- The erection of any temporary means of enclosure
- The erection of temporary hard standing
- The erection of welfare facilities
- Creation of site accesses
- The temporary display of site notices or advertisements.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

1.4.1.1 Although the Principal Contractor has not been appointed at the time of writing, the key roles, and associated responsibilities regarding this Outline Biosecurity Protocol are set out below. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 also identify the legal duties, responsibilities, and obligations of all the major roles within the construction team. The responsibilities of each role will be refined in the detailed Biosecurity Protocol post consent.

Applicant

1.4.1.2 The Applicant will be responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that the Biosecurity Protocol is implemented effectively
- Giving necessary direction to contractors (for example, setting contractual obligations)
- Reviewing, revising and refining the Biosecurity Protocol (where necessary) in conjunction with the Principal Contractor.

Principal Contractor

1.4.1.3 The Principal Contractor will be appointed by the Applicant and has the overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring all contractors are suitably qualified and experienced in implementing the required measures within the Biosecurity Protocol. These measures will be contained within the terms of contracts to ensure understanding and accountability
- Ensuring all contractors are made aware of the requirements of the Biosecurity Protocol before starting work on site
- Establishing procedures for the regular review and recording of the quality of the works as part of its Quality Management System
- Maintain records relevant to the Biosecurity Protocol.

Ecological Clerk of Works

1.4.1.4 The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be appointed by the Principal Contractor. However, quality assurance of the ECoW will be maintained by the Applicant. The ECoW will be the lead on-site ecologist, assisted where necessary by one or more suitably qualified and experienced Accredited Agents (AA). The ECoW, or the authorised AA, will be responsible for:

- Delivering toolbox talks and briefings to all site contractors to communicate the requirements of the Biosecurity Protocol for all staff
- Monitoring and ensuring all procedures in this Biosecurity Protocol are followed
- Ongoing monitoring of INNS and where necessary updating the Biosecurity Protocol if new outbreaks of INNS are identified
- Communicating any changes or revisions to the Biosecurity Protocol to the Principal Contractor.

Contractors/Sub contractors

1.4.1.5 Contractors and sub-contractors will be required to understand their responsibilities and implement the measures within the Biosecurity Protocol.

1.4.1.6 All contractors must have a toolbox talk delivered by the ECoW or AA before they start work on site, to communicate the requirements of the Biosecurity Protocol.

1.5 Biosecurity Measures – pre-construction

1.5.1 Invasive and Non-Native Species (INNS)

1.5.1.1 Many of the measures required to prevent the spread of INNS and animal and plant pathogens will be required in advance of construction, while the site is being demarcated and while personnel and equipment are being mobilised. This pre-construction period is where there is the highest potential risk of animal and plant pests or pathogens being introduced, disturbed and spread. The measures to be implemented during mobilisation and site establishment are described in the following sections of this Outline Biosecurity Protocol below.

Preconstruction surveys

1.5.1.2 Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken by appropriately qualified ecologists that are competent in the identification of INNS, as defined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Competency Framework (2021).

1.5.1.3 Pre-construction surveys will ensure that there is there is up-to-date information on the location, distribution and extent of INNS within and surrounding the Mona Onshore Development Area, as detailed in the Outline LEMP (Document Reference: J22) and Outline CoCP (Document Reference: J26).

1.5.1.4 Pre-construction surveys will be required for the following INNS, which were identified during field surveys within the Mona Onshore Development Area:

- Japanese knotweed
- Himalayan balsam
- Japanese rose
- Monbretia.

1.5.1.5 The location of INNS, previously identified as part of the field surveys to inform the Environmental Statement, will be updated with the locations and extent of INNS identified during pre-construction surveys, where required.

1.5.1.6 In addition, other INNS which may be identified within the Mona Onshore Development Area during the pre-construction surveys will also be recorded.

1.5.1.7 The measures to be implemented during the pre-construction monitoring of water courses are detailed in Outline LEMP (Document Reference: J22) and in the Outline CoCP (Document Reference: J26).

Exclusion zones

1.5.1.8 Where INNS will not be disturbed, an exclusion zone will be demarcated around the plants. Exclusion zones will be demarcated with Heras fencing (or similar), with clear signage that the area is an INNS exclusion zone, and that no works are permitted within the exclusion zone.

1.5.1.9 The geographic extent of exclusions zones will be appropriate to the INNS of plant concerned and will comprise a buffer around the plants. Works within the exclusion zone could cause the spread of plant stem or leaf fragments or soil containing seeds, roots, or rhizomes. For Japanese knotweed the exclusion zone would be a minimum of 7 m to avoid rhizomes (i.e. root network). For other INNS, an appropriate exclusion

zone would be decided by the ECoW in consultation with a competent ecologist and the Principal Contractor.

Control and removal

1.5.1.10 Where pre-construction surveys identify an INNS of plant within the working area, where it may be disturbed, a control and removal strategy will be prepared in advance (in consultation with a qualified ecologist) of any activity taking place, which could cause the spread of the plant in the wild.

1.5.1.11 It is not within the scope of the Biosecurity Protocol to provide a detailed control strategy for all possible INNS of plant that may be encountered. However, any control or removal strategy would likely include the following best practice elements:

- Establishment of appropriate exclusion zones around all stands of INNS of plants, with fencing and clear signage indicating an invasive species exclusion zone and that unauthorised access is prohibited
- Appropriate measures for the removal of the INNS of plant and any contaminated soil. This may include: herbicide treatment of plant stands if there is sufficient time for this to be effective; physical cutting down and removal of plant material; and physical removal of contaminated soil
- A sterile working method to ensure that contaminated material is not spread within or outside of the construction works area. Measures may include: washing of all tools, footwear and equipment (including wheel washes) before leaving the contaminated area; covering vehicles carrying contaminated material to ensure it is not spread in transit
- Appropriate disposal of any contaminated material at a licensed landfill and by licensed contractors (where required)
- Survey immediately after removal of INNS to confirm removal has been successful before permitting pre-commencement or construction works to recommence.
- Ongoing monitoring for INNS to ensure any previously unknown occurrences of the species are identified and suitable control measures are in place.

1.5.2 Notifiable animal diseases and plant pests and pathogens

1.5.2.1 The risk of the spread of notifiable animal diseases and plant pests and pathogens is likely to be low unless there is a known outbreak on or adjacent to the working area. There will be no necessity to enter yards or enclosures where livestock are regularly kept, which will greatly reduce the risk of spreading animal diseases.

1.5.2.2 As reported in Volume 7, Annex 3.2: Extended phase 1 habitat survey technical report of the Environmental Statement, the vast majority of the Mona Onshore Development Area comprises improved pasture and grassland. As such, there is a low risk of encountering notifiable plant pests and pathogens, which are often are more likely to be present in areas cultivated for arable crops.

1.5.2.3 Notwithstanding, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) should be contacted prior to construction to request the following information for construction works area or areas through which vehicles staff or equipment will move:

- Any known or suspected outbreaks of notifiable animal diseases or plant pests and pathogens in the construction works area or areas through which vehicles staff or equipment will move
- Any Restricted Infected Areas
- Any Plant Health Control orders which are currently in force.

Dynamic risk assessment

1.5.2.4 In the absence of a known outbreak within the Mona Onshore Development Area, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance to staff who visit farms (HSE, 2015) provides appropriate biosecurity measures for farm visits, assuming there will be no close contact with livestock or disturbance of arable crops. This includes the following measures, which will be implemented as part of the Biosecurity Protocol, where practicable:

- Keep farm accesses to the minimum necessary and follow existing tracks
- Park off farm or on hard standing away from livestock
- Vehicles taken onto farms should be visibly free of animal excreta, slurry etc
- Footwear, waterproof clothing, vehicles and equipment should be clean before entering a farm for the first time
- Before moving between farms, visible faecal contamination (e.g. manure, slurry etc.) should be cleaned from the outside of the vehicles which should be disinfected using on-farm facilities. If this is not possible, vehicles should be cleaned before being taken onto another farm with livestock
- Footwear should be cleaned and disinfected before moving between farms with a multipurpose disinfectant that is effective against viral, bacterial and fungal pathogens
- Restrict the amount of equipment taken onto site to only what is required
- Avoid driving through wooded areas; areas with known outbreaks of plant or animal diseases; and livestock areas
- Schedule multiple site visits so that sites of greatest risk with regard to INNS, diseases or pathogens are visited at the end of the working day.

1.5.2.5 Areas of known risk, such as areas with known outbreaks of animal or plant diseases, or INNS will have been identified and demarcated in advance via pre-construction surveys. In addition, consultation with Defra and ongoing monitoring by the EcoW or competent ecologist will also be undertaken. The following measures would be undertaken:

- Make a note of the location of material (take photograph and if possible, note the location on a plan or take a phone GPS reading)
- Notify the site supervisor and ECoW within 24 hours
- Clean and disinfect clothing, footwear and equipment that has come into contact with the suspect material using an appropriate disinfectant as advised by the ECoW (e.g. Virkon ® broad spectrum disinfectant or Propeller™ disinfectant for Phytophthora infection).

1.5.2.6 If there is a known outbreak of a particular notifiable animal disease or a plant pest/pathogen, this will be identified through the pre-works checks with Defra and the landowner. Where this is the case, additional biosecurity measures may be necessary.

1.5.2.7 In the first instance, the landowner should be consulted on specific biosecurity measures in place, and these will be followed. Additional advice should be sought from Defra and any control measures specified by Defra will be followed.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

1.5.2.8 As stated in Volume 7, Annex 3.3: Great Crested Newt survey technical report of the Environmental Statement, a large metapopulation of GCN have been assumed to be present within the Mona Onshore Development Area, particularly in the vicinity of the Onshore Substation.

1.5.2.9 As such, a GCN Mitigation Strategy will be prepared in general accordance with the Outline GCN Mitigation Strategy. The Outline GCN Mitigation Strategy forms Appendix D of the Outline LEMP (Document Reference: J22), which is secured under a requirement of the DCO.

1.5.2.10 Given the presence of GCN within the Mona Onshore Development Area, the following additional measures will be implemented to prevent the spread of Chytridiomycosis, an infectious fungal disease in amphibians, when handling GCN (e.g. translocation) and working in waterbodies, where GCN could be present:

- All equipment, including footwear and clothing that has come into contact with amphibians or fresh water will be disinfected, and disinfection procedures will be repeated between ponds
- All debris, plant fragments and mud will first be scrubbed off, rinsed with water and followed by disinfection, which will comprise soaking in a bleach solution (1 measure of household bleach to 9 measures water) for 15 minutes; or Virkon solution (1 mg/ml) for 1 minute, or fabrics can be washed on a 40 °C cycle (with detergent, ensuring sufficient rinsing)
- Nets (if required) will be boiled for 10 minutes or disinfected with spray bleach and rinsed thoroughly with clean water
- Field gear (traps, net frames, etc) will be kept inside plastic bags during transit and storage to reduce the likelihood of transmitting disease. All used disinfectant will be disposed of appropriately.

1.6 Biosecurity measures - during construction

1.6.1.1 Once the mobilisation is complete and the construction site has been established and demarcated, there will be minimal need for biosecurity measures for movement within the construction zone.

1.6.1.2 The construction zone perimeter fence (heras fencing, post and rail or similar) will be maintained with regular checks to ensure there is a clear physical delineation between the construction site and areas outside of the construction site.

1.6.1.3 Any measures implemented to prevent the spread of INNS of plants as described above, including exclusion zones around known stands of invasive plants, and any measures specified in control and removal strategies will continue to be observed and implemented through monitoring, as detailed in the Outline LEMP (Document Reference: J22).

1.6.1.4 If any member of site staff inadvertently comes into contact with material they suspect may be a risk (e.g. dead amphibians, livestock, or a suspected invasive plant) the following actions should be undertaken:

- Make a note of the location of material (take photograph and if possible, note the location on a plan or take a phone GPS reading)
- Notify the site supervisor and ECoW within 24 hours
- Clean and disinfect clothing, footwear and equipment that has come into contact with the suspect material using an appropriate disinfectant as advised by the ECoW (e.g., Virkon ® broad spectrum disinfectant or Propeller™ disinfectant for Phytophthora infection).

1.7 Monitoring

1.7.1 Construction and decommissioning

1.7.1.1 The implementation of the Biosecurity Protocol will be regularly monitored by the ECoW and the Principal Contractor. Monitoring during construction and decommissioning of the onshore elements of the Mona Offshore Wind Project will comprise the following:

- Regular (at least weekly) checks of construction site permitter fence to ensure demarcation of the construction site and no unauthorised access outside of the construction site
- Regular (at least weekly) checks of any known stands of INNS of plants by the ECoW to ensure exclusion zones are maintained
- Regular (at least weekly) liaison between the ECoW and Principal Contractor to review any issues arising relating to biosecurity
- Regular monitoring of Defra website to identify any new outbreaks of diseases, pests or pathogens that may be relevant and consultations with stakeholders as required
- Regular review of the Biosecurity Protocol against any new issues arising from monitoring and updating the protocol accordingly
- Delivery of any new and relevant information requiring a change in working practice through the mechanism of a toolbox talk delivered by the ECoW or their AA to all site staff which is to be acknowledge and signed by all relevant personnel.

1.7.1.2 It is also noted that more specific measures with respect to construction monitoring of watercourses is detailed in the Outline LEMP (Document Reference: J22) and in the Outline CoCP (Document Reference: J26) in relation to biosecurity measures.

1.8 References

CIEEM (2019) Competency Framework. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

HSE (2015) Biosecurity: Guidance to staff who visit farms: Available at: hse.gov.uk. Accessed: February 2023.