



**Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks**

Fishing Industry Mitigation & Co-existence Consultation

Summary of Results
May 2019

ssen.co.uk



The background

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) is responsible for maintaining the electricity networks across the north of Scotland as well as central southern England. With around 4 million customers across the UK, including some 900,000 in Scotland, SSEN ensures a safe and reliable supply for homes and businesses through a series of transmission and distribution networks.

In Scotland, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is a trading name of Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc (SHEPD) and Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (SHE Transmission).

Our SHEPD operating region covers a quarter of the UK landmass which attracts unique challenges both in terms of distance and location. As well as the major towns and cities across the north of Scotland, we connect to most Scottish islands with over 100 subsea cable links, including the Inner and Outer Hebrides, Arran and the Orkney Islands. We also serve the Shetland Islands, which runs as a separate electrical system without a connection to the mainland.

SHE Transmission owns and maintains the 132kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network across the north of Scotland, in some of the UK's most challenging terrain. The operating area contains a vast renewable energy resource that relies on SHE Transmission for transportation to the load centres across the country.

The transmission network takes electricity from a variety of sources - including hydro and windfarms - and transports it at high voltage through overhead lines, underground and subsea cables to areas of demand in towns and cities.

The distribution element then connects from the transmission network to other parts of the country using overhead lines on wooden poles and underground cables which operate at lower voltages. These cables include those which connect Scotland's islands to the distribution network by way of submarine electricity cables.

Maintaining and replacing these distribution submarine electricity cables is vital in ensuring that homes and businesses throughout the islands have a safe and reliable supply of electricity. There is also a need to install and maintain higher capacity submarine electricity cables for major transmission projects such as renewable energy.

It is important to monitor the physical condition of our submarine electricity cables and prioritise those cables which require repair or replacement. As the cost of maintaining the electricity network is shared amongst our customers, we must ensure and evidence value for money in the work that we do.



"Through the medium of both public and targeted meetings the SSEN team have shown a willingness to try and understand the needs of fishermen, and we hope that our input, along with others, gives a sound basis for a safe future marine cabling network."

Bertie Armstrong,
Chief Executive,
Scottish Fishermen's Federation



Valuing stakeholder input

Whilst we realise the importance of our work in maintaining the electricity network, we also appreciate the need to interact with other people and businesses who may be impacted by our work, including marine users and fishermen. We want to ensure that everyone who interacts with our work has an opportunity to have their say on how we do things. This will allow us to do things better in the future and ensure a mutual understanding of each other's requirements.

Although we have regular dialogue with fishing industry organisations and representatives, we also appreciate that others may choose to represent themselves and their views also need to be considered.



Being responsible and fair

We also want to be fair and offer to compensate marine users and fishermen when they have, through no fault of their own, been impacted by the work that we do. Whilst we always try to advise of operations well in advance, sometimes we have to carry out work quickly to restore or maintain electricity supplies to our customers.



Safety at all times

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks has a safety licence - if it's not safe, we don't do it - which covers both our work and the environment we operate in. This includes ensuring the safety of marine users and fishermen. To ensure we carry out our work safely, we must co-exist with marine users and appreciate their requirements.

We are committed to communicating effectively to understand any concerns and plan our work in such a way that we look to minimise its impact. A communications plan is developed for each project which details the methods we adopt to co-exist with marine users including:

- issuing Notice to Mariners 20 days in advance for planned works where possible
- consulting on new cable routes and protection methods to ensure legitimate sea users views are considered
- updating UKHO charts with our cable locations



What we asked and how it will be used

The short consultation was designed to focus on the areas which matter most to fishermen, including how and when we communicate our planned operations. It will also allow us to develop an approach to ensure fishermen are compensated, where appropriate, in a timely manner.

The results will be used to develop guidance and a process which will make it easier to understand the work that we do whilst trying to minimise the impacts on fishermen.



The consultation



September 2018

Initial meeting with fishing industry bodies



October 2018

Presentation to West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group meeting attended by inshore fishing and government representatives



December 2018

Launch of co-existence and mitigation consultation which ran until February 2019



May 2019

Summary report written and published

Following meetings with fishing bodies in 2018, we identified the need to have wider engagement with fishermen – both those who are affiliated and non-affiliated with industry bodies – enabling the views of everyone to be considered.

The survey was distributed to fishing industry bodies in December 2018 for dissemination around their members.

Marine Scotland also put a link on their website and details were circulated to the Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation Committee.



The questions

We wanted to be sure that when marine users interact with our distribution and transmission business, the way that we communicate or agree compensation is clear and consistent.

Our stakeholders agreed that a short consultation would be the best approach for fishermen who are generally pushed for time. Whilst the questionnaire was short with six questions, it did give the opportunity for respondents to detail any other comments about our work and communication methods.

A draft 'Fishing Claim Form' was also shared, which incorporated some elements and processes suggested by fishing associations at previous meetings.



Approach and response

To maximise responses, fishermen could respond via post, email or use the online form to submit their response. Our Fishing Industry Representatives (FIRs) attended local ports and meetings to raise awareness and gather views. Over the course of January and February 2019, our FIRs obtained almost 80 responses from fishermen in Argyll, the Outer Hebrides, the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands.

From discussion with our Company Fishing Liaison Officer and FIRs it was clear that the majority of fishermen did not have any issues with the work carried out by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks. The responses we received backed up this narrative as the majority of fishermen had no issues with how we operate or the proposed fishing claims process.



What we heard

Section 1: Are we good neighbours?



What notice period do you require on our planned operations?



Some 65% of respondents stated that 20 or 21 days was an acceptable notice period for planned operations where possible. Other respondents suggested alternatives of 30 days (32%) and 2 months (3%). This result, along with recent discussions with member organisations, would suggest that our current 20-day notice period for planned operations is deemed acceptable by the majority of fishermen. Whilst others may wish to see a longer notice period for planned operations, weather and issues such as availability of vessels can make it difficult to plan so far in advance with any certainty.



Is our use of a Fishing Industry Representative to liaise in the local area beneficial?



All but one of the respondents believed that the use of a fishing industry representative by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks for local liaison work was beneficial.



Is it clear where our cables are on UKHO charts?



All respondents agreed that Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks cables are clearly marked on UKHO charts.

Section 2: Compensation payments will only be considered where there are significant residual impacts that cannot be mitigated (see attached Fishing Claim Form).



Is there anything missing from our Fishing Claim Form which would make the process easier?



98% of respondents didn't think that anything was missing from the Fishing Claim Form.



Is a 30-day payment period for valid claims acceptable?



All but two of the respondents felt that a 30-day payment period was acceptable.

Section 3: Any other comments about how we communicate with you?



All respondents were satisfied with how we communicate. Some comments suggested that email and telephone were best to contact individual fishermen. Local fishing associations were also best placed to forward any messages in the area.



Summary of findings

The results of the consultation demonstrate that our current approach is suitable and is supported by the majority of fishermen who responded. This was the case regardless of where fishermen operated and no distinction was made between distribution and transmission projects.

These findings can be backed up with recent discussions we have had with fishing industry bodies, who seem content with our approach to co-existence and compensation.

We will continue to engage and learn to ensure our approach meets the needs of fishermen in the future.

Next steps

Our 'Marine Mitigation and Co-existence Policy' will be updated and used to provide clear policy guidance to our stakeholders.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is committed to being fair and reasonable in how we interact with fishermen.

This includes compensating valid claims in a timely manner in order to reduce any period of inconvenience.

Our ongoing regular dialogue with the fishing industry will ensure that we continue to operate in a safe and considerate manner.

"SSEN is to be commended for its proactive engagement with stakeholders which reflects constructive consultation and early intervention that fishermen would welcome with all energy companies that undertake coastal cable works."

**Alastair McNeill, Chair,
West Coast Regional Inshore
Fisheries Group**



Fishing Claim Form

In line with best practice, we request that claims are submitted within 30 days of the date of occurrence.¹

DETAILS OF VESSEL AND CLAIMANT

Name, letters, type, length and description of vessel	
Home port	
Fishing association (if applicable)	
Name of owner/skipper (please specify)	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
VAT registration number	

DETAILS OF CLAIM INCIDENT

Date and time of incident	
Location of incident If possible, please provide chart/image	Latitude: Longitude:
Water depth	
Conditions	Weather: Sea: Visibility:
Description of incident and supporting evidence Incidents will be investigated on a case by case basis. Claims will be considered only where evidence to support consultation of cable awareness charts on board the vessel concerned, together with evidence that the vessel complied with recommended procedures during the incident. Vessel position data e.g. Plotter and AIS should be supplied (where available) with the claim, demonstrating vessel position/track 12 hours prior to and 12 hours after the incident	
Has fishing gear been damaged or lost? Any claims for loss of earnings while waiting for replacement gear will need to be supported	
What attempts were made to recover gear?	



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Prepared by:
Submarine Electricity Cables Team,
Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc,
Inveralmond House,
200 Dunkeld Road,
Perth, PH1 3AQ

Email: submarinecables@sse.com

<https://www.ssen.co.uk/subseacables/>

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