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STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REVIEW FOR VERMILION INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE SURVEY OF PIPELINE AND SUBSEA STRUCTURES 2022

RAMBOLL

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT VERMILION INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE SURVEY OF PIPELINE AND SUBSEA STRUCTURES 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ramboll UK Limited (herein referred to as Ramboll) was commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (herein referred to as DECC) to provide assistance with regards to the statutory assessment of an application by Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd (referred to herein as the applicant) for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination.

The applicant has submitted an application for consent for an offshore pipeline and subsea structure inspection and a near shore pipeline inspection of the Corrib Offshore Pipeline and Umbilical system (herein referred to as the project) from the landfall valve site in Glengad, Co. Mayo to the Corrib Wells (herein referred to as the site). The scope of the project comprises two main components:

- Offshore pipeline and subsea structure inspection and maintenance survey works from a suitable offshore vessel supported by ROV, similar to the Edda Sun used previously as part of the survey programme. This vessel will be responsible for the survey works covering the area of the Corrib offshore field assets as well as seabed infrastructure as far inshore as Broadhaven Bay.
- Nearshore pipeline inspection using the survey vessel Leah-C or similar. This vessel is responsible for the survey covering the area primarily within Broadhaven Bay as far as the inshore limit of safe navigation.

The application for consent also makes reference to maintenance and repair works that may be required (if any) following the survey works. However, the Natural Impact Statement (NIS) report only covers survey works, and accordingly any potential maintenance / repair works (if any required) are not considered further in this report. It is noted that original consent to operate the Corrib Upstream Gas Pipeline (issued by the Minister on 29 December 2015) is considered to provide consent for any required maintenance / repair works, should these be required.

The competent authority (DECC) is required to consider the potential effects of such activities on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, with respect to Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC which is transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 as amended (the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations).

This report provides a review of the Appropriate Assessment Screening (part of the NIS report) and the assessment of impacts on Annex IV species contained within the EIA Screening and Environmental Risk Assessment for Annex IV species report. Both reports were prepared by RSK on behalf of the applicant and submitted with their application.

The report provides a conclusion that can be used by the DECC to issue an AA screening determination. The information provided by the applicant is considered to be adequate and up to date for the DECC to issue an AA Screening determination, and no other information is required.

Table 1.1 summarises the overall screening conclusion.

Table 1.1: Recommendation of Screening Determination

Outcome of Screening Report Assessment	Overall Screening Opinion / AA Required?
~~No Likely Significant Effects on Natura Sites identified, or project is directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the Natura site.~~	~~**No likely significant effects on European Sites have been identified, having had regard to the potential connectivity with sites, relevant conservation objectives and the potential for in combination effects and will not cause significant**~~

Outcome of Screening Report Assessment	**Overall Screening Opinion / AA Required?**
	~~**disturbance to Annex IV species described. Appropriate Assessment is not required.**~~
Likely or Potential Likely Significant Effects on Natura Sites identified, and project is not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the Natura site.	Appropriate Assessment is required because it cannot be excluded, on the basis of the initial assessment (AA screening) provided by the applicant, that the project will have either individually or in combination with other plans or projects a likely significant effect on European sites.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ramboll UK Limited (herein referred to as Ramboll) was commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (herein referred to as DECC) to provide assistance as competent experts for the statutory assessment of an application by Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd (herein referred to as the applicant), submitted in respect of an offshore pipeline and subsea structure inspection, and a nearshore pipeline inspection. The authors hold undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in environmental science (or related disciplines), professional qualifications including chartered status with the Society for the Environment and full membership of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and have long standing experience as expert practitioners within the fields of offshore development, environmental impact assessment and the appraisal of applications in the context of the Birds and Natural Habitat regulations.

1.1 Documents Reviewed

The following documents have been reviewed to inform this report:

- Notification of Application to Conduct an Offshore Pipeline Survey and Inspection / Maintenance Programme of the Offshore Facilities in 2022. Submitted by Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd on 10 December 2021;
- Application to conduct an offshore survey form. Completed by Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd;
- Corrib subsea infrastructure inspection, and maintenance surveys. EIA screening and environmental risk assessment for Annex IV species. Report prepared by RSK on behalf of Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd. Project Number 660841. Dated 8 December 2021; and
- Corrib subsea infrastructure inspection, and maintenance surveys - 2022. Natura Impact Statement. Report prepared by RSK on behalf of Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd. Project Number 660841. Dated 8 December 2021.

This report provides a review of the Appropriate Assessment Screening included in the NIS Report, and the EIA Screening and Environmental Risk Assessment for Annex IV species report submitted by the applicant, prepared and approved by Ramboll as competent experts having relevant qualifications and experience.

1.2 Project Background

The competent authority (DECC) is required to consider the potential effects of such activities on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, with respect to Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC which is transposed in to Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-21 as amended (the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations). Additionally, as required by Article 12 of the Habitats Directive, the potential impact on the favourable conservation status of species listed in Annex IV of the Directive must also be assessed.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Legislative context

This report has been prepared having regard to EC Directive 2009/147/EC[1] on the conservation of wild birds (commonly referred to as the Birds Directive) and EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (commonly referred to as the Habitats Directives), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 (the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) as amended and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts.

The NIS submitted by the applicant confirms that the Project has been screened having regard to the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Birds and Natural Habitats regulations and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts.

2.2 Relevant guidance

This report has been prepared having regard to guidance on appropriate assessment for planning authorities, published by the Department for Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) in 2009[2]. In addition, the structure and content of this report is based upon the methodology published by the European Communities in 2002[3] and Commission notice C (2021)[4].

2.3 Consultation

2.3.1 Notified Bodies

The applicant submitted the application on 10 December 2021. The following bodies were notified of the application by DECC on 23 December 2021:

- Irish Maritime Administration (IMA), Department of Transport;
- Marine Survey Office, IMA, Department of Transport;
- Maritime Safety Policy Division, IMA, Department of Transport;
- Marine Notices, IMA, Department of Transport Ship Source Pollution Prevention Unit, Irish Maritime Administration, Department of Transport;
- Irish Coast Guard (& National Maritime Operations Centre), Department of Transport;
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority;
- Sea Fisheries Policy Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Department of Agriculture and Food;
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Development Applications Unit, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- Marine Institute;
- Department of Defence;
- Mission Support Facility, Irish Air Corps;
- Naval Headquarters;

[1] Amending Directive 70/409/EEC
[2] DEHLG (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities, Revision Notes added 2010, URL: https://www.npws.ie (accessed 15/02/2022)
[3] European Communities (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EE, URL: http://ec.europa.eu (accessed 15/02/2022)
[4] C (2021) 6913 final "Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive: https://op.europa.eu (accessed 15/02/2022)

- Commission for Regulation of Utilities; and
- Commissioners of Irish Lights.

One response was received within the consultation period, which closed on the 8 February 2022:

- Response from the Maritime Safety Policy Division of the Department of Transport received by the applicant on 10 December 2021 and received by DECC on 23 December 2021.

The following observations were made:

- Prospective licensees and their employees and contractors are reminded that they should be aware of ship-source pollution prevention provisions which are in place to protect human health and the marine environment and apply to all shipping activity. These provisions are obligatory independently of particular licence terms and conditions. Under the MARPOL Convention and EU law as applicable in national law, ships may not cause pollution either by discharge to water or emissions to air, when at sea or when at berth in port. Ships include Floating Production and Offloading vessels (FPSOs) also called a "unit" or a "system", and Floating Storage Units (FSUs). Ships berthed at terminals at sea are also obliged to conform to the law.
- Management of ship waste (mainly oil, hazardous and polluting substances, sewage, garbage and polluting emissions to air) and of all cargo residues must be ensured as required under international (IMO), EU and national law. Under existing provisions ships are obliged to discharge waste and cargo residues at port and ports are obliged to provide adequate facilities for their reception from ships.

2.3.2 Public Consultation

The application was advertised by the DECC on their website on 23 December 2021, following receipt of the application on 10 December 2021. Invitations for submissions were advertised by DECC to be received by close of business on 8 February 2022 to ensure consideration by the Minister. No responses were received from the public in response to this consultation.

3. REVIEW OF APPLICANT AA SCREENING REPORT

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the key project information.

Table 3.1: Project Information

Project Title:	Corrib subsea infrastructure inspection, and maintenance surveys - 2022
Project Type:	Visual and Geophysical Survey
Applicant:	Vermilion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd
Exploration Licence Reference:	Corrib Petroleum Lease
Date AA Screening Report Received:	10 December 2021

3.1 Determining whether a Project should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment

Under Paragraph 42(6) of the Habitats Regulations, the DECC (as the relevant competent authority) shall determine that an AA is required, where it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the project, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would have a significant effect on a European Site.

Where it is determined that AA is required for the project, the applicant must submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

3.2 Description of the Project

The AA screening process involves describing the individual elements of the project that are likely to give rise to impacts on the conservation objectives and/or qualifying features of a Natura site.

Table 3.2 provides a review of the applicant's description of the project.

Table 3.2: Description of Project AA Checklist

Brief Project Description:

The proposed work scope will comprise two main components:

- Offshore pipeline and subsea structure inspection and maintenance survey work from a suitable offshore vessel supported by ROV, similar to the Edda Sun used previously as part of the survey programme. This vessel will be responsible for the survey works covering the area of the Corrib offshore field assets as well as seabed infrastructure as far inshore as Broadhaven Bay.
- Nearshore pipeline inspection using the survey vessel Leah-C or similar. This vessel is responsible for the survey covering the area primarily within Broadhaven Bay as far as the inshore limit of safe navigation.

The offshore and nearshore elements of the work will investigate features such as free-spanning and scouring, pipeline burial depth and integrity as well as cathodic protection measures. The survey will be carried out using a combination of acoustic survey techniques (e.g. multibeam echo sounder (MBES), sub-bottom profiler (SBP), side-scan sonar (SSS)). In addition, a visual survey using underwater video / camera imagery and ROV will be undertaken.

The application for consent also makes reference to maintenance and repair works that may be required (if any) following the survey works. However, the NIS report only covers survey works, and accordingly any potential maintenance / repair works (if any required) are not considered further in this report. It is noted that original consent to operate the Corrib Upstream Gas Pipeline (issued by the Minister on 29 December 2015) is considered to provide consent for any required maintenance / repair works, should these be required.

Details on the proposed equipment is provided below:

- A Sound Velocity Probe (SVP) will be deployed occasionally throughout the surveys to provide salinity, conductivity, temperature and sound velocity depth information. These probes operate at an extremely high frequency of around 2.5 MHz at a very low level of intensity. This allows periodic calibration of the primary acoustic survey sensors.
- Both vessels are likely to have single beam depth echosounders (operating at around 50 kHz) and ultra-short baseline acoustic profiling systems (USBL) for maintaining position and communications with any deployed equipment. The USBL system operate at a frequency at between 19 kHz to 34 kHz.
- The nearshore vessel will use a SBP with an operating frequency between 3 kHz and 8 kHz. Alternative systems operate between 3 and 10 kHz.
- MBES equipment will be hull mounted on the nearshore survey vessel for the survey in the confined waters of Broadhaven Bay. The preferred option for the MBES system onboard the nearshore vessel will operate between 350 kHz and 400 kHz. Alternative systems operate between 190 kHz to 450 kHz. MBES will also likely be mounted to the ROV of the offshore vessel for the offshore survey. ROV mounting for the deepwater sections of the survey will result in a relatively short distance between the acoustic source and the seabed allowing for the acquisition of high-resolution seabed data. The bathymetric system onboard the ROV will operate at a frequency of 400 kHz. Alternative systems operate between 400 and 600 kHz.
- The nearshore vessel will use a SSS. The preferred option of the SSS's operating frequency is between 300 kHz and 600 kHz. The alternatives operate between 445 kHz and 900 kHz.
- The offshore vessel will use an obstacle avoidance sonar operating on the ROV, with a frequency of 675 kHz. Alternative systems operate between 300 and 700 kHz.
- The offshore vessel will utilise a doppler velocity log (DVL) for accurate positioning and speed determination. This operates at a high frequency between 1.2 and 2 MHz at a very low level of intensity.
- The offshore vessel will use a bathymetric system with altimeter (Tritech SK704 or equivalent), which operates at 500 kHz.
- The offshore vessel will use a pipe tracker (TSS 440) of negligible magnetic field strength.
- The ROV deployed from the offshore vessel will be integrated with a laser and imaging system with stills and video camera for pipeline integrity and seabed inspection work.
- The Tracerco Discovery tool or ARTIMIS Halfwave tool will be used for checking pipeline wall thickness and integrity deployed using the ROV from the offshore vessel.

A soft-start procedure for acoustic surveys will be implemented as per the NPWS "Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-Made Sound Sources in Irish Waters" (2014) for both the inshore and offshore surveys.

The determination of "offshore" and "inshore" areas for the purpose of this report has assumed a boundary at a water depth of approximately 20 m below Chart Datum, however, the location of this boundary may be refined closer to the time of survey. The offshore vessel would therefore be responsible for the survey of the subsea infrastructure between the Corrib Field to Broadhaven Bay, while the nearshore vessel would limit its survey operations to within the Bay itself in depths of 20 m of less and would cover the section of the routes close to the landfall.

It is anticipated that the overall programme will be approximately 20 days in duration (dependent on weather conditions) with operations taking place for both vessels between March and December 2022. It is likely that the offshore and inshore elements will overlap during this time period. During data acquisition, the vessels will follow a pre-determined survey programme that may be subject to change depending on the prevailing current and wind conditions.

Project Element	**Have these features of the project been identified by the applicant? (If not, please provide details)**
Spatial Extent (size, scale, area etc)	**Yes** – the applicant proposes to conduct a visual and geophysical survey (MBES, sub-bottom profiler, SSS) along the pipeline running

	from Corrib Field (65 km offshore) to the limit of navigational safety in Broadhaven Bay.
Supporting Infrastructure	**Not applicable** – no supporting infrastructure is directly required for this project. The Corrib infrastructure is already in place.
Transportation Requirements	**Yes** – two survey vessels will be used, an *offshore survey vessel* (supported by a ROV) in water depths >20 m and outside Broadhaven Bay, and a *nearshore survey vessel* in water depths up to 20 m in Broadhaven Bay.
Physical changes that will result from the project (e.g. from excavation, dredging)	**No** – The applicant has concluded that there is limited potential for interaction with the identified receptors, and as the minimum survey depth is 2 m, there will be no physical disturbance to sensitive terrestrial or intertidal habitats. Physical changes in terms of underwater noise emissions have been characterised.
Emissions and Waste	**Yes** – the main output from the surveying equipment and vessels is underwater noise emissions, which have been detailed for the preferred and alternative equipment; no waste is expected to be released into the marine environment and will be appropriately disposed of onshore; leakages / spillages are highly unlikely to occur.
Resource Requirements (e.g. water abstraction)	**Yes** – the resource requirements are standard for survey vessel operations and are considered to be minimal.
Duration of each phase *e.g.* • *Phase 1 Construction* • *Phase 2 Operation* • *Phase 3 Decommissioning*	**Yes** – the works will take place over a 20-day period (dependent on weather conditions) between March and December 2022.

The AA screening must consider the effects of the project in combination with other plans and other projects in making the screening assessment.

Table 3.3 provides a review of the in-combination assessment undertaken by the applicant.

Table 3.3: In-combination Assessment

Brief Description of identified plans / projects that might act in-combination (Operational, Consented and Proposed projects) with the proposed project:		
The applicant's AA screening report considers the following projects that might act in-combination with the proposed project: • a programme of offshore geophysical and geotechnical surveys by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and SAIPEM S.A. at the Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site and along a proposed cable route in Belderra Sound (off the west coast of Co. Mayo) programmed to take place in spring 2022; • the proposed subsea telecoms cable installation by America Europe Connect 2 Ltd from New York to a landfall at Fallduff Strand, Old Head, Louisburg, Co. Mayo, anticipated in 2022; and • geophysical survey works associated with the Kinsale area gas field in the Celtic Sea, likely to continue in 2022.		
Project Element	**Is the predicted magnitude / extent of identified likely in-combination effects considered by the applicant?**	**Summary**

Spatial Extent (define boundaries for examination of in-combination effects)	Yes	The applicant has stated 200 km as the distance used for screening of other plans and projects, based on typical foraging and migratory ranges for qualifying features of European designated sites. This approach is sufficient to screen in/out in-combination effects for the purposes of the review of the applicant's AA Screening Report.
Impact Identification (e.g. noise, chemical emissions etc.)	Yes	The applicant has identified underwater noise as a potential in-combination effect with identified plans and projects. However, the likelihood of such eventuality occurring is rated as low in terms of potential impact on or affecting the integrity of European sites and their qualifying features.
Pathway Identification (e.g. via water, air etc)	Yes	The pathway is via water, i.e. underwater sound.

3.3 Identification of relevant European sites and species

The applicant's AA screening report considers the designated European sites that may be impacted by the project, including consideration of direct, indirect and in combination effects. As projects that lie out with European sites may still have an impact upon their integrity, particularly in a marine environment where the environment is extremely dynamic and species may be highly mobile, identifying potential zones of influence surrounding the European sites is a key component.

Appendix 1 identifies the relevant European Sites and species that might be impacted by the project. The relevant sites in the report have been reviewed and the applicant meets the requirements of:

- Identifying the Natura Site / Annex IV species;
- Listing the qualifying interests / Annex IV species;
- Considering direct impacts to the Natura site / Annex IV species;
- Considering indirect impacts to the Natura site / Annex IV species;
- Considering potential zones of influence on the Natura site / Annex IV; and
- The consideration of in combination effects.

3.4 Screening of Likely Significant Effects on Natura sites and adverse effects on Annex IV species.

Table 3.5 provides a summary of the likely significant effects identified for the project alone and in combination with other projects considering, *inter alia*, the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the sites concerned by the relevant project and the project location.

Table 3.5: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects AA Screening

Summary of LSE
The applicant's AA Screening Report identified the following impact sources for further consideration in the determination of LSE: • Physical presence of survey vessels and equipment; • Underwater noise from the operation of geophysical survey equipment and survey vessels; • Routine emissions and discharge during vessel operations; • Accidental events; and • Cumulative effects. The applicant has used a screening distance of 200 km, as this is expected to encompass foraging distances for resident and semi-resident species, and have also taken habitat connectivity into account. Sites within 25 km have been given particular consideration, and seabird foraging ranges (Woodward *et al.*, 2019) have been used for SPAs >200 km from the project area. **Physical Presence of the Survey Vessels and Equipment** The applicant has identified collision and disturbance as potential effects associated with vessel presence and has determined that these may impact the following receptors: marine mammals, and seabirds. Due to the short duration (20 days), small spatial scale (in comparison to the foraging range of receptors), and limited number of vessels (2) proposed for the project, the spatial scale and magnitude of effect are considered small. Disturbance effects on marine mammals will be limited to behavioural, and the population will recover (i.e., individuals can return to the region) immediately following the cessation of works. The likelihood of collision is also considered extremely low as the vessels will operate in accordance with codes of conduct and at low speed. Interaction (entanglement) is also unlikely to occur. The applicant has identified that seabirds (from both near and far-ranging SPAs) utilise the area and has considered them as a potential receptor for disturbance effects. Similarly, to marine mammals, seabirds have an extensive foraging habitat available, with high connectivity; and the survey will take place over a short duration and spatial extent. The applicant has given greater consideration to the sites / qualifying features closest to the survey works (within 25 km). Further assessment determined that these species may be temporarily disturbed and displaced from local foraging habitat. However, a wide extent of habitat remains available, with high levels of connectivity. The applicant concluded that the physical presence of the vessel and survey equipment will be unlikely to displace seabirds permanently. **Underwater Noise from the Operation of Geophysical Survey Equipment and Survey Vessels** The potential impact mechanism from underwater noise is acoustic disturbance/injury resulting from use of the survey equipment (MBES, positioning equipment, SSS, sub-bottom profiler, USBL, and mini-dredge tool). The relevant receptors to this impact are seabirds, marine mammals, fish, and prey species. The survey area overlaps with one SPA designated for seabirds; however, a wide number of SACs and SPAs are within screening (marine mammal/seabird foraging) distance of the works. The auditory range of the marine mammal and fish species in the region has been compared with the sound emissions of the vessel and equipment. The equipment specifications and outputs have been described to a high level of detail and overlaps with the hearing ranges of sensitive species have been identified. The initial assessment could not conclude no likely significant effect, and therefore the applicant has conducted a **Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.**

Several SACs designated for migratory fish species were within screening distance, and thus have been assessed for likely significant effect. The species are migratory and have large ranges, and the fact that the species groups in question (salmonids and lampreys) are insensitive to sound. The project area, particularly the offshore proportion, has a low density of diving seabirds, and therefore the applicant has determined that the proposed activities are unlikely to result in any significant effect on these species. **Routine Emissions and Discharges during Vessel Operations** Atmospheric emissions (primarily exhaust gases) and routine marine discharges (macerated food, grey water, bilge water, and ballast water) will be released from the vessel. This may result in localised decreases in air and water quality, however, due to the rapid dispersion, the effect will be temporary and very short term. The applicant concluded that these effects will not be significant, and thus have been screened out of further assessment. **Accidental Events** The applicant notes the possibility of a fuel oil spillage, however, explains that in the rare event a spillage occurs, contaminants would rapidly disperse, and preventative measures used on board during surveying reduce the risk of occurrence. The applicant concludes the potential for impact on European sites is considered to be low. **Cumulative Impacts** The applicant has identified that there are three known projects that will occur within a similar timescale to the proposed works and have the potential to act cumulatively with the effects from the project: • a programme of offshore geophysical and geotechnical surveys by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and SAIPEM S.A.; • the proposed subsea telecoms cable installation by America Europe Connect 2 Ltd; and • geophysical survey works associated with the Kinsale area gas field in the Celtic Sea. The applicant has determined that there is potential for these other plans and projects to result in a cumulative effect on European sites. However, the likelihood of such an eventuality occurring, is considered to be very low in terms of the potential for impact on or affecting the integrity of any European sites and their qualifying interests.
Do you agree with the applicant's AA screening assessment? Why?
The applicant's AA screening assessment is overall considered robust, and as per the applicant's conclusion, it is concluded that a Stage 2 AA is required, as it is not possible to exclude on the basis of the initial assessment that the project will have a likely significant effects (LSE) either individually or in combination with other plans or projects on European sites. We agree with the pathways that have been identified and agree with the applicant's conclusion of no LSE except for the pathway of underwater noise, based on the information provided in the screening report.

3.5 Screening Determination

If significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain then the DECC must request the applicant to provide a NIS in order for the DECC to undertake an AA as the competent authority.

The applicant may also choose to recommence the screening process with a modified project that removes or avoids elements that posed risks of LSE and triggered the need for an AA.

Table 3.6 and 3.7 provide a summary of Ramboll's recommendation to enable DECC to make a screening determination.

Table 3.6: Summary of Applicant's Screening Report Review

Is the plan or project directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the Natura site?	No
Is the project or plan likely to have significant effects on the environment?	Yes.
Is an AA required? (Yes / No / More Information Required?)	Yes - the applicant could not determine No Likely Significant Effect on marine mammals, migratory fish and seabirds from underwater noise sources, therefore an AA is required.
What further information is required to inform AA Screening Opinion (if any)?	None.

Table 3.7: Recommendation of Screening Determination

Outcome of Screening Report Assessment	**Overall Screening Opinion / AA Required?**
~~No Likely Significant Effects on Natura Sites identified, or project is directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the Natura site.~~	~~**No likely significant effects on European Sites have been identified, having had regard to the potential connectivity with sites, relevant conservation objectives and the potential for in combination effects and will not cause significant disturbance to Annex IV species described. Appropriate Assessment is not required.**~~
Likely or Potential Likely Significant Effects on Natura Sites identified, and project is not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the Natura site.	Appropriate Assessment is required because it cannot be excluded, on the basis of the initial assessment (AA screening) provided by the applicant, that the project will have either individually or in combination with other plans or projects a likely significant effect on European sites.

APPENDIX 1: IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES/SPECIES AA SCREENING CHECKLIST

Natura site/ Annex IV species identified by assessor	**Distance from Project Site (km)**	**Are the Natura site / Annex IV species identified by the applicant?**	**Are all the qualifying interests / Annex IV species listed by the applicant?**	**Are direct impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are indirect impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are Potential Zones of Influence on the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are in combination effects considered by the applicant?**	**Briefly summarise whether the applicant's consideration of relevant Natura sites / Annex IV species which may be affected by the proposed project, meets the requirements for a screening opinion:**
1. Broadhaven Bay SAC (IE0000472)	0.0 (overlap)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
2. Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC (IE0000500)	0.0 (overlap)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
3. West Connacht Coast SAC (IE0002998)	~1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
4. Erris Head SAC (IE0001501)	2.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
5. Mullet / Blacksod Bay Complex SAC (IE0000470)/ OSPAR MPA (O-IE-0002972)	10.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

Natura site/ Annex IV species identified by assessor	**Distance from Project Site (km)**	**Are the Natura site / Annex IV species identified by the applicant?**	**Are all the qualifying interests / Annex IV species listed by the applicant?**	**Are direct impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are indirect impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are Potential Zones of Influence on the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are in combination effects considered by the applicant?**	**Briefly summarise whether the applicant's consideration of relevant Natura sites / Annex IV species which may be affected by the proposed project, meets the requirements for a screening opinion:**
6. Owenduff / Nephin Complex SAC (IE0000534)	16.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
7. Inishkea Islands SAC (IE0000507)	19.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements
8. Duvillaun Islands SAC (IE0000495)	26.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements
9. River Moy SAC (IE0002298)	30.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
10. Killala Bay / Moy Estuary SAC (IE0000458)	39.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
11. Newport River SAC (IE0002144)	40.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
12. Clew Bay Complex SAC (IE0001482)	42.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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13. Mweelrea / Sheefry / Erriff Complex SAC (IE0001932)	61.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
14. Cummeen Strand / Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC (IE0000627)/ OSPAR MAP (O-IE-0002973)	73.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
15. Inishbofin and Inishshark SAC (IE0000278)	74.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
16. The Twelve Bens / Garraun Complex SAC (IE0002031)	74.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
17. Ballysadare Bay SAC (IE0000622)	76.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
18. Maumturk Mountains SAC (IE0002008)	76.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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19. Slieve Tooey / Tormore Island / Loughros Beg Bay SAC (IE0000190)	82.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
20. Lough Corrib SAC (IE0000297)	86.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
21. Lough Gill SAC (IE0001976)	87.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
22. Connemara Bog Complex SAC (IE0002034)	89.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
23. Slyne Head Islands SAC (IE0000328)	94.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
24. Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (IE0002111) / OSPAR MPA (O-IE-0002979)	100.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
25. Lough Melvin SAC (IE0000428)	99.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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26. West of Ardara / Maas Road SAC (IE0000197)	101.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
27. Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC (IE0000133)	111.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
28. Rutland Island and Sound SAC (IE0002283)	112.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
29. Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC (IE0000163)	118.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
30. Galway Bay Complex SAC (IE0000268) / OSPAR MPA (O-IE-0002969)	130.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
31. Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC (IE0000147)	150.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
32. Lower River Shannon SAC (IE0002165)	166.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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33. Blacksod Bay / Broadhaven SPA (IE0004037)	0.0 (overlap)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has made no reference to the the Blacksod and Broadhaven Bay Ramsar site[5], which overlaps with this SPA. However, no further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
34. Carrowmore Lake SPA (IE0004052)	7.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
35. Termoncarragh Lough and Annagh Machair SPA (IE0004093)	9.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
36. Mullet Peninsula SPA (IE0004227)	9.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

[5] See: https://rsis.ramsar.org

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37. Stags of Broadhaven SPA (IE0004072)	9.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
38. Illanmaster SPA (IE0004074)	11.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
39. Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA (IE0004084)	13.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
40. Inishkea Islands SPA (IE0004004)	19.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
41. Duvillaun Islands SPA (IE0004111)	22.0+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
42. Clare Island SPA (IE0004136)	50.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
43. Bills Rocks SPA (IE0004177)	50.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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44. Ardboline Island and Horse Island SPA (IE0004135)	73.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
45. Inishmurray SPA (IE0004068)	76.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
46. West Donegal Coast SPA (IE0004150)	78.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
47. Cruagh Island SPA (IE0004170)	86.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
48. Inishduff SPA (IE0004115)	89.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
49. Connemara Bog Complex SPA (IE0004181)	89.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
50. High Island, Inishshark and Davillaun SPA (IE0004144)	94.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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51. Donegal Bay SPA (IE0004151)	98.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
52. Inner Galway Bay SPA (IE0004031)	123.0	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
53. Inishmore SPA (IE0004152)	125.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
54. Cliffs of Moher SPA (IE0004005)	145.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
55. Aughris Head SPA (IE0004133)	147.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
56. Tory Island SPA (IE0004073)	148.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
57. Horn Head to Fanad Head (IE0004194)	150.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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58. Mid-Clare Coast SPA (IE0004182)	160.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
59. River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (IE0004077)	188.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
60. Loop Head SPA (IE0004119)	189.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
61. Kerry Head SPA (IE0004189)	201.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
62. Inishtrahull SPA (IE0004100)	208.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
63. Dingle Peninsula SPA (IE0004153)	220.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
64. Blasket Islands SPA (IE0004008)	243.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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65. Iveragh Peninsula SPA (IE0004154)	248.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
66. Puffin Island SPA (IE0004003)	273.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
67. Skelligs SPA (IE0004007)	281.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
68. Deenish Island and Scariff Island SPA (IE0004175)	283.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
69. Beara Peninsula SPA (IE0004155)	289.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
70. The Bull and the Cow Rocks SPA (IE0004066)	300.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
71. Irish Sea Front SPA (UK9020328)	308.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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72. Treshnish Isles SPA (UK9003041)	321.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
73. Rum SPA (UK9001341)	358.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
74. Glannau Aberdaron ac Ynys Enlli / Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island SPA (UK9013121)	364.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
75. Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire / Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA (UK9014051)	397.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
76. Mingulay and Berneray SPA (UK9001121)	412.0	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed razorbill *Alca torda*[6], as a qualifying feature, and *Fulmarus glacialis* has been misspelled. Due to

[6] See https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu / https://apps.snh.gov.uk

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								the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
77. Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA (IE0004156)	413	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
78. Copeland Islands (UK9020291)	418	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
79. Galley Head to Duneen Point (IE0004190)	454	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
80. Old Head of Kinsale (IE0004021)	483	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
81. Lambay Island (IE0004069)	509	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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82. Magharee Islands SPA (IE0004125)	512	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
83. St Kilda (UK9001031)	531	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
84. Shiant Isles (UK9001041)	541	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
85. Saltee Islands (IE0004002)	626	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
86. Mers Celtiques - Talus du golfe de Gascogne (FR5212016)	719	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
87. Nord Bretagne DO (FR2512005)	824	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
88. Ouessant-Molène (FR5310072)	841	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

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89. Côte de Granit Rose-Sept Iles (FR5310011)	887	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Arenaria interpres, Calidris alba or Calidris alpina*[7], as a qualifying feature. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
90. Roches de Penmarc'h (FR5312009)	930	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Alca torda, Calonectris Diomedea, Fulmarus glacialis, Gavia stellata, Larus fuscus, Melanitta nigra, Mergus serrator, Oceanodroma leucorhoa, Pernis apivorus, Phalacrocorax aristotelis, Podiceps spp., Puffinus gravis, P. griseus,*

[7] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu / https://inpn.mnhn.fr

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								Rissa tridactyla, Stercorarius parasiticus, S. pomarinus, Sterna hirundo, Sylvia undata, Tachybaptus ruficollis or Uria aalge [8]. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
91. Archipel de Glénan (FR5310057)	951	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Alca torda, Asio flammeus, Calidris spp., Catharacta skua, Fulica atra, Limosa lapponica, Melanitta nigra, Numenius arquata, Podiceps spp., Somateria mollissima, Stercorarius parasiticus, Sterna albifrons, Tringa*

[8] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu / https://inpn.mnhn.fr

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								tetanus or Uria aale[9]. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
92. Chausey (FR2510037)	1004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
93. Iles Houat-Hoëdic (FR5312011)	1039	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
94. Cap Gris-Nez (FR3110085)	1041	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Accipiter gentilis*[10], as an important species for the site. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these

[9] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu / https://inpn.mnhn.fr
[10] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu / https://inpn.mnhn.fr

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								species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
95. Mor Braz (FR5212013)	1054	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
96. Baie de Vilaine (FR5310074)	1059	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Acrocephalus paludicola, Circus cyaneus, Gavia arctica, Melanitta fusca, Tachybaptus ruficollis or Uria aalge*[11]. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.

[11] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu

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97. Littoral seino-marin (FR2310045)	1071	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Gavia immer*[12]. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
98. Estuaire de la Loire - Baie de Bourgneuf (FR5212014)	1086	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
99. Estuaire de la Loire (FR5210103)	1098	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
100. Littoral augeron (FR2512001)	1100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

[12] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu

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101. Secteur marin de l'île d'Yeu jusqu'au continent (FR5212015)	1106	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
102. Pertuis charentais – Rochebonne (FR5412026)	1142	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
103. Espacio marino de Punta de Candelaria-Ría de Ortigueira-Estaca de Bares (ES0000495)	1226	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*[13] as a qualifying feature. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
104. Espacio marino de la Costa da Morte (ES0000497)	1245	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

[13] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu

Natura site/ Annex IV species identified by assessor	**Distance from Project Site (km)**	**Are the Natura site / Annex IV species identified by the applicant?**	**Are all the qualifying interests / Annex IV species listed by the applicant?**	**Are direct impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are indirect impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are Potential Zones of Influence on the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are in combination effects considered by the applicant?**	**Briefly summarise whether the applicant's consideration of relevant Natura sites / Annex IV species which may be affected by the proposed project, meets the requirements for a screening opinion:**
105. El Cachucho (ES90ATL01)	1251	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.
106. Espacio marino de la Costa de Ferrolterra-Valdoviño (ES0000496)	1253	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*[14] as a qualifying feature. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
107. Espacio marino de Cabo Peñas (ES0000494)	1277	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*[15] as a qualifying feature. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be

[14] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu
[15] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu

Natura site/ Annex IV species identified by assessor	**Distance from Project Site (km)**	**Are the Natura site / Annex IV species identified by the applicant?**	**Are all the qualifying interests / Annex IV species listed by the applicant?**	**Are direct impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are indirect impacts to the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are Potential Zones of Influence on the Natura Site / Annex IV species considered by the applicant?**	**Are in combination effects considered by the applicant?**	**Briefly summarise whether the applicant's consideration of relevant Natura sites / Annex IV species which may be affected by the proposed project, meets the requirements for a screening opinion:**
								affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
108. Cabo Busto-Luanco (ES0000318)	1287	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The applicant has not listed *Streptopelia turtur, Uria aalge or Vanellus vanellus*[16] as a qualifying feature. Due to the distance from the project area it is unlikely these species would be affected. No further information is required from the applicant to support a screening determination.
109. ZEPA Banco de Galicia (ES0000498)	1294	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Applicant meets requirements.

[16] See: https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu