

Hand/near-shore harvesting of wild seaweeds: Licensing of larger scale proposals

Harvesting Licence Options

This Harvesting Licence Options ('HLO') process has been introduced in response to increasing competition for rights to harvest naturally occurring seaweeds by hand from Crown foreshore for commercial purposes.

Its aims are;

1. to accommodate and assess competing interest for limited resource from larger scale hand-harvesting proposals,
2. to address licensing requirements for the higher intensity of harvesting characteristic of these larger scale proposals.

The process will identify the successful grantee of a HLO, a secure and conditional interest in an identified seaweed stock at an identified location. This will provide assurance for the expenditure, time and effort considered necessary for stock assessments and associated harvesting and monitoring strategies to identify sustainability thresholds, in pursuit of a full Harvesting Licence.

Both volume of seaweed and the extent of foreshore from which it is sought constitute qualifying criteria for this process. (Lower intensity harvesting that is likely to fall well within sustainability thresholds will remain subject to the existing application process.)

Note that all extents quoted in km are as measured along the line of MHWS

The HLO process applies to

- Crown owned foreshore (MHWS-MLWS) and/or immediately adjacent accessible seabed, up to 100m beyond MLWS.
- Any proposal for harvesting at one or more locations where the aggregate extent of foreshore to be licensed (ie. those extents from which actual collection will take place) exceeds 10km, and/or where an annual harvest volume in the region of 100 tonnes wet weight cumulatively across all species is anticipated.

Proposals close to these thresholds (above or below) will require further discussion to conclude the process that will apply, but all prospective harvesters are encouraged to engage with us at an early stage to obtain clarity on just what process applies.

For example;

- (i) Harvesting over an aggregate foreshore extent of 12km for anticipated cumulative volumes of circa 90 tonnes – this process applies*
- (ii) Harvesting over an aggregate foreshore extent of 6km for anticipated cumulative volumes of circa 110 tonnes – this process applies*
- (iii) Harvesting over an aggregate foreshore extent of 15km for anticipated cumulative volumes of circa 20 tonnes – this process unlikely to apply.*

Continuation

Option Extents (all as measured along MHWS)

1. Aggregate foreshore extents considered to constitute parts of a single Harvest Licence Option proposal will be where the furthest distant points along the coast fall within 50km of each other (subject to the maximum extent available for one Option – see below*). Where these extend beyond 50km, locations will be considered to make up more than one Harvesting Licence Option proposal.

*A Harvesting Licence Option will be granted for a maximum of

- 20km of foreshore/seabed for harvesting of multiple species, either as a single stretch or cumulatively over several individual locations or,
- 30km of foreshore/seabed for harvesting of a single species, either as a single stretch or cumulatively over several individual locations

For example;

- (i) 15km aggregate foreshore comprising 3 x 5km extent locations;
 - all falling within two points less than 50km apart = 1 Option
 - all falling within two points more than 50km apart = 2 Options
 - (ii) 30km aggregate foreshore comprising 6 x 5km extent locations;
 - all falling within two points less than 50km apart = 2 Options (1 for single spp)
 - all falling within two points more than 50km apart = 2 Options (2 “)
2. Proposals for locations within 50km of an existing licence held by the applicant, that would between them cumulatively exceed Harvest Licence Option extent/volume thresholds, may well be made subject to this process at our discretion.

Applications

Applications for a Harvesting Licence Option can be submitted during two application windows per annum – 1st fortnights in March and September.

Proposals must include;

- Accurate co-ordinates (WGS84 preferred) of those (exact) extents of foreshore from which harvesting is proposed, including start and end co-ordinates for each location within a Harvesting Licence Option.
- A list of the species of interest at each harvesting location
- Anticipated volumes of each species to be harvested.
- Provisional harvesting and monitoring strategies that demonstrate a clear commitment to the environmental sustainability of the proposal
- A business plan with evidence of financial and business resource to enable its execution.

Harvesting Licence Options will be granted for a period of 3 years.

Continuation

Any single applicant may hold up to 3 Harvesting Licence Options at any one time for which no detailed submission (see below) has been made.

Exercising an Option

A Stock Assessment for each harvesting location within an Option with projected sustainably available volumes for each species of interest must have been prepared, along with detailed Harvesting and Monitoring Strategies (which may apply across more than one location), and submitted to CES and SNH within 24 months of the signing of a Harvesting Licence Option. This 24-month deadline cannot be extended.

Where SNH confirm no evident risk of unacceptable environmental impacts, the Option can be exercised for a full Harvesting Licence. The Licence will be subject to whatever mitigation and monitoring conditions SNH consider appropriate for licensable harvesting.

Any proposed harvesting location subject to an Option that lapses because the 24-month deadline was not met cannot be re-applied for by the same applicant for a period of two years.

Applications with overlapping extents

Occasions may arise where particular stretches of foreshore are the subject of more than one prospective harvester's application for a Harvesting Option.

If all applicants concerned have the necessary licensee credentials that precludes any obvious prioritising of one application over another, they will in the first instance be invited to agree apportioning of the foreshore in question or reaching some other resolution to the conflict between themselves.

If this is not possible, Crown Estate Scotland will resolve the matter itself in its determination of the conflicting applications.