



SubNet Project

Environmental Report

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Introduction

The SubNet project is an innovative initiative that aims to develop a Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicle (ROUV) that can autonomously explore and analyze underwater environments, with a primary focus on optimizing the deployment of submarine cables. Submarine cables are essential for global communication and internet connectivity, but they also pose environmental challenges and risks. Therefore, it is crucial to assess the potential environmental impacts of the SubNet project, both direct and indirect, and propose mitigation measures to minimize them.

Methodology

This report is based on the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the SubNet project, which was conducted following the guidelines and standards of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). The EIA involved the following steps:

- ▶ Scoping: identifying the key environmental issues and stakeholders related to the SubNet project, and defining the scope and objectives of the EIA.
- ▶ Baseline: collecting and analyzing data on the existing environmental conditions and trends in the areas where the SubNet project will operate, and establishing the baseline scenario for comparison.
- ▶ Impact analysis: predicting and evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the SubNet project, both positive and negative, direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, and cumulative and synergistic, using qualitative and quantitative methods and tools.
- ▶ Mitigation: identifying and recommending measures to avoid, reduce, or compensate for the adverse environmental impacts of the SubNet project, and to enhance the positive ones, taking into account the technical, economic, social, and legal feasibility of the measures.
- ▶ Reporting: preparing and presenting the EIA report, which summarizes the main findings and conclusions of the EIA, and the proposed mitigation measures and monitoring plan.

Results and Discussion

The EIA report identified and assessed the potential environmental impacts of the SubNet project on the marine ecosystems, encompassing habitat disruption, noise pollution, and marine debris. Additionally, the EIA report evaluated the project's energy consumption and potential emissions to determine its ecological footprint.



Direct Impacts

Habitat Disruption

The deployment and operation of the SubNet ROUV may temporarily perturb marine life in its immediate vicinity, potentially affecting feeding, breeding, and migration patterns. However, the autonomous nature of the ROUV and its restricted operation duration significantly minimize the extent of habitat disturbance. Moreover, the SubNet project will avoid sensitive marine habitats, such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves, and will comply with the relevant environmental regulations and standards.

Noise Pollution

The SubNet ROUV's propulsion system and sonar may generate noise that could disrupt marine life, particularly sensitive species like marine mammals. To mitigate noise impact, the SubNet project will rigorously control and monitor the ROUV's acoustic emissions, and will adhere to the best practices and guidelines for underwater noise management. Furthermore, the SubNet project will coordinate with other stakeholders, such as the submarine cable industry, the maritime sector, and the research community, to reduce the overall noise levels in the ocean.

Marine Debris

The SubNet ROUV could potentially contribute to marine debris if components of the vehicle or discarded equipment are lost or discarded in the ocean. Marine debris is a serious threat to marine life, as it can cause entanglement, ingestion, injury, or death. To prevent marine debris generation, the SubNet project will implement stringent waste management protocols and utilize recyclable materials. Additionally, the SubNet project will conduct regular maintenance and inspections to minimize the risk of component failure.



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We don't have to sacrifice a strong economy for a healthy environment.

– Dennis Weaver



Indirect Impacts



Energy Consumption

The SubNet ROUV will require energy for propulsion, communication, and data processing. While the SubNet project will design the ROUV to optimize energy efficiency, it is important to consider the project's overall energy consumption within the context of the broader underwater infrastructure it supports. The SubNet project will aim to reduce the energy demand and carbon footprint of the submarine cable industry, by providing more accurate and reliable data on the optimal routes and locations for cable deployment and maintenance.

Emissions

**Nature provides a free lunch,
but only if we control our
appetites.**

William Ruckelshaus, Business Week, 18 June 1990

The production and transportation of the SubNet ROUV and its components may generate emissions, contributing to air and water pollution. Emissions are a major driver of climate change, which in turn affects the marine environment and biodiversity. To minimize the project's emissions, the SubNet project will select sustainable materials, efficient manufacturing processes, and environmentally responsible transportation methods. Moreover, the SubNet project may consider carbon offsetting initiatives, such as investing in renewable energy projects or supporting reforestation efforts.



*“I only feel angry when I see waste.
When I see people throwing away things
we could use.” — Mother Teresa*

Mitigation Measures

Habitat Protection

Careful planning of SubNet ROUV deployments will steer clear of sensitive marine habitats and minimize disruptions during operation. Continuous monitoring of marine life will be conducted to assess the project’s impact, and the SubNet project will adapt mitigation measures as needed.

Noise Mitigation

The ROUV’s propulsion system will be designed to minimize acoustic emissions, and sonar usage will be meticulously controlled to avert excessive noise levels. Additionally, noise monitoring will be implemented to ensure compliance with noise regulations.

Marine Debris Prevention

Rigid waste management protocols will be implemented to prevent the loss or disposal of ROUV components or discarded equipment in the ocean. Reusable materials will be prioritized, and regular maintenance will be conducted to minimize the risk of component failure.

Sustainable Design and Manufacturing

The SubNet ROUV and its components will be designed and manufactured utilizing sustainable materials and processes, minimizing the project’s environmental footprint. Renewable energy will be utilized whenever feasible.

Carbon Offsetting

To further reduce the project’s carbon footprint, the SubNet project may consider carbon offsetting initiatives, such as investing in renewable energy projects or supporting reforestation efforts.



The SubNet initiative holds tremendous promise for transforming underwater technology and contributing significantly to the development of sustainable communication infrastructure. Nevertheless, we recognize the environmental challenges and risks associated with our undertaking. Our commitment to addressing these issues is reflected in the thorough and comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which outlines mitigation measures to minimize potential adverse effects.

We are dedicated to implementing these measures and diligently monitoring our environmental performance to ensure that our efforts align with environmental responsibility and social consciousness. As we navigate the complexities of technological innovation, we prioritize sustainable development and recognize the importance of harmonizing progress with environmental preservation. Our proactive approach underscores our commitment to not only achieving technological milestones but doing so in a manner that is environmentally sound and socially responsible.