

Glenvernoch Wind Farm

Environmental Impact Assessment Report Volume I Chapter 1: Introduction

October 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) is submitted in support of an application under section 36 (s.36) of the Electricity Act 1989 by Energiekontor UK Limited (the “Applicant”) to the Scottish Government’s Energy Consents Unit (ECU) for a wind farm consisting of 13 wind turbines and associated infrastructure (the “Proposed Development”) on land at Glenvernoch, Newton Stewart (the “Site”).
- 1.2 This EIA Report has been prepared on behalf of Energiekontor UK Limited and sets out the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development that has been carried out pursuant to Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (“the EIA Regulations”).
- 1.3 The EIA Report includes a description of the Proposed Development, the Site and its design; summarises the findings of a comprehensive study of potential environmental impacts; and, where adverse effects are identified, measures to avoid, reduce, or remedy such effects are described. At the time of the assessment for the Proposed Development, the EIA Report considers the likely significant effects on the environment, identified in the EIA, during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. In addition, any likely cumulative significant effects with other developments have also been considered in the EIA Report.

The Applicant – Energiekontor UK Ltd

- 1.4 Energiekontor UK Ltd (EK) is a renewable energy development company with offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leeds. The company was formed in 1999 and develops onshore wind and solar farms throughout the United Kingdom. The company operates 11 wind farms in the UK including three subsidy-free wind farms in Scotland.
- 1.5 Energiekontor UK Ltd is part of the Energiekontor Group. The parent company, Energiekontor AG, was established in 1990 in Bremerhaven in Northern Germany. It has since grown to become one of the leading wind energy companies in Europe and is active in Germany, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, the USA and the UK. The company has built over 140 wind farms and 14 solar farms across Europe with a total capacity of 1.3GW
- 1.6 The suite of EIA Report documents has been prepared by the Applicant. In addition, the following chapters and technical assessments have been undertaken by the Applicant:
- 1.7 Volume I - Chapter 1: Introduction;
 - Volume I - Chapter 2: Approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment;
 - Volume I - Chapter 3: Project Description and Construction Methods;
 - Volume I - Chapter 4: Design Evolution;
 - Volume I - Chapter 5: Planning Policy;

- Volume I - Chapter 13: Infrastructure and Safety;
- Volume I - Chapter 14: Socioeconomics;
- Volume I – Chapter 15: Schedule of Mitigation
- Volume IV – Non-Technical Summary;
- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement; and
- Pre-Application Consultation Report.

1.8 The suite of EIA Report documents that have also benefitted from the assistance of expert contributions from specialist consultants are detailed in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1: External EIA Report Contributors

Technical Area	Organisation
Landscape Character and Visual Amenity	Pegasus
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	Pegasus
Ornithology	Sterna Ecology
Ecology	Sterna Ecology
Noise	Hoare Lea
Traffic and Transportation	Systra
Hydrology, Geology and Geohydrology	WSP
Tourism / Socio-Economics	BiGGAR Economics
Biodiversity Restoration and Enhancement Plan	WSP

1.9 The EIA Report chapters can be categorised to the following groups:

Introductory:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Approach to EIA
- Chapter 3: Project Description and Construction Methods
- Chapter 4: Design Evolution
- Chapter 5: Renewable Energy and Planning Policy

Physical Environment:

- Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual
- Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
- Chapter 12: Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology

Biological Environment:

- Chapter 8: Ornithology
- Chapter 9: Ecology

Population and Human Health:

- Chapter 10: Noise
- Chapter 11: Traffic and Transportation
- Chapter 13: Infrastructure and Safety
- Chapter 14: Socio-Economic Statement

Mitigation

- Chapter 15: Schedule of Mitigation

Planning History

- 1.10 A planning application for a wind farm known as Hill of Ochiltree consisting of 10 turbines with tip heights of 115m was submitted by Eon in 2009 on land northwest of the Site, on land adjacent to Loch Ochiltree.
- 1.11 The planning application was refused in 2012 by Dumfries and Galloway Council due to concerns in relation to landscape and visual amenity, impacts on tourism and impacts on the water environment, soils and hydrogeology.
- 1.12 In 2015, a Scoping Request was submitted by Gamesa for a site named Bargrennan which consisted of 15 turbines with tip heights of 137m. The site boundary for that proposal was contiguous with the previous Hill of Ochiltree site boundary. This proposal was never progressed further by Gamesa.

The Proposed Development

- 1.13 The Proposed Development is described in detail in Chapter 3: Project Description and Construction Methods. It includes the following principal elements:
 - 13 turbines up to 200m to blade tip;
 - Associated turbine transformers;
 - Associated turbine foundations;
 - Hardstanding areas for erecting cranes at each turbine location;
 - On-site tracks connecting each turbine;
 - Underground cables linking the turbines to the substation;
 - Borrow pits for the extraction of stone on-site;
 - A temporary construction compound;
 - An area for a battery storage facility;
 - On-site substation;
 - A new site access onto the A714; and
 - Off-site access works.
- 1.14 The site layout is provided at Figure 3.1.

- 1.15 Consent is sought for 35 years of the operational phase of the wind farm. After the expiration of this period the turbines would be decommissioned and removed. Any alternative course of action would require a fresh planning application to be submitted.

Background to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report)

- 1.16 The Proposed Development falls within Category 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, being a generating station for the harnessing of wind power for energy production.
- 1.17 The EIA is an important procedure aimed at ensuring that significant effects on the environment, likely to be caused by a new development proposal, are taken into account within the decision making process. Thus, this EIA Report has been carried out pursuant to the EIA Regulations.
- 1.18 Throughout each respective chapter of this EIA Report, an overview of the methodology adopted for each technical study is provided along with a statement from the chapter author stating their technical competence to undertake the assessment.

Structure of the EIA Report

- 1.19 The EIA Report for the Proposed Development is presented in five volumes, as follows:
- Volume I: Written text (this document);
 - Volume II: Application Drawings, Figures and Visualisations;
 - Volume III: Technical Appendices; and
 - Volume IV: Non-Technical Summary (NTS).
- 1.20 In support of the s.36 application, the following documents have also been submitted:
- Planning Statement;
 - Design and Access Statement; and
 - Pre-application Consultation Report.

Contact for Further Information and Commenting

- 1.21 The full EIAR, together with the application for consent and associated documents, will be available for viewing on the application website at <https://www.energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/glenvernoch> or the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit at www.energyconsents.scot.
- 1.22 For additional copies, a charge of £15 will be made for a full electronic copy of the EIA Report on CD. Costs for paper copies are as follows:
- Volume I – Written Text £100
 - Volume II – Application Drawings and Figures £600
 - Volume III – Technical Appendices £600
 - Volume IV – Non-Technical Summary £20

- 1.23 Any representations to the application may be submitted via the Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx; by email to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot; or by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation.