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5.0 Approach to EIA and Consultation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out an overview of the requirements of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'). It then provides an outline of the general approach and methodology undertaken to assess the proposed development in accordance with the EIA Regulations. Finally, it presents the assumptions that have been made in undertaking the EIA for the proposed development.

5.2 EIA Regulations

Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations lists those developments for which an EIA is mandatory, whilst Schedule 2 describes projects for which the need for EIA is judged by Scottish Ministers on a case-by-case basis. The proposed development falls with Schedule 2, paragraph (a) of the EIA Regulations as *"a generating station, the construction of which (or operation of which) will require a section 36 consent but which is not a Schedule 1 development."*

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations lists the 'selection criteria' which must be considered by Scottish Ministers in determining whether a Schedule 2 development is an EIA development. These selection criteria relate to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and consequently whether the project is likely to have to have significant effects on the environment.

Developments that are listed within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations may have the requirement for EIA determined by a screening request to the Scottish Ministers. In this case however, a screening request was not sought, as it was considered that the proposed development would be of a size and nature that may have the potential to cause significant effects. In addition to this, the Applicant recognises that the EIA process has a significant role in developing the design of proposals, to minimise adverse environmental effects and maximise benefits. The Applicant has therefore determined that an EIA will be required to be included for the proposed development.

The EIA process requires the identification of potential adverse effects, with either the incorporation of appropriate embedded mitigation into the proposal design, or including mitigation measures within the construction and/or operation of the proposal to avoid, reduce and if possible, rectify any significant adverse effects, or enhance further any beneficial effects.

5.3 Requirements of EIA Regulations

The approach to the EIA undertaken with regards to the proposed development has followed the requirements of the EIA Regulations. An application for an Electricity Act consent for EIA development must be accompanied by an EIA Report.

The EIA Regulations require a description of the likely significant effects on the following factors:

- population and human health;
- biodiversity;
- land, soil, water, air and climate; and
- material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape.

The EIA Report must then identify, describe and assess both the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development, and their interaction with the factors as outlined. The identification, description and assessment of any expected effects that may result from the proposed development's vulnerability to risks of major accidents and disasters are also required.

An EIA Report must include:

- a) a description of the development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;



- b) a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment;
- c) a description of the features of the development and any measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
- d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment;
- e) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and
- f) any other information specified in schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the development and to the environmental features likely to be affected.

Where a scoping opinion is adopted, the EIA Report must be based on the scoping opinion and, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, must contain the information that may reasonably be required for reaching a conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment.

Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations sets out the information that must be included in the EIA Report, and is summarised below, in **Table 5.1**. This table also identifies where the corresponding information can be found in this EIA Report.

Table 5.1 Information Included in the EIA Report

Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
<p>1. Description of the development, including in particular:</p> <p>(a) a description of the location of the development;</p> <p>(b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;</p> <p>(c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quality of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; and</p> <p>(d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.</p>	<p>A description of the location of the proposed development is presented in Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Alternatives.</p> <p>A description of the proposed development and its characteristics is presented in Chapter 2: Proposed Development Description.</p> <p>The predicted individual emissions and residues of the proposed development are reported in Chapters 6 to 15.</p>
<p>2. A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its special characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for this choice, taking into account a comparison of the environmental effects.</p>	<p>The alternatives considered are covered under Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Alternatives.</p>
<p>3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (the "baseline scenario") and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the project as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of relevant information and scientific knowledge</p>	<p>This is described in the baseline section of each technical chapters in the EIA Report (Chapters 6 to 15), where relevant.</p>



Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
<p>4. A description of the factors specified in item 3 above likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage, including the architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.</p>	<p>Effects on population and human health are discussed in relation to visual/residential amenity impacts in Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, traffic impacts in Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport Assessment, noise impacts in Chapter 12: Acoustic Assessment, air quality impacts in Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker and Other Issues and socio-economic impacts in Chapter 13: Socio-economics, Land Use and Tourism.</p>
<p>5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, resulting from:</p> <p>(a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works;</p> <p>(b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;</p> <p>(c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances and the disposal and recovery of waste;</p> <p>(d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for examples due to accidents or disasters);</p> <p>(e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved development, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;</p> <p>(f) the impact of the development on climate and the vulnerability of the development to climate change; and</p> <p>(g) the technologies and the substance used.</p> <p>The description of the likely significant effects should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.</p>	<p>The predicted significant effects of the proposed development are reported as residual effects after relevant mitigation measures in each of the technical chapters of the EIA Report (Chapters 6 to 15). The methods used to predict significant effects are explained in this chapter and each individual chapter as relevant.</p> <p>Effects have been predicted in relation to the project's construction and permanent use of the land. The operation and nature of these effects and their duration are reported</p>
<p>6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.</p>	<p>Methods, assumptions and limitations in the EIA process are reported as required in this chapter and in the relevant technical chapters of the EIA Report (Chapters 6 to 15).</p>
<p>7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce and if possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any monitoring arrangements. That description should explain the extent to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided,</p>	<p>The overall approach to mitigation is discussed in this chapter. Specific mitigation measures are reported in each relevant technical chapter and are summarised in Chapter 16: Schedule of Mitigation.</p>



Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the proposed development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the proposed development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Where appropriate, the description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for the proposed response to such emergencies.	<p>The proposed development is not located in an area of natural disasters, such as extreme weather events. The construction and the operation of the proposed development will be managed within the requirements of a number of health and safety regulations, including the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.</p> <p>Nonetheless, Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker and Other Issues considers the risk to Human Health as a result of such events.</p> <p>The issue of peat slide and flood risk are considered in Chapter 10: Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology.</p>
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1 to 8	A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is presented as Volume 1 of this EIA Report.
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments in the EIA report	Reference lists are provided in each chapter (Chapters 6 to 15).

5.3.1 Legislation and Guidance

The EIA has been completed in accordance with the latest regulations and advice on best practice, including the following:

- The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- Scottish Government, Good Practice Guidance for Applications under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 2022.
- Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Scottish Government Planning Circular 1/2017: Guidance on The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017;
- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2004) Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment; and
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2018) Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidance for Competent Authorities, Consultees and other involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment Process in Scotland (5th Edition).

5.4 EIA and the Design Process

To optimise effectiveness, the EIA is treated as an iterative process throughout the design stage, as opposed to a standalone, post-design environmental assessment. This allowed the findings from the EIA to be utilised during the design process, to provide an optimal design with consideration to the Applicant's requirements and the environment. Where potentially adverse environmental effects were identified through preliminary investigations, or later in the detailed EIA, consideration was given as to how the project design could be altered to design out adverse environmental effects, or where this was not possible, to identify appropriate mitigation. This process is explained further in **Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives**; and in the subsequent technical assessment chapters (Chapters 6 to 15).



5.5 Determining the Scope of the EIA Report

The purpose of scoping is to:

- obtain baseline information regarding current environmental site conditions;
- establish key environmental issues and identify potential effects to be considered during the EIA;
- identify those issues which are likely to require more in depth study and those which can be justifiably excluded from further assessment;
- provide a means of confirming the most appropriate methods of assessment; and
- ensure that statutory consultees and other bodies with a particular interest in the environment such as community councils are informed of the proposal and provided with an opportunity to make an input at an early stage in the EIA process.

A scoping opinion request was submitted to the Scottish Ministers by the Applicant in November 2021 for the proposed development. The request was made under regulation 7 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, and the Scottish Ministers' scoping opinion was subsequently issued in March 2022.

Since scoping the maximum number of turbines proposed has remained at 16, with a tip height not exceeding 200m, although significant design iterations have taken place within the design envelope (see **Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Evolution**).

This EIA report is based upon the responses received from the scoping exercise.

5.6 Approach and Methods

5.6.1 Introduction

The assessments that have been undertaken as part of the EIA have been based upon the Site and relevant study areas. The Site is the area contained within the redline application boundary shown on **Figure 1.2**. Relevant study areas are determined for each technical discipline and described within the relevant technical chapters (Chapters 6 to 15).

The EIA Regulations require a description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in Section 5.3 above. Any such effects are identified in the relevant technical chapters (Chapters 6 to 15).

Full details of the assessment methodology used by technical disciplines in this EIA Report are provided in each chapter (Chapters 6 to 15). In general terms, assessment criteria have been used to evaluate environmental effects. Significance is generally determined through a combination of the sensitivity of a receptor to an effect and the magnitude of the change. This process is outlined as follows:

- identification of baseline conditions of the Site and its environs, including the sensitivity of receptors which may be affected by changes in the baseline conditions;
- consideration of the magnitude of potential changes (impact) in the environmental baseline;
- assessment of the significance of effect taking account of the sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of impact;
- identification of appropriate mitigation measures; and
- assessment of significance of residual effects taking account of any mitigation measures.

Where significant environmental effects are predicted in the EIA process, the EIA Report provides mitigation measures which would be employed to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy these significant effects. Mitigation measures can be in the form of changes to operational practice, or



changes/additions to the proposed design. EIA also considers positive changes or enhancements as a result of the proposed development.

The above approach does not apply to all disciplines addressed in the EIA Report, and alternative approaches are described and justified in the relevant technical chapters. In most cases these differences are based on guidance from technical discipline industry bodies and institutions.

5.6.2 Baseline Conditions

A fundamental aspect of EIA is to determine the baseline environmental conditions prevailing at the Site. These form the benchmark against which predicted changes resultant from the proposed development are assessed to determine the magnitude of any impact. The baseline conditions have been determined by a number of different methods, including desktop studies, Site surveys, use of analytical models and the acquisition of data from third parties.

The assessment of each environmental parameter was undertaken in comparison to baseline conditions. This describes the existing environmental conditions at the Site (and in the wider area as pertinent to the particular environmental parameter). Where relevant, the future baseline is considered where changes are considered certain or likely to happen, including nearby consented renewable energy proposals which are not yet present but are expected to be constructed.

The sensitivity of the baseline conditions has been defined according to the relative sensitivity of existing environmental features on or in the vicinity of the Site, or by the sensitivity of receptors which would potentially be affected by the proposed development. Criteria for the determination of sensitivity or importance have been established based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The criteria for each environmental parameter are outlined in the EIA Report according to the technical subject area.

The baseline for the majority of the Site, being upland grazing land, is a relatively static environment with mainly seasonal vegetation changes to note. This relatively static nature of the baseline environment is an important factor when considering the sensitivity of the baseline conditions to change.

Relevant wind farms that are operational or under construction are considered to be part of the baseline for the purposes of this EIA Report, unless specifically stated otherwise within relevant technical chapters.

5.6.3 Consultation

Consultation has formed an integral part of the EIA process and both the EIA team, and the applicant has contacted a number of statutory and non-statutory consultees to determine their views on the proposed development, collect baseline information and refine survey methodologies. Replies received in response to Scoping are detailed within the relevant technical chapters of the EIA Report. Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant consultees for the technical disciplines and is reported in the topic specific chapters of the EIA Report.

Consultation with the local community was undertaken through public exhibition events held in March 2022 and August 2023 and subsequent consultation periods. The information presented at these events, including the feedback form, was also made available online for those who could not attend in person or who preferred to view the information in their own time. Further details about the events, including the feedback received and attendance numbers, can be found in the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report submitted as part of the application for consent for the proposed development.

5.6.4 Assessment of Effects

Throughout the assessment, a distinction has been made between the term 'impact' and 'effect'. The EIA Regulations refer to the requirement to report the significance of 'effects'. An impact has been defined as the physical change of the characteristics of the receiving environment as a result of the proposed development (e.g. noise from turbines), whereas an effect refers to the significance of this impact (e.g. a significant residual noise effect on residential properties). These terms have



been adopted throughout this EIA Report to present a consistent approach to the assessment and evaluation of effects and their significance.

The assessment of potential effects, using a range of appropriate methodologies, takes into account the construction and operation of the proposed development in relation to the Site and its environs. Methodologies for predicting the nature and magnitude of any potential environmental impacts vary according to the technical subject area and are described in the relevant chapter. Numerical or quantitative methods of assessment are used to predict values which can be compared against published thresholds and indicative criteria contained in relevant guidance and standards.

Not all technical subject areas are capable of being assessed numerically or quantitatively, and thus qualitative assessments are used in certain cases. Such assessments rely on previous experience of similar projects, environments and professional judgement of experienced and qualified professionals as detailed in **Chapter 1: Introduction**.

5.6.5 Sensitivity of Receptors

Criteria for the determination of sensitivity (e.g. 'high', 'medium', or 'low') or of importance (e.g. 'international', 'national', 'regional' or 'authority area') have been established based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The criteria for each technical discipline are provided in the relevant chapter of the EIA Report.

5.6.6 Magnitude of Change (Impact)

The magnitude of change or impact on environmental baseline conditions is identified through detailed consideration of the proposed development, taking due cognisance of any legislative or policy standards or guidelines, and / or the following factors:

- the nature of the change to which the environment would be affected, e.g. whether the quality is enhanced or impaired;
- the scale or degree of change from the baseline situation;
- whether the impact is temporary or permanent, indirect or direct, short term, medium term or long term;
- any in-combination effects; and
- potential cumulative effects.

In some cases, the likelihood of impact occurrence may also be relevant, and where this is a determining feature of the assessment this will be clearly stated.

5.6.7 Mitigation, Enhancement, Monitoring

Mitigation is considered as an integral part of the overall design strategy for the proposed development, as part of an iterative EIA process. Embedded mitigation refers to environmental measures that have been integrated into the design of the project (for example altering and refining the layout of the proposed development to reduce landscape and visual impact, watercourse crossings or avoid sensitive species and habitats) rather than relying solely on 'add-on' measures to prevent, reduce or remedy any remaining significant environmental effects.

The applicant adopts an iterative approach whereby mitigation is assessed and considered at all stages of the project. The final design of the proposed development has evolved over the project planning lifetime as demonstrated in **Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Alternatives**, with the project design systematically being optimised during the EIA process in response to increasing knowledge of the Site and potential environmental effects.

Some of the environmental measures described within Chapters 6 to 15 of this EIA Report do not respond directly to likely significant adverse effects but have been included as good practice to reduce the level of adverse effects (or enhance the level of beneficial effects) of the proposed development. Where relevant, these good practice and enhancement measures are described in the technical chapters.



Where significant environmental effects are predicted, the EIA Report provides additional measures which would be employed to eliminate or ameliorate the effect. Mitigation measures may include the adoption of alternatives and changes/additions to design management or operation to prevent, reduce or, where possible, offset any adverse significant effects.

In some cases, whilst mitigation of a specific significant effect may not be possible, it may be appropriate to provide other benefits such as replacement habitat for that which has been disturbed or lost due to the construction of the proposed development. The adoption of such environmental compensation measures may be used to offset a significant effect and can be effective in reducing the level of adverse effect, or indeed achieving a positive effect, for the project as a whole.

Where appropriate, the EIA Report sets out details of any post-consent monitoring which is proposed. This includes, where appropriate, proposals to measure the effectiveness of the identified mitigation measures.

5.6.8 Summary of Significance

Assessing the significance of effects is based on consideration of the magnitude of the change (impact) relative to the baseline conditions and the sensitivity of the receptor.

The significance of an effect is derived from an analysis of:

- the sensitivity of the receiving environment or receptor to change, including its capacity to accommodate the kinds of changes the proposed development may bring about;
- the amount and type of change, often referred to as magnitude of the potential impact which includes the timing, scale, size and duration of the impact;
- the likelihood of the impact occurring - which may range from certainty to a remote possibility;
- the duration of the effect;
- the geographical extent of the effect; and
- the reversibility of the effect.

There is no general definition of what constitutes significance. In EIA, the term significance reflects both its literal meaning of 'importance' and its statistical meaning where there is an element of quantification. This combination of judgemental/subjective and quantifiable/objective tests has become the standard approach to understanding and applying the test of 'significance'.

The level of effect that is adjudged to be 'significant' is defined in each of the technical chapters. Any effects associated with the proposed development are considered to be negative or adverse except where it is stated that they are positive or beneficial.

5.6.9 Consideration of Cumulative Effects

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the assessment has considered 'cumulative effects' that might arise from the proposed development in conjunction with other similar projects that are in development, i.e. projects that are not reported in the baseline but have a reasonable expectation of being developed ('reasonably foreseeable'). Likely cumulative effects have been defined for this EIA as the likely effects that the proposed development may have in combination with other renewable energy developments in the local area which are at application stage or consented but not yet under construction or operational. Cumulative effects are addressed as appropriate throughout Chapters 6 to 15 of this EIA Report.

The study area for considering cumulative effects is specific to each technical discipline and established in each technical chapter. The technical discipline which considers the largest cumulative study area is Landscape and Visual, which has considered cumulative effects within approximately 45km from the Site. **Table 5.2** presents a list of cumulative developments within 25km proposed to be included in the EIA Report which includes single turbines. Outwith 25km it is proposed to only include larger wind farms in the cumulative assessment, as per the list at **Table 5.3**.



A cut-off date for the approach to, and inclusion of cumulative renewable energy developments was set at 31 July 2023 in the Stage 1 Gatecheck Report unless specifically stated otherwise within relevant technical chapters.

Table 5.2 Cumulative Wind Farms within 25km

Site Name	Distance (m)	Number of Turbines	Blade Tip Height
Operational			
Balnagoon	2,156	1	70
Netherton Of Windyhills Grange Crossroads	2,262	2	92.5
Myreton Crossroads	2,709	3	79.6
Newton Of Edingight	5,624	1	80
Muirake	8,632	2	99.5
Edintore	9,410	6	125
Hill of Towie I	9,872	21	100
Mains Of Auchinderran	14,086	3	79.6
Cairnborrow	14,530	5	100
Drumdelgie House	15,497	2	55.4
Deuchries	17,034	3	100
Roths I & II	23,237	18+ 28	100 + 125
Dummuies	23,303	7	80
Shielburn Farm	24,184	5	71
Huntly Community	24,188	1	84
Clashindarroch Forest	24,725	18	110
Glens Of Foudland	24,746	20	78
Dorenell	24,788	95	126
Consented			
Lurg Hill	2,884	3	130
Hill of Towie II	12,096	16	125
Deuchries II	16,942	3	119
Garbet	19,584	7	190
Hunt Hill & Extension	20,462	4	67
Roths III	21,112	29	149.5 - 225
Clashindarroch II	22,953	14	180
A J Duncan Newton Of Fortrie	24,589	2	99.5
In Planning			
Craig Watch	20,169	11	200
Clashindarroch Extension	24,570	22	180
Scoping			
Teindland	11,905	17	180
Kellas	22,542	10	200



Site Name	Distance (m)	Number of Turbines	Blade Tip Height
Glenfiddich	23,168	11	200

Table 5.3: Cumulative Wind Farms beyond 25km (single turbines excluded)

Site Name	Distance	Number of Turbines	Blade Tip Height
Operational			
Little Whiterashes Farm	26,105	3	80
Mains of Hatton	27,189	3	76
Backhill Of Yonderton	27,593	3	99.5
Milton Of Fisherie	27,792	3	99.5
Hill of Tillymorgan	29,344	3	100
Gordonstown Hill	30,057	5	100
Cairnhill Farm	30,512	3	76
Land at Easter	30,613	3	79
Castle of Auchry Farm	30,998	3	74
Upper Wheedlemont Farm	31,121	3	81
Paul Hill I	32,575	28	100
Cairnmore	32,848	3	81
Berry Burn	33,926	29	0
Little Byth New Byth	34,690	3	80
Crannabog Farm	34,819	6	79
Kildrummy	35,355	8	93
Greenhill Croft	37,084	3	98.14
Hill of Glaschyle	38,232	12	99.5
St Johns Wells Extension	38,302	3	79.6
St Johns Well	38,794	5	79.6
Mackies Hill	38,953	2	75
Methlick Farmers	39,681	3	93.5
Balquhindachy	40,978	3	75
Skelmonae	44,988	8	77 & 92.5 - 99.5
Meikle Hill (under construction)	26,535	9	80
Cornabo (under construction)	43,520	3	74
Consented			
Clash Gour	30,475	48	136.6 - 176
Paul Hill II	31,308	7	134 - 149.9
North Haddo	33,068	2	74
Berry Burn Ext	33,534	9	149.9
Fyvie Community	34,593	3	67
Cairn Duhie	45,174	20	110



Site Name	Distance	Number of Turbines	Blade Tip Height
Moray West Offshore	46,745	67	262
In Planning			
Ourack	37,819	18	180
Cairn Duhie (Tip Height Increase)	45,121	16	149.9

5.6.10 Data Gaps, Assumptions, Limitations and Technical Difficulties

The EIA process is designed to enable informed decision-making based on the best available information about the environmental implications of a proposed development. However, there will always be some level of uncertainty inherent in the scale and nature of predicted environmental effects and so a number of assumptions have been made during preparation of the EIA Report, which are set out here. Assumptions specific to certain environmental aspects are discussed in the relevant technical chapters of the EIA Report.

Assumptions made during the EIA include:

- the principal land uses adjacent to the Site would remain as they are at the time of the EIA Report submission. In the case of nearby renewable energy projects that are currently in planning or consented but not yet developed, these are included in the cumulative effects assessment;
- proposed renewable energy projects that are not yet in the planning system are not included within the cumulative projects assessed in this EIA Report; and
- information provided by third parties, including publicly available information and databases, is correct at the time of publication.

The assessment has been subject to the following limitations:

- where baseline conditions have been subject to physical surveys the data is considered accurate at that date but, owing to the dynamic nature of the environment, conditions may change during the consenting, construction and operational phases;
- where access to parts of the Site was restricted this has been clearly laid out in the relevant chapter; and
- the assessment of cumulative effects has been reliant on the availability of information on other developments.

There is also the potential for a degree of uncertainty as certain aspects of the proposed development may be subject to change until a detailed design has been finalised. This uncertainty can come in the forms of:

- turbine selection;
- foundation and infrastructure design; and
- micro-siting of the turbines and associated infrastructure which may change due to investigation findings or implementation of mitigation measures.

5.7 References

IEMA (2017). Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment.

Scottish Government (2022). Good Practice Guidance for Applications under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Scottish Government (2017). The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended).



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