

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared by RES Limited (RES) and Ramboll Environment and Health Limited (Ramboll) on behalf of SIMEC Wind One Ltd (a company registered under the Companies Acts with company number 10060100 and having its registered office at West Nash Road, Newport, Gwent, United Kingdom, NP18 2BZ) (the Applicant) in support of an application under s36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for consent to construct and operate a wind farm of over 50 MW. The proposal will comprise 39 turbines with an anticipated total capacity of 168 MW on the Glenshero Estate at a site located approximately 8 km west of the village of Laggan, in the Highlands ("the proposed development"). The site location is shown in EIAR Volume 3: Figure 1.1.
- 1.1.2 This chapter is supported by the following figures and technical appendices:
- Figure 1.1: Site Location;
 - Technical Appendix 1.1: Consultation Register; and
 - Technical Appendix 1.2: Technical Team.
- 1.1.3 Figures and technical appendices are referenced in the Main Report where relevant.
- 1.1.4 The EIAR comprises four volumes:
- Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary (NTS);
 - Volume 2: Main Report;
 - Volume 3: Figures; and
 - Volume 4: Technical Appendices.

1.2 Purpose of the EIAR

- 1.2.1 This EIAR has been prepared to support the proposed development, in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations'). An EIAR is required where a development is an EIA development, that is a development which is *"likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location."*
- 1.2.2 The Applicant has considered the proposed development in light of the EIA Regulations and concluded that, due to the nature and scale of the proposals and the potential for significant environmental effects, this is an EIA development.
- 1.2.3 Each of the technical chapters of the EIAR provides the specific criteria, including sources and justifications, for quantifying the different levels of effect. Where possible, this has been based upon quantitative and accepted criteria together with the use of value judgements and expert interpretations to establish to what extent an effect is environmentally significant. The threshold at which effects are likely to be "significant" is defined in each of the technical chapters.

1.3 Other Planning Documents

- 1.3.1 Additional documents that will be submitted with this application includes:
- Socio-economic & Tourism Impact Assessment;

- Planning Statement, which includes a Design and Access Statement (Appendix 3 of the Planning Statement);
- Pre-application Consultation Report; and
- Cover Letter, confirming deposit locations for the EIAR.

1.4 EIA Process

Scoping

- 1.4.1 The Applicant submitted a request for a Scoping Opinion from the Scottish Ministers on 14 November 2017. This request was accompanied by a Scoping Report, prepared by the Applicant, which set out a summary of the proposed development; identified the likely significant environmental effects, and summarised the proposed scope of the EIA. The Scoping Report was simultaneously issued to a list of statutory and non-statutory consultees which were agreed with the Energy Consents Unit (ECU).
- 1.4.2 A Scoping Opinion was received from the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on 13 February 2018. The contents of the scoping consultation responses are summarised in EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendix 1.1: Scoping Consultation Register, along with a list of all bodies consulted during the scoping exercise.

Consultation

- 1.4.3 In addition to seeking a Scoping Opinion, the Applicant conducted two public exhibitions, to seek the views of the local community. Exhibitions were held, as follows:
- 20th November 2017, Laggan Village Hall; and
 - 21st November 2017, Fort Augustus Village Hall.
- 1.4.4 These events were advertised in advance in the Strathspey & Badenoch Herald and the Press & Journal (North) on 9th November 2017. Letters were issued to Local MSPs, Councillors and Community Councils notifying them of the event and leaflets were distributed to around 900 properties located within a 15 km radius of the site centre on the 11 November 2017. A project website (<http://www.glenshero-windfarm.co.uk>) was also set up to allow access to further information on the proposal and to allow comments to be made online. These events were attended by 56 people at the Laggan event and 14 people in Fort Augustus.
- 1.4.5 In addition, the Applicant engaged with all local community councils as detailed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Community Council Log	
Community Group	Meeting Date(s)
Laggan Community Association	12.10.17 / 05.02.18 / 09.05.18/ 14.06.18/ 23.08.18
Stratherick & Foyers CC	28.11.17
Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston CC	29.11.17
Strathdearn CC	09.01.18
Newtonmore CC	13.10.17 (met with CC Chair)

- 1.4.6 RES also conducted a door-knocking exercise in Laggan village in November 2017. For residents that were present the project was discussed and if residents were out a letter introducing the project and contact details were left.
- 1.4.7 A summary of the representations received during the public exhibitions is provided in the Pre-Application Consultation Report.
- 1.4.8 Further detail on the key issues identified through the scoping and consultation process are described in EIAR Volume 2: Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives.

Baseline Characterisation

- 1.4.9 Baseline characterisation is the process by which the environmental conditions now and in the future assuming no development on the site are established. The process has included a combination of desk research, site survey and empirical study and projection.
- 1.4.10 The environmental baseline adopted for the purposes of the EIA is stated in each of the technical assessment chapters provided in the EIAR. The baseline is normally taken as the current character and condition of the site and surrounds, and the likely significant environmental effects of the development are then assessed in the context of the current conditions.
- 1.4.11 The access track for the Glenshero Wind Farm is presented on EIAR Volume 3: Figure 2.1 and shows that access to the site would be via the consented Stronelaig Wind Farm. A small section of the track between Stronelaig Wind Farm and Glenshero Wind Farm is called the 'link road'. It should be noted that the Stronelaig Wind Farm consent requires the restoration of the link road. Therefore, for the purposes of the EIA baseline, it is assumed that the link road will be reinstated prior to construction of Glenshero Wind Farm. However, it is the intention that the proposed track between Glenshero Wind Farm and Stronelaig Wind Farm would follow the route of the link road track to minimise disturbance to new areas of ground. For the purposes of Glenshero Wind Farm, this link road track is considered new track.

Mitigation by Design and Consideration of Alternatives

- 1.4.12 Following the baseline characterisation, the information collected on environmental constraints was used to inform the consideration of design alternatives. An iterative process was followed, whereby the Applicant considered a range of turbine layouts, heights and access proposals. The aim of the design element of the EIAR process was to develop an optimal solution which seeks to maximise potential renewable energy generation, within technical and environmental constraints. The main aim has been to avoid likely potential significant environmental effects through design. Further details on the design process adopted in the development of the proposed Glenshero Wind Farm are presented in EIAR Volume 2: Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives.

Impact Assessment

- 1.4.13 The next stage in the EIA process was to complete an impact assessment to address the likely significant effects remaining following the implementation of mitigation by design. An assessment chapter has been provided for each issue where it is considered that there are likely significant effects associated with the construction, operation, decommissioning or restoration phases of the proposed development. Each assessment chapter considers primary, secondary, direct, indirect and cumulative effects and defines the assessment methodology used and the criteria by which a significant effect is defined.

Additional Mitigation

- 1.4.14 The impact assessment is used to identify where additional mitigation is required to address likely significant adverse effects, where it has not been possible to avoid the effect through design of the turbine or infrastructure layout. Mitigation has been considered following a hierarchy of first seeking to avoid effects, followed by seeking a reduction in effects to level not considered significant, and finally where necessary and possible, offsetting or compensatory measures are considered.

Statement of Competence

- 1.4.15 In accordance with regulation 5(5) of the EIA Regulations, by appointing Ramboll the Applicant has ensured that the EIAR has been prepared by 'competent experts'. The EIAR has been compiled and approved by professional EIAR practitioners at Ramboll, holding relevant undergraduate and post-graduate degrees, membership of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and Chartered Environmentalist status with the Society for the Environment. The EIAR meets the requirements of the IEMA EIA Quality Mark Scheme. This is voluntary scheme operated by IEMA that allows organisations to make a commitment to excellence in EIA and to have this commitment independently reviewed on an annual basis.
- 1.4.16 The project team comprises the companies presented in Table 1.2 below. CVs for the lead author of technical reports is included in EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendix 1.2 and each of the impact assessment chapters provides details of the relevant professional memberships of the author, code or practice followed and assessment methodology used.

Table 1.2: Project Team	
Team Member	Role & Responsibility
RES	Project Developer, Project Engineers and Noise
Ramboll	EIA Project Management and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Jones Lang LaSalle	Planning
MacArthur Green	Ecology, Ornithology & Peat (excluding peat slide risk)
SLR	Peat Slide Risk
Headland Archaeology	Archaeology
WYG	Transport
Biggar Economics	Socio-economics

- 1.4.17 The process and outcomes of the report are presented in a single document, known as the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). This EIAR has been prepared to provide clear and concise information on the likely significant environmental effects associated with the proposed development. The EIAR includes descriptions of the likely significant effects; and, it also describes the residual effects that remain following the implementation of mitigation. The EIAR provides environmental information, in accordance with EIA regulations, to inform the environmental impact assessment required to be carried out in respect of this application for consent for this wind farm development under s36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

1.4.18 The EIAR is submitted to:

The Scottish Ministers
Energy Consents Unit
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

1.4.19 A copy has also been sent to The Highland Council as Planning Authority.

1.5 Copies of the EIAR

1.5.1 Further information is available on the project website (<http://www.glenshero-windfarm.co.uk>) and hard copies of the EIAR and other documentation can be viewed at the following locations:

The Highland Council,
Inverness Service Point,
Town House, High Street
Inverness,
IV1 1JJ

Laggan Stores Coffee Bothy & Gallery
Laggan,
Newtonmore,
Inverness-shire,
PH20 1AH

The Highland Council,
Fort Augustus Service Point,
Memorial Hall,
Fort Augustus,
PH32 4DJ

1.5.2 An electronic version of the EIAR and statements supporting the Application will be available to download from www.glenshero-windfarm.co.uk. This document is available at a cost of £400 in hard copy format (including postage and packaging) or on CD-ROM (price £15). A Non-Technical Summary of the EIAR is available free of charge from the Applicant on request.

1.5.3 Copies of the EIAR can be obtained from:

RES Limited
3rd Floor, STV
Pacific Quay
Glasgow
G51 1PQ

1.6 Commenting on the Application

- 1.6.1 When the application for the proposed development is lodged with Scottish Government the Applicant will advertise the application in the Edinburgh Gazette, a national newspaper and a local newspaper, providing details of by when representations should be made. The ECU will invite formal representations on the proposal, which will be taken into account before any decision is reached on the application.
- 1.6.2 Any representations in relation to the application should be made by email to the Scottish Government, 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. Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations.