Chapter 1: Introduction

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

1.1.1 GB Wind Farm Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') proposes to install and operate up to seven wind turbines, a battery energy storage system (BESS) and ancillary infrastructure (Giant's Burn Wind Farm, hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development') on land (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') approximately 1.3 km north-west of Dunoon and 1.5 km south-west of Sandbank as shown on Figure 1.1[1]. The Site is shown on Figure 1.2 as the area encompassed by the Site Boundary.

1.1.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the Argyll and Bute Council area (within the Kilmun, Dunoon and Sandbank Community Council areas), centred on BNG 213806, 678515. The Proposed Development is being developed by the Applicant, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Limited. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in Chapter 3.

1.1.3 A team of consultants, led by Green Cat Renewables Ltd (GCR) have been appointed to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), to evaluate and assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The results are presented in this EIA Report.

1.1.4 For the purposes of the EIA, the height of the proposed turbines has been assessed as five turbines up to 200 m to blade tip and two turbines up to 180 m to blade tip in an upright position. It is expected that each wind turbine would be rated at approximately 7.2 MW giving an anticipated total installed capacity of approximately 50.4 MW. This equates to enough power for over 58,212 average Scottish households[2], which would be a significant contribution to the green energy requirements in the Argyll and Bute Council area. However, it is likely that wind turbines with a rating greater than 7.2 MW would be available at the time of procurement and construction, given the rapid evolution of onshore wind technology. A battery energy storage system (BESS) is also proposed, with a rate power of approximately 23 MW giving a total site capacity of over 73 MW.

1.1.5 As the Proposed Development would have a generating capacity in excess of 50 MW, the Applicant is submitting an application under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU). As part of this process, deemed planning permission is also sought under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended.

1.1.6 The precise route of the grid connection for the Proposed Development has not yet been determined. The grid connection will be a separate application to this one. The Section 37 application would be progressed by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN).

1.2 Purpose of the EIA Report

1.2.1 The EIA has been undertaken in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).

1.2.2 Where a development falls within one of the descriptions in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment then an EIA is required to be submitted with the application for consent. The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 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."

1.2.3 Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations lists the 'selection criteria' which must be taken into account 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 a proposed development, the characteristics of potential impacts of the development and consequently, whether the project is likely to have to have significant effects on the environment.

1.2.4 For those developments listed under Schedule 2, the requirement for an EIA can be determined via a screening request made to Scottish Ministers. In this case, a screening request to Scottish Ministers was not sought, since it was acknowledged at an early stage, given consideration of the Site, its nature, location and the characteristics of the intended Proposed Development, that an EIA would be required.

1.2.5 Establishing which aspects of the environment and associated issues are relevant for a particular project is captured in the EIA Scoping process. The Scoping process identifies those aspects of the environment and associated issues which may be significantly affected by any proposed development and therefore should be subject to detailed assessment and reported in an EIA Report. An EIA Scoping

[1] All figures are provided in Volume 3a of the EIA Report.

[2] Based on a 50.4 MW Installed Capacity, wind resource assessment and average Scottish domestic consumption of 3,099 Kwhpa (DESNZ 2023). Candidate turbine still to be confirmed.

Report[3] for the Proposed Development setting out the proposed scope of the EIA Report was submitted to the ECU in February 2024 with a request for a formal Scoping Opinion. A Scoping Opinion[4] was subsequently issued by the ECU on 10 May 2024. The Scoping exercise for the Proposed Development is detailed in Chapter 4.

1.2.6 Regulation 3 of the EIA Regulations prohibits the Scottish Ministers from granting Section 36 consent for EIA development unless they have first carried out an environmental impact assessment and taken the environmental information, including that provided in the EIA Report into account.

1.2.7 This EIA Report presents the findings of the EIA process by describing the Proposed Development, the current conditions at the Site, consideration of reasonable alternatives studied by the Applicant, design evolution, predicted future change in the absence of the Proposed Development and the likely significant environmental effects which are predicted to result from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development, as well as any cumulative effects with other developments in the vicinity of the Site that are operational, under construction, or in the planning system.

1.2.8 Where appropriate, mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed, and any residual impacts are reported including where beneficial effects on biodiversity can be achieved in line with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Further details on the requirements for, and the approach to, undertaking the EIA are set out in Chapter 4. References are provided at the end of each technical assessment (Chapters 5 – 14) and a Non-Technical Summary is included in Volume 1 of this EIA Report.

1.3 The Applicant

1.3.1 The Applicant, GB Wind Farm Limited, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Limited (Statkraft).

1.3.2 Statkraft is a leading company in hydropower internationally and Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power and solar power, generating 62 TWh of renewable electricity in 2024. Statkraft also provides energy storage and grid stability services and is a global company in energy market operations. The company has 7,000 employees in over 20 countries.

1.3.3 Statkraft is at the heart of the UK's energy transition. Since 2006, Statkraft has gone from strength to strength in the UK, building experience across wind, solar, hydro, storage, grid stability, EV charging, green hydrogen and a thriving markets business. Statkraft has invested over £1.3 billion into the UK's renewable energy infrastructure and facilitated over 4GW of new-build renewable energy generation through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). Statkraft develops, constructs, owns and operates renewable facilities across the UK and employs over 600 people in offices across Scotland, England and Wales.

1.3.4 Further information about Statkraft can be found at www.statkraft.co.uk.

1.4 EIA Project Team and Competency

1.4.1 This EIA has been led by GCR with input from other specialist technical and environmental consultants.

1.4.2 GCR is an environmental and engineering consultancy focused on all aspects of development support, based in Scotland. With a team of over 100 staff spread across four offices, the company's multi-disciplinary resource base spans all stages of project delivery from feasibility and concept development through to planning, engineering, project management and operational asset management.

1.4.3 While much of the company's experience is within the renewable sector, GCR's emphasis is on supporting farmers, landowners and developers in a wide range of renewable projects. GCR have also developed expertise in helping a range of businesses find sustainable energy solutions to aid economic viability in a climate where energy costs are forecast to continue to rise.

1.4.4 The GCR EIA team brings a diverse skill-set that includes planning, environmental and technical expertise, and is comprised of Project Managers, planners, consultants, environmentalists, engineers, acousticians, CAD technicians, hydrologists and resource analysts.

1.4.5 Further information on GCR Limited can be found on its corporate website at www.greencatrenewables.co.uk.

[3] ECU reference ECU00005007 Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Search

[4] The full scoping opinion can be read on the ECU website here: Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Details

1.4.6 For the Application for the Proposed Development, GCR is responsible for the following technical disciplines:

- Geology, Hydrology and Peat;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Noise; and
- Other issues (shadow flicker, carbon balance and telecommunications).

1.4.7 Other technical and environmental work has been undertaken by the following consultancies with output coordinated by GCR:

- David Bell Planning;
- Abseline;
- AOC Archaeology Group;
- Land Use Consultants (LUC);
- Natural Research;
- Pell Frischmann;
- McKay Forestry; and
- Wind Power Aviation Consultants (WPAC).

1.4.8 GCR confirms that the technical experts who have carried out the EIA and produced the EIA Report have the skills, relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake the EIA for the Proposed Development. Table 1.1 demonstrates the relevant competency for each technical discipline covered in this EIA Report.

Table 1.1 – Technical Disciplines and Competencies

Discipline	Consultancy	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
EIA Project Management	GCR	Corey Simpson Dugald Macgregor	BA (Hons) BSc (Hons)	10+ 2
Climate Change, Energy and Planning Policy	David Bell Planning	David Bell	BSc (Hons) DipUD MCIHT MRTPI	30+
Landscape and Visual	Abseline	Mary Fisher Mark Evans	Chartered Landscape Architects	Over 22 years of experience
Ornithology	Natural Research	Blair Urquhart	Diploma in Conservation Management	20+
Ecology	LUC	Anna Dennis Ellen McMurchy	MSc, MSc, BA (Hons), ACIEEM BSc (Hons)	10 5
Geology, Hydrology, and Peat	GCR	Ciara Morton Rory Harkness	BSc (Hons), AIEMA BEng (Hons), PIEMA	2+ 2
Cultural Heritage	AOC Archaeology Group	Victoria Oleksy Anne Marot	BA (Hons), MA, MCIfA. BA, MA, ACIfA	20 10
Site Access	Pell Frischmann	Gordon Buchan	BEng (Hons) MSc CEng FCIHT, MCILT	28
Traffic and Transport	GCR	Andrew MacLean	BA (Hons), MSc	2+
Noise	GCR	Merlin Garnett Paul Hawthorne	MSc, MIOA BSc (Hons), AMIOA	12 2
Forestry	McKay Forestry	Neil McKay	National Diploma in Forestry MICFor	15+
Aviation	WPAC	John Taylor	Commander, ATC, Royal Navy, Expert Witness at PLI	30+
Shadow Flicker	GCR	Cameron Sutherland Paul Hawthorne	MSci, MSc, Diploma in Acoustics BSc(Hons), AMIOA	20+ 2
Design	GCR	Christopher Thompson	HND CADD	8+

1.5 Structure of the EIA

1.5.1 The EIA Report is presented in four volumes as follows:

- Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary (NTS): The NTS provides a non-technical overview of the EIA Report and is intended for review by the general public. It includes a description of the Proposed Development and a summary of the predicted environmental effects.
- Volume 2: EIA Report:
  - Chapter 1: Introduction;
  - Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution;
  - Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development;
  - Chapter 4: Approach to EIA;
  - Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual;
  - Chapter 6: Ecology;
  - Chapter 7: Ornithology;
  - Chapter 8: Geology, Hydrology and Peat;
  - Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage;
  - Chapter 10: Traffic and Transport;
  - Chapter 11: Noise;
  - Chapter 12: Forestry
  - Chapter 13: Aviation;
  - Chapter 14: Other Considerations; and
  - Chapter 15: Schedule of Commitments.
- Volume 3: EIA Report Figures: The EIA Report Figures are separated out into two sub-volumes as follows:
  - Volume 3a: Figures to support Chapters 1-15 of the EIA;
  - Volume 3b: Proposed Development Visualisations – Landscape viewpoints 1 – 24 and Heritage Viewpoints 1 - 18; and
- Volume 4: EIA Report Technical Appendices: The Technical Appendices that are referred to in each chapter of the EIA Report are compiled separately in Volume 4. They are numbered sequentially for each of the chapters in which they are principally referred to.

1.6 Publicity of the EIA Report

1.6.1 The EIA Report will be published in accordance with Part 5 of the EIA Regulations and Part 4 of the Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990 (as amended).

1.6.2 A notice will be published as follows:

- on the project website www.giants-burn.co.uk
- once in the Edinburgh Gazette;
- once in the Herald; and
- in the Dunoon Observer for two successive weeks.

1.6.3 In addition to the statutory requirements for publicising the EIA Report, the Applicant has advised the following local Community Councils that the EIA Report is available:

- Kilmun;
- Dunoon; and
- Sandbank

1.6.4 Hard copies of the EIA Report can be viewed at the following locations during their opening hours:

Table 1.2 - Location of Hard Copies

Location	Opening House	Address
Dunoon Library	Tuesday 9.30 – 16.30 Wednesday 9.30 - 16.30 Thursday 9.30 - 18.30 Friday 9.30 - 13.00 Saturday 9.30 - 13.00	Queen's Hall, 9 Argyll Street, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 7HH
Rothesay Library	Tuesday 9.30 – 16.30 Wednesday 9.30 - 16.30 Thursday 9.30 - 18.30 Friday 9.30 - 13.00 Saturday 9.30 - 13.00	Stuart Street, Rothesay, Isle of Bute, PA20 0BX

1.6.5 A copy of the EIA Report Volumes will be made available for download from the project website at: www.giants-burn.co.uk

1.6.6 Paper copies of the NTS are available free of charge from:

- Address: Freepost Statkraft
- Tel: 0800 7720668
- Email: ukprojects@statkraft.com

1.6.7 Paper copies of the EIA Report may be purchased by arrangement from the above address for £1,500 per copy, or £15 per USB memory stick copy. The price of the paper copy reflects the cost of producing the Landscape and Visual photographs at the recommended size. As such, USB memory stick version is recommended.

1.7 References

HM Government (1989). The Electricity Act 1989. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents. Accessed on 03 June 2025.

HM Government (1990). The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1990/455/made. Accessed on 03 June 2025.

Scottish Executive (1997). Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents. Accessed on 03 June 2025.

Scottish Government (2017). The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/contents/made. Accessed on 03 June 2025.

Scottish Government (2022). Planning Circular 3/2022: development management procedures. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-circular-3-2022-development-management-procedures/pages/3/. Accessed on 03 June 20254.

Scottish Government (2022), National Planning Framework 4. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/. Accessed on 03 June 2025.

Statkraft (2024). Giant's Burn Wind Farm Project Website. Available at: https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/giants-burn/. Accessed on 03 June 2025.