



Cruach Clenamacrie – FAQs

Department: Voltage UK – Development
Project: Cruach Clenamacrie Wind Farm, 65MW

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CRUACH CLENAMACRIE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Summary

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken, which is specific to the proposed Cruach Clenamacrie Wind Farm (the Proposed Development). Scottish based technical experts, in a number of fields, have assessed the potential for the Proposed Development to result in significant impacts. They have also considered the need for mitigation, where required. The findings are presented in the EIA Report and are summarised in the Non-Technical Summary.

The EIA was submitted to Scottish Ministers on 15th November 2024. The consultation period for representations is now closed and the below summarises the comments / themes to date.

1. Ecology, Ornithology, Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

The scopes of the ecological and ornithology works associated with the EIA have been agreed with NatureScot and Argyll and Bute Council. It is considered that it covers all species and habitats that could be significantly effected by the Proposed Development.

Chapters 10 and 11 of the EIA report on the findings of the assessments. Sites designated for biodiversity reasons and protected species are considered and reported as part of this assessment.

Chapter 10 concludes that there would be no significant impact on any site, which is designated for ecological purposes either internationally or nationally, as a result of the Proposed Development.

Chapter 11 of the EIA Report finds that there would be no significant impact on any internationally or nationally designated site for ornithological purposes as a result of the Proposed Development.

NatureScot have been consulted on the Application, as advisors to the Scottish Ministers. For Natural Heritage matters of national interest, NatureScot have not objected to the Proposed Development. It has been accepted that the Proposed Development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Loch Etive Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or any other site which is designated internationally or nationally for natural heritage purposes, provided that the mitigation set out in the EIA Report is in place.

NatureScot's comments relating to ornithology, specifically golden eagle, black grouse and hen harrier, are currently being considered by the Applicant in conjunction with NatureScot.

RSPB have advised that they will not comment on the Application.

Argyll and Bute Council's Biodiversity officer agrees with the findings in the EIAR in relation to sites designated for biodiversity purposes.

2. Impact on Water

Chapter 8 of the EIA Report contains a full assessment of hydrology and hydrogeology, as a result of the Proposed Development. It is concluded that the Proposed Development would not result in any unacceptable impacts on hydrology or hydrogeology.

Private Water Supplies (PWS) are considered specifically. Any mitigation required to ensure that there is not an effect on PWS, would be the subject of a condition should consent be granted.

Impact on water quality has been considered, and where necessary, the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Pollution Prevention Plan (PPP) would contain measures designed to ensure that water quality is not unacceptably impacted by the Proposed Development.

Argyll and Bute Council Flood Risk and Drainage Manager has not objected to the Application.

3. Impact on Peat

On site peat has been carefully mapped via onsite probing by technical experts as part of the EIA process. The impact of the Proposed Development on peat has been assessed and is reported on in the EIA Report at Chapter 9.

NatureScot have responded to the Application but have not made any comment in respect of peat.

SEPA, as advisors to the Scottish Ministers in respect of peat management, have requested further information in this matter, which the Applicant is currently collating. Further consultation with SEPA is ongoing.

4. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

A BESS Safety Management Plan will be produced in line with the latest legislation and best practice, including fire suppression.

Although fire risk at BESS sites is low, any risks will be considered and mitigated through design and operation practices.

5. Impact on Cultural Heritage

An assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage has been undertaken and is reported in the EIA Report at Chapter 7. This chapter acknowledges the important cultural heritage sites within proximity of the Site.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES), as advisors to the Scottish Ministers on historical matters in the national interest, have considered the application and not objected. Impacts experienced on the setting at local monuments are not considered to be severe enough to object. Comments made by HES in respect of mitigation are currently being considered by the Applicant.

6. Impact on Residents / Property

Criteria for Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) and the location of the noise sensitive properties were agreed with Argyll and Bute Council in advance of the assessments being undertaken.

Noise impacts of the Proposed Development are considered to be acceptable at the Noise Assessment Locations (EIA Report figure 8.1) which have been assessed, as agreed. The assessment concluded there would be no unacceptable noise impact on residents, as a result of the Proposed Development. Argyll and Bute Council have, concluded that subject to the confirmation of assessment details, there is no noise related matter for Argyll and Bute Council to object.

A Shadow Flicker assessment is contained in Chapter 15 of the EIA Report. The assessment concluded that the shadow flicker impacts are acceptable. Shadow flicker can only be experienced under certain circumstances, generally within 10 rotor diameters of the turbines.

Impacts on property values, as a result of the Proposed Development, are not historically considered in the decision making process by Scottish Ministers.

7. Loss of Dark Sky's

This area of Argyll is not a designated dark sky area; however, it is recognised that the Proposed Development is located in an area with a limited number of lights. A reduced lighting scheme is proposed to mitigate any effects whilst adhering to the requirements of the Civil Aviation Agency (CAA).

8. Impact on Landscape and Visual

NatureScot, as advisors to the Scottish Ministers on landscape and visual matters in the national interest, have considered the application. They have advised that they do not object to the Application.

NatureScot have provided comments in respect of issues related to landscape, including the impact of the Proposed Development on the Lynn of Lorn National Scenic Area (NSA) which they consider to be a key consideration. The response to the Application from NatureScot is currently being carefully considered by the Applicant.

9. Longevity of Socio-Economic Impacts

Although impacts during construction focus on a short time period, there would be longer term investment through the community benefit fund and operations and maintenance works. These are set out in the Socio-Economic Statement of the EIA report.

In addition to the significant annual commercial rates, paid by the developer, the Applicant is proposing to align with the Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits. This would seek to provide £5,000 per MW per annum (index linked) as a community benefit for the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

10. Impact on Tourism

It is widely accepted that the development of onshore wind in Scotland has not had a detrimental impact on tourism. Indeed, in the promotion of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the issue of tourism was removed from the list to be considered in the context of renewable energy development. It is, however, recognised that impacts on tourism are a matter which features in the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2).

Research shows that there is “no relationship between tourism employment and wind farm development, at the level of the Scottish economy, across local authority areas nor in the locality of wind farm site”. Indeed, the report notes that growth in tourism has been strongest in rural local authorities, including Argyll and Bute. *Windfarms and Tourism Trends in Scotland: Evidence from 44 Wind Farms’, dated 2021

11. Carbon Footprint

The carbon footprint of the Proposed Development has been assessed via the carbon calculator and is reported in Chapter 17 of the EIA Report. This has concluded that the carbon payback time of all the emissions associated with the lifetime operation of the Proposed Development, based on a fossil-fuel mix of electricity generation, is two years and against a grid-mix of electricity generation, it is expected to be 4.1 years.

12. Grid Connection

The connection from the Proposed Development will be the subject of a separate application and does not form part of the Application. The grid connection point will be at the Taynuilt substation. The nature and location of the connection will be determined by Scottish and Southern Energy Networks. This is entirely normal in the case of onshore wind farm developments.

13. About Voltalia

The Applicant, Voltalia UK Ltd, has a long-term commitment and experience in the development of renewable energy projects across the UK. With headquarters in Gloucestershire, England and representation in Edinburgh. Voltalia UK Ltd works across all stages of project development, from planning to the construction and operation of sites.

Voltalia UK Ltd is focused on providing renewable energy schemes to help decarbonise the UK’s electricity generation and combat the climate crisis by supplying an affordable and renewable source of clean energy. In the UK, Voltalia UK Ltd currently operates two ground-mounted solar farms, with four solar sites under construction and a pipeline of wind, solar and storage projects in different stages of the development lifecycle.

The Proposed Development is the first in a series of renewable projects which Voltalia UK Ltd are proposing to construct and operate in Scotland.