EIA Report Chapter 1: Introduction

Monan Repower

Client: Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd
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Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd

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Preface

This Environmental Impact Assessment Report assesses the environmental effects of a three wind turbine repowering at Monan Wind Farm. Further details on the development are provided within this report. The proposal is being brought forward by Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd, the Applicant.

This is an Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the purposes of the Planning EIA Regulations (the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2017) covering the major environmental effects arising from this proposal. This EIA Report includes a description of the proposed development; a comprehensive study of potential environmental impacts during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases; and, where required, mitigation to minimise any potentially adverse impacts.

Green Cat Renewables Ltd (GCR) has been commissioned by Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd.

A copy of the EIA Report can be viewed via the online 'Public Access' service on Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website where representations can be made.

Hard copies of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) are provided for £10 per copy upon request and the full Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for £250 per hard copy, excluding Landscape Graphics and drawings. Electronic copies (CD-ROM) of the EIAR package can be purchased for £10. Please contact:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') is seeking permission for the Proposed Development from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act of 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 to repower the existing Monan Wind Farm, Monan, Ardhasaig (hereinafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development is located at E114204, N904894, as shown on **Planning Drawing C5507-GCR-WF-GA-DR-P-0001.** This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report has been prepared in support of the application to CnES.

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the Proposed Development, as well as providing an overview of the purpose of the EIA Report, its structure, and the project team producing it.

1.1.1 Key Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency through the EIA Report, the following terms are used:

- EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Proposed Development – the proposed Monan Repowering scheme.
- The Application Boundary – the extent of the area relating to the application.
- The Site – the area within the Application Boundary within which the Proposed Development lies.
- The Applicant – Constantine Wind Energy (UK) Ltd
- The Landowner – the owners of the land required for the Proposed Development.

1.2 The Applicant

The Applicant is Constantine Wind Energy (CWE) a leading owner, manager and maintainer of onshore wind turbines, with 199 turbines located throughout Great Britain. These are managed with market leading operational and maintenance expertise and supported by proprietary asset management software.

1.3 The Site

The Application Site, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' is located solely in CnES. The new turbines would be located in close proximity to the current turbine positions and will use the majority of the existing access tracks.

The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is titled as 'Prominent Hills and Mountains'. This LCA is characterised by individual peaks with pronounced summits, long ridges, and slopes, rising steadily from the surrounding terrain. Steep sided corries and short u-shaped glens form an integral part of this character type. The landcover is dominated by a mixture of low moorland, mixed windswept heather with damp rough grassland which gives a course texture surface.

The northern part of the Site where the Proposed Development is located is situated within the Harris – Uig hills Wild Land Area (WLA). The WLA consist of many different landscape elements at a variety of scales, elevation, and pattern. These include open peatland; high rocky mountain ranges; isolated lone peaks; rocky cnocan; deeply carved fjords; open sea; islands; sea cliffs; lochs and lochans; and rivers and waterfalls. The landscape and scenic qualities attributed to the Site's location are recognised through its inclusion within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area. Approximately 9km east of the Site is the Eishken WLA.

The wider area is sparsely populated with the nearest residential properties situated 1.0km to the south-west in Bunavoneader. The settlement of Tarbert is approximately 4.6km south-east of the Site.

There are no NRHE (Canmore) sites within the Application Boundary. The closest NRHE (Canmore) sites are Ceann An Ora Quarry and a shieling hut located approximately 620m and 600m south of the Site respectively.

The A859 lies approximately 400m south-east of the Site and is a key route within the immediate area, running from Stornoway to Rode.

The carbon and peatland map 2016[1] indicates that the Site is entirely underlain with Class 1 and Class 2 peat.

The Abhainn Glaic a' Choin duinn partially runs through the northern section of the Site. The western edge of Loch Learga is situated within the Site Boundary. SEPA's flood map[2] has given the surface water flood risk of Loch Learga a grading of High.

Powerlines enter the southern area of the Site and cross over the southern most section of access track.

1.4 Planning History

In 2008 consent was granted on the Monan Wind Farm site for three wind turbines at a maximum tip height of 86m and associated infrastructure (06/00290). This consent was then varied in 2012 to reduce the height of the turbines to the height of the operational scheme due to turbine supply issues for the Site at this time.

This application seeks consent for turbines of height consistent with the original 2008 consent.

1.5 Description of the Proposed Development

The repowering proposal will comprise the removal and replacement of the operational 46m tip 2-bladed machines with three wind turbines measuring up to 86m to tip. The existing substation building and existing access tracks and turning/passing areas on the Site would be utilised, with an additional section of new access track to facilitate additional improved access to one of the turbines.

The extent of additional areas required, will be kept to a minimum.

The Proposed Development will comprise:

- Three, three-bladed horizontal axis wind turbines measuring up to 86m tip height and up to 500kW each;
- Hardstanding areas for cranes at each turbine location;
- Turbine foundations;
- Drainage works;
- A temporary construction compound, including parking, and welfare facilities;
- Associated ancillary works; and
- 370m of new access track and 930m of upgraded access track.

A detailed description of the Proposed Development can be found in **Chapter 2 – Proposed Development and Design Evolution.**

[1] https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/?layer=10 (Accessed 05/01/2024)
[2] https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmaps/FloodRisk/ (Accessed 05/01/2024)

1.6 Purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment

This EIA Report (EIAR) describes the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development and assesses the significance of the residual effects, along with proposals for appropriate mitigation measures that can be implemented to minimise these effects. It considers impacts that may arise from construction, operation (including likely planned maintenance activities) and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

The EIAR includes an assessment of cumulative impacts alongside other projects in the vicinity of the Proposed Development that are currently in planning or are being constructed.

The purpose of this EIA Report is to provide the necessary information and outcome of the EIA undertaken, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act of 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) would therefore also apply. Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations lists developments for which the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is determined on a case-by-case basis (i.e., if significant environmental effects are considered likely) using applicable thresholds and the selection criteria presented in Schedule 3. The Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2, being an installation "for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms)" that "involves the installation of more than 2 turbines" with a hub-height that exceeds 15m. However, the selection criteria in Schedule 3 are not clearly defined and therefore each development must be judged on its own merits in terms of whether or not significant environmental effects are in fact likely.

Further details on the requirements for undertaking this EIA are presented in Chapter 3 – EIA Methodology. This EIA process has been informed by a scoping process with CnES. A Scoping Report was submitted to CnES in September 2023. A Scoping Opinion was received from CnES in December 2023.

1.7 The Project Team

Green Cat Renewables Ltd (GCR) have been commissioned by the Applicant as the Environmental Consultant to lead the EIA and prepare the supporting EIAR. GCR is an environmental and engineering consultancy focused on all aspects of development support, based in Scotland. With a team of 80 staff spread across 4 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.

GCR has development expertise in helping a range of businesses find suitable energy solutions to aid economic viability in a climate where energy costs are forecast to continue to rise.

GCR have been supported in preparing this EIA Report by IMTeco Ltd and GLM Ecology Ltd as specialist subconsultants.

In line with regulation 5(5) of the EIA Regulations, the EIA Report and technical assessments which inform it have been undertaken by a qualified project team. Table 1.1 presents the EIA Project Team and associated specialist roles.

Details of the members of the EIA team members are provided in Appendix 1.1.

Table 1.1 – The EIA Team

Technical Chapter	Chapter Number	Lead Author
Introduction	1	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Proposed Development and Design Evolution	2	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
EIA Methodology	3	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Regulatory and Policy Context	4	Green Cat Renewables Ltd

Carbon Balance	5	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Landscape and Visual	6	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Hydrology and Hydrogeology	7	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Ecology	8	IMTeco Ltd
Ornithology	9	GLM Ecology Ltd
Telecommunications	10	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Traffic and Transport	11	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Other Issues	12	Green Cat Renewables Ltd
Summary of Mitigation	13	Green Cat Renewables Ltd

1.8 Content of Planning Submission

The application for planning permission for the Proposed Development comprises:

- The Monan Repower EIA Report;
- Non-Technical Summary (NTS); and
- Planning Statement.

The Monan Repower EIAR is organised as follows:

- Volume 1: EIA
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: Proposed Development and Design Evolution
  - Chapter 3: EIA Methodology
  - Chapter 4: Regulatory and Policy Context
  - Chapter 5: Carbon Balance
  - Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual
  - Chapter 7: Hydrology and Hydrogeology
  - Chapter 8: Ecology
  - Chapter 9: Ornithology
  - Chapter 10: Telecommunications and Infrastructure
  - Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport
  - Chapter 12: Other Issues
  - Chapter 13: Summary of Mitigation
- Volume 2: Planning Drawings, Figures and Visualisations
- Volume 3: Appendices

1.8.1 Drawing Register

The EIAR is accompanied by the planning drawings outlined in **Table 1.2.**

Table 1.2 – Planning and Technical Drawings Register

Drawing Number	Drawing Title	Size	Issue/Revision
Planning Drawings			
C5507-GCR-WF-GA-DR-P-0001	Site Location	A3	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-GA-DR-P-0002	Site Layout	A1	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-GA-DR-P-0003	Drainage Concept	A1	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-VS-DR-P-0001	Visibility Splay	A3	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-DE-DR-P-0001	Typical Construction Details Hardstanding and Road Details	A1	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-DE-DR-P-0002	Typical Foundation Details	A1	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-DE-DR-P-0003	Turbine Elevation	A3	Planning Final
C5507-GCR-WF-DE-DR-P-0004	Drainage Details	A1	Planning Final

1.8.2 Figure and Visualisation Register

The EIAR is accompanied by the figures outlined in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 – Figure and Visualisation Register

Figure Number	Figure Title	Size	Issue/Revision
Constraints Plans for Chapter 2			
Figure 2.1	Site Constraints Plan	A3	Final
Figure 2.2	Site Constraints Plan with Layout	A3	Final
EIA Methodology Figures for Chapter 3			
Figure 3.1	Cumulative Projects	A3	Final
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Figures for Chapter 6			
Figure 6.1	Study Area	A3	Final
Figure 6.2	ZTV to 86m Tip	A1	Final
Figure 6.3	ZTV to 59m Hub	A1	Final
Figure 6.4	Landscape Character Assessment	A3	Final
Figure 6.5	Landscape Character Assessment with 86m Tip ZTV	A3	Final
Figure 6.6	Landscape Designations	A3	Final
Figure 6.7	Landscape Designations with 86m Tip ZTV	A3	Final
Figure 6.8	Cumulative Basemap	A3	Final
Figure 6.9	Viewpoint 01 – Loch a Mhorghian	A1	Final
Figure 6.10	Viewpoint 02 – A859 Overlooking Ceann an Ora	A1	Final
Figure 6.11	Viewpoint 03 – A859 at Loch na Ciste	A1	Final
Figure 6.12	Viewpoint 04 – Viewpoint at Tolmachan	A1	Final
Figure 6.13	Viewpoint 05 – Taransay	A1	Final
Figure 6.14	Viewpoint 06 – Beinn Mhor	A1	Final

Hydrology Figures for Chapter 7			
Figure 7.1	Hydrological Context Map	A3	Final
Figure 7.2	Peat Depth Map	A3	Final
Ornithology Figures for Chapter 9			
Figure 9.1	Viewshed Map	A3	Final
Figure 9.2-9.13	Flight Maps	A3	Final
Telecommunications and Infrastructure Figures for Chapter 10			
Figure 10.1	Infrastructure Constraints	A3	Final

1.8.1 Appendix Register

Table 1.4 below lists the appendices that accompany each Chapter.

Table 1.4 – Appendix Register

Appendix	Title	Location
Chapter 1 Introduction		
Appendix 1.1 Project Team	Project Team	Appended to chapter
Chapter 5 Carbon Balance		
Appendix 5.1	Carbon Calculator Input and Results	Separate Document
Chapter 6 LVIA		
Appendix 6.1	LVIA Methodology	Appended to chapter
Chapter 7 Hydrology		
Appendix 7.1	Peat Management Plan	Separate document
Chapter 8 Ecology		
Appendix 8.1	Habitats and National Vegetation Classification Survey	Separate document
Appendix 8.2	Protected Species Survey	Separate document
Appendix 8.3	Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan	Separate document
Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport		
Appendix 11.1	Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan	Appended to chapter
Appendix 11.2	Monitoring Plan	Appended to chapter

1.8.2 Issues Scoped Out of the EIA

Through the consultation process, a number of issues were scoped out of the EIA as the Proposed Development is unlikely to give rise to significant effects on these areas. These subjects were scoped out following initial surveys

and consultation with CnES through the pre-application, screening and scoping processes. The scoped-out subjects are as follows:

- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
  - Pre-application screening was undertaken with CnES archaeologist. It was advised that the previous application dealt with the necessary on-site archaeological mitigation. Additionally, it was highlighted that additional visibility would be minimal and it was advised that there would be no archaeological issues with the Site and would not require an EIA.
  - As such, Cultural and Heritage and Archaeology has been scoped out of this EIA.
- Noise
  - Preliminary assessments were undertaken as part of the scoping report. This indicated that the operational noise of the Proposed Development would be acceptable in noise terms working within the ETSU assessment framework.
  - The closest construction activity would be more than 850m from the nearest noise sensitive receptors. As such, noise arising from construction activities should be suitably controlled by planning conditions.
  - The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) did not have any comments on the scoping report other than to attach standard conditions.
  - As such, Noise has been scoped out of this EIA.
- Shadow Flicker
  - An initial review of the Site indicated that there were no properties within 10x the rotor diameter of the candidate model. The closest property is over 850m from the nearest turbine.
  - As such, Shadow Flicker has been scoped out of this EIA.
- Socio-Economics
  - The Proposed Development would continue the current partnership with the North Harris Trust and in particular a community benefit fund will be established with the Trust.
  - Additionally, the Proposed Development would provide opportunity for local contractors to work on the construction of the Proposed Development.
  - As such, Socio-Economics has been scoped out of this EIA.

Appendix 1.1 – Project Team

In line with Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (a transposition of EU directive 2014/52/EU), which came into place on the 16th May 2017, the EIA Report has been prepared by 'competent experts'. Regulation 5(5) states:

"(5) In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the EIA report—

(a) the developer must ensure that the EIA report is prepared by competent experts; and

(b) the EIA report must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts."

The following section provides details of the 'competent experts' involved in the preparation of the EIA Report. Full CVs available on request:

Gavin Catto – Director

Gavin established Green Cat Renewables in December 2004 and has over 25 years of experience in the renewables industry developing wind, small-scale hydro, solar and hybrid projects. From a background of electrical engineering, and with a PhD in wind turbine generator design, his broad base of expertise includes project feasibility assessment and optimisation, project management, construction management, commercial risk assessment, environmental assessment, resource assessment, grid connection negotiation and design. In his time at Green Cat, Gavin has overseen the delivery of over 800MW of renewables projects.

Cameron Sutherland – Technical Director

In his role as Technical Director, Cameron is responsible for Green Cat's wind, solar and hydro Due Diligence work for a variety of funders and investors and provides technical oversight across all our Environmental Assessment areas and Asset Management function. He has an MSc in Renewable Energy Systems Technology and 17 years of experience in the renewables industry. Cameron has a thorough and in-depth understanding of the technical, environmental and social issues associated with commercial renewable energy development, having managed more than 30 wind energy projects through the Scottish planning system and provided technical support for over 300 wind, solar and hydro projects at all stages of project development, from initial feasibility to post construction encompassing consenting, resource assessment, due diligence and operational asset management. Cameron also specialises in noise assessment of pre-planning and constructed sites and has acted as expert witness on noise in the UK and Alberta, Canada. His expert witness experience also extends to shadow flicker for wind farms and glare assessment for solar farms.

Rob Collin – Head of Planning and Environmental

Rob holds an MSc in in Urban and Regional Planning as well as a BEng in Energy and Environmental Engineering and has over 12 years of specialist experience in the renewables industry. Rob has managed all aspects of the consenting and project development process from initial feasibility assessments, constraints mapping and layout design, liaising with clients, community groups, sub-contractors and regulatory bodies, co-ordinating and inputting into environmental and technical assessments as well as the overseeing and managing of EIA's. Rob has a thorough understanding of the key environmental and technical constraints involved in the development of renewables projects.

Alasdair Warnock – Principal Landscape Architect

Alasdair is a qualified town planner and urban designer with over 15 years of experience in completing Townscape & Visual Impact Assessments and Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments, particularly specialising in wind energy

developments. He has a wealth of experience in every aspect of wind energy LVIA, including site selection, viewpoint selection and photography, graphics and written assessment.

Within his years of experience, Alasdair has designed and undertaken assessments for a number of large scale wind projects as well as small to medium scale commercial projects, throughout the UK. In addition, Alasdair has been involved in solar and hydro projects, designed landscape mitigation schemes and planting plans as well as landscape capacity work for local authorities. Alasdair also has experience in providing Landscape Clerk of Works services for construction sites during key phases and working to strict planning controls.

Dale Hunter – Senior Planner/EIA Manager

Dale is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, has a BSc. (Hons) in Urban and Regional Planning, a background as a local authority senior planning officer and independent planning consultant with a wide range of experience across many development types. With 10 years experience handling planning applications, Dale has a strong understanding of the planning system and experience with a wide range of stakeholders. Dale is responsible for managing renewable energy projects from feasibility through EIA production to consent and discharge of planning conditions.

Kirsten Dickson – Senior Environmental Consultant

Kirsten is an IEMA Practitioner (PIEMA) with an MSc in Environmental Management with conservation specialisation. She has a keen interest in groundwater, hydrological and ecological issues, and utilises strong GIS skills with an expertise in ground conditions, habitat assessment and mapping. Having worked in the renewables sector for several years, Kirsten has been involved in all stages of project development from initial site identification and layout design, to conducting site walkovers and environmental assessments, through to post-planning works and discharge of planning conditions. Kirsten is comfortable in liaising with stakeholders and community groups as well as the management of the project team across hydrology, ecology, and ornithology disciplines. Kirsten has built a thorough understanding of the EIA and regulatory process within the UK renewables sector, authoring, and reviewing key chapters within the EIA, with focus on hydrology and hydrogeology assessments, peat management plans, flood risk assessments, and ecological and ornithological assessments.

Isla Ferguson – Environmental Consultant

Isla is an Associate Member of IEMA (AIEMA) with a BSc. (Hons) in Environmental Geography and an MSc in Environmental Management, as well as an HND in Photography. During both degrees Isla's research focused on environmental impacts on cultural heritage assets. As an Environmental Consultant, Isla is involved in all aspects of project delivery including site constraints and feasibility, cultural heritage impact assessments and landscape and visual impact assessments, as well as, project management and management of sub-contractors.

Isla also leads our GIS and Graphics team, coordinating and managing the production of all required photography, mapping, photomontages and figures for our clients, landscape studies and planning applications. Utilising a range of software packages such as QGIS, ReSoft Windfarm, PTGui and the Adobe Creative Suite including Photoshop, Illustrator, Lightroom and InDesign.

Alice Burberry – Graduate Environmental Consultant

Alice holds a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Resource Management, in addition to a HND in the same subject. Throughout Alice's degree, she focussed on the energy industry with research into the state of nuclear power in Scotland. As a Graduate Environmental Consultant, Alice is involved in project delivery stages such as landscape and visual impact assessments, telecommunications assessments and site constraints for projects from feasibility stages through to EIA. Alice is also an Associate Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

Alice is highly skilled in software such as QGIS, ReSoft WindFarm, Adobe Creative Suite and PTGui in addition to NatureScot standard landscape photography. Alice has authored LVIA chapters for small-scale repowering and wind farm extension projects, as well as telecommunications for a number of wind farm developments.

Olivia Selby – Graduate Environmental Consultant

Olivia holds a Master of Arts degree in Economics and Geography and an MSc in Environment and Sustainable Development. During both degrees, Olivia studied modules such as Environmental Economics and Natural Resource Economics and has considerable knowledge of climate change from both an economic and geographical perspective. As a Graduate Environmental Consultant, Olivia is involved in initial feasibility studies and constraints, creating Landscape and Visual figures and photomontages, and writing introductory chapters for different EIA reports. Olivia utilises a range of software packages such as QGIS, ReSoft Windfarm, PTGui and the Adobe Creative Suite including Photoshop and Illustrator.

Dugald Macgregor – Graduate Environmental Consultant

Dugald holds a BSC (Hons) in Urban Planning and Property Development from Heriot-Watt University. This has allowed him to achieve an in-depth understanding of the planning process and how this interacts with the development process, all while placing this within a wider understanding of how environmental and sustainability challenges are shaping the future of development and planning. As a Graduate Environmental Consultant, Dugald is involved in the production of a plethora of feasibility analyses, the production of various EIA Chapters, the production of planning statements, and the production of landscape and visual impact figures and photomontages. Dugald is well-versed in software packages such as QGIS, ReSoft Windfarm, WindPro, PTGui and the Adobe Creative Suite including Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Lightroom.

Christopher Thompson – CAD Engineer

Christopher has 8 years of experience working within the civil engineering industry. He has experience in site, drainage, roads, earthworks design, swept path analysis & off-site route assessments. Christopher started working at Green Cat in 2019 and since then has developed his skills in AutoCAD Civils 3D and AutoDesk Vehicle Tracking. Within Green Cat Christopher provides engineering input into Wind Farm layouts to both planning and engineering departments while also conducting earthworks calculations for contactors. Christopher has experience working with AutoCAD, Civil 3D, AutoTrack, Revit and Inventor.

Garry Mortimer and Irene Tierney – Ecologists and Ornithologists

GLM Ecology & IMTeco Ltd

GLM Ecology and IMTeco Ltd are experienced ecology consultancies with fifteen years' experience of ecological assessments at over 140 renewable energy sites in the UK. The findings of the field and desktop surveys are considered in regard to the legal obligations and guidance that currently exists for all protected species of flora and fauna when considering new proposals and developments.

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