

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (hereafter referred to as 'EIA Report') has been prepared by LUC and supporting specialist consultants on behalf of Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd (a company wholly owned by Statkraft UK Limited, hereinafter referred to as 'the Applicant'). It accompanies an application for planning permission to construct and operate an up to 13 turbine wind farm (with associated infrastructure) known as Loch Liath Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development') in The Highland Council (THC) administrative area. The Proposed Development is located within the Balmacaan Estate, directly west of the Great Glen and Loch Ness, and with the closest turbine being located approximately 13 kilometres (km) south-west of Drumnadrochit. The location of the Site is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

1.2 As the Proposed Development has a generating capacity in excess of 50 megawatts (MW), consent is required from Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (hereafter referred to as 'the Act'), in consultation with relevant statutory consultees, including THC. In addition, a request is being made by the Applicant that planning permission is deemed to be granted under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended.

1.3 The application for consent is accompanied by this EIA Report which presents the findings of the EIA undertaken in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the Regulations'). This EIA Report presents information on the identification and assessment of any significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Further details of the statutory requirements for EIA are set out below and in **Chapter 2: Approach to the EIA**.

The Proposed Development

1.4 The Proposed Development is described in detail in **Chapter 4: Project Description** of this EIA Report. In summary, it will comprise:

- Up to 13 wind turbines (three (T1, T6 and T7) will have a maximum blade tip height of up to 180 metres (m) and ten (T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12 and T13) will have a maximum blade tip height of up to 200m).
- It is proposed that six of the turbines (T1, T4, T7, T10, T12 and T13) will be fitted with visible aviation warning lights;
- Foundations supporting each wind turbine;
- Associated crane hardstandings and adjacent laydown areas at each turbine location;
- Approximately 9.3km of new access tracks which includes 8.2km standard track and 1.1km of floating track;
- A total of nine new watercourse crossings, seven crossings over small drains (16 crossings in total) and associated infrastructure, i.e. culverts ;
- Network of onsite underground electrical cables and cable trenches to connect the turbines to the onsite substation;
- One permanent steel lattice anemometer mast of up to 122.5m in height;
- Vehicle turning heads;
- Onsite passing places (final location and specification to be determined by the turbine supplier);
- Site signage;
- A permanent compound containing the onsite substation and control building; and
- An Outline Restoration and Enhancement Plan (OREP) for peat, biodiversity, forestry and landscape.

1.5 In addition to the above components of the operational Proposed Development, construction of the Proposed Development will also require the following components:

- One temporary compound;
- Creation of one temporary borrow pit for the extraction of stone;

- A concrete batching area (location to be confirmed however this will be within the existing infrastructure area identified e.g. in the borrow pit or construction compound as identified by the Contractor and agreed in the CEMP); and
- Whilst no widening of the existing Bhlairaidh Wind Farm access from the A887 is required, it may be necessary to improve the running surface prior to use and to scrape of the top layer of material to facilitate delivery of the turbine components.

1.6 The expected operational life of the Proposed Development is 35 years from the date of commissioning. Up to 18 months are required for construction (an indicative construction programme can be found in **Chapter 4**). It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development will commence in 2027. Following the 35 year operational period, the Proposed Development will be fully decommissioned, or an application may be made to extend the operational life of the Proposed Development or replace the turbines, and any effects associated with this will be assessed at the relevant time. Decommissioning will last approximately 12-18 months. This will involve the removal of the turbines, hardstandings, electrical equipment and control building after which point the Site will be restored.

The Applicant

1.7 The application will be made by Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Ltd). Statkraft is a leading company in renewable energy internationally and is Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, solar power, gas-fired power and supplies district heating. Statkraft is a global company in energy market operations and has 5,300 employees in 21 countries.

1.8 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 in the UK's renewable energy infrastructure and facilitated over 4GW of new-build renewable energy generation through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). In the UK Statkraft employs over 450 staff in England, Scotland, and Wales, and plays a key role in helping the global business reach its goal of 9GW of developed wind and solar power by 2025

Legislative Requirements for EIA

1.9 As the Proposed Development exceeds the threshold for wind farms set out within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, and as it is considered that it could potentially result in significant effects, an EIA is required. Where an EIA is required, the information must be provided to the determining authority by the Applicant in the form of an EIA Report. This EIA Report presents the findings of the EIA undertaken for the Proposed Development and has been compiled in accordance with Regulation 5 and Schedule 4 of the Regulations. Further details regarding the EIA legislative requirements are provided in **Chapter 2**.

Supporting Documents

Design and Access Statement

1.10 The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced a mandatory requirement for a Design and Access Statement to be prepared in support of all 'major' developments. Although not required for applications submitted under the Act, a Design and Access Statement has been prepared for the application by LUC, as good practice. This explains the design principles and concepts that have informed the wind farm layout. Information on how the layout has been generated and a discussion on the scale and appearance of the Proposed Development are included, together with the consideration of issues associated with vehicular access and transport links. The Design and Access Statement does not form part of the EIA Report and further information on site selection and design is provided in **Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Strategy**.

Pre-Application Consultation Report

1.11 A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report has been produced by Kane Partnership. Although also not required for applications submitted under the Act, pre-application consultation is required for major and national developments under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (as amended). The PAC has therefore

been prepared as good practice, and presents a summary of the public consultation that was undertaken for this application, including examples of material provided and feedback given. Further information on consultation is also provided in **Chapter 2**.

Planning Statement

1.12 In addition, a separate Planning Statement has been prepared by David Bell Planning. The purpose of this is to appraise the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant Development Plan and other material considerations to determine its compliance with local and national policy. There is no legislative requirement for the submission of a Planning Statement, although it is now also regarded as good practice. The Planning Statement does not form part of the EIA Report.

Climate Change and Renewable Energy Legislation and Policy

1.13 The issues of climate change, renewable energy generation and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions have become increasingly important in the UK as well as in international policy and legislation in recent years. One of the primary aims of the UK government is to move the UK towards a low zero carbon economy. This relates to all sectors of business and industry and all policy frameworks that affect the general public.

1.14 UK legislation and policy is, in turn, driven by international co-operation to cut the emission of greenhouse gases, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This includes the 'Kyoto Protocol'¹, which became a legally binding treaty on 16th February 2005, and the 'Paris Agreement'². Ratified in the UK in November 2016, the Paris Agreement sets out the ambition of holding the increase of global average temperature to "well below 2°C" and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C. The commitments set out in the Agreement were reaffirmed in the Glasgow Climate Pact (November 2021)³. The Pact emphasises the role of phasing down the use of all fossil fuels across the energy sector and scaling up clean power

1.15 In response to the declaration of a national climate emergency in May 2019, a net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050 became law with the updating of the UK Climate Change Act, compared to an 80% reduction by 2050, as set by the Climate Change Act 2008⁴. Like the UK Government, the Scottish Government also responded to the climate emergency and in 2019, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon called on the Scottish Government to set a net-zero emissions target for 2045, five years ahead of the UK Government. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019⁵ received Royal Assent on 31st October 2019 and the net-zero target is now enacted by law.

1.16 Although energy policy is reserved to the UK Government, the devolved Scottish Government has also published a suite of policy in relation to renewable energy and climate change which continues to drive Scotland's low carbon ambitions. The following publications are particularly relevant:

- The Scottish Climate Change Plan Update (2020)⁶.
- The Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)⁷;
- The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (January 2023); and
- The Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022)⁸.

1.17 The Scottish Government also committed to updating its Climate Change Plan to account for the new targets. In 2020, the Climate Change Plan 2018 was updated to represent the latest set of targets over the period to 2032 as based on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. Targets also include the world-leading interim goal of a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 (relative to the 1990 baseline).

1.18 The Scottish Energy Strategy, which calls for a 50% 'all energy' from renewables target by 2030, emphasises that onshore wind is now one of the cheapest forms of electricity and will therefore continue to play an important role in realising the Scottish Government's Climate Change ambitions. Scottish energy and climate change goals mean that onshore wind is vital to Scotland's future, and will help to decarbonise our electricity, heat and transport systems, boosting our economy, and meeting local and national demand.

1.19 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022 sets out the up-to-date national policy position in relation to onshore wind. The Ministerial Foreword sets out that:

"Scotland has been a frontrunner in onshore wind and, while other renewable technologies are starting to reach commercial maturity, continued deployment of onshore wind will be key to ensuring our 2030 targets are met."

It adds that:

"This statement, which is the culmination of an extensive consultative process with industry, our statutory consultees and the public, sets an overall ambition of 20 GW of installed onshore wind capacity in Scotland by 2030".

1.20 The last paragraph states that:

"By acting now, we can set Scotland on a pathway to meeting our ambitious climate change targets in a way that is aligned to the needs of our citizens, supports a just transition and delivers opportunities for all."

1.21 More detail on statutory and policy framework is provided in **Chapter 5: Statutory and Policy Framework** of the EIA Report and the Planning Statement.

Benefits of the Proposed Development

Environmental Benefits

Carbon Emissions Offset

1.22 The principal atmospheric pollutants produced by burning fossil fuels are CO₂, sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x). In contrast, the harnessing of wind energy is non-consumptive and produces no gases or other by-products. The key environmental benefit of the Proposed Development will be the generation of electricity from a renewable energy source that will reduce or avoid the use of fossil fuels through the displacement of electricity generated from other sources of energy, or to add to renewable electrical capacity which can contribute to decarbonisation in other sectors such as transport and heat.

1.23 Consequently, the electricity that will be produced by the Proposed Development results in a saving in emissions of CO₂ with associated environmental benefit. The 'payback time' is defined as the length of time (in months) required for the Proposed Development to be considered a net avoider of emissions rather than a net emitter. The calculation of payback time includes a consideration of emissions resulting from the construction and operational phases, and the quantification of the carbon storage loss as a result of loss of peat as a result of the Proposed Development (expressed as CO₂ emissions).

1.24 Use of the Scottish Government's latest carbon calculator⁹ with best estimate values, based on available information and assuming a grid mix electricity generation indicates that the Proposed Development will pay back the carbon emissions associated with its construction and operation in the region of 2.4 years and overall will save approximately 1.3million tCO₂ over its operational lifetime by displacing fossil fuel use. Further details are provided in **Appendix 14.1: Carbon Balance Assessment**.

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

1.25 As part of the Proposed Development, there will be an Outline Restoration and Enhancement Plan (OREP) (**Appendix 8.5: Outline Restoration and Enhancement Plan**). Proposals include improvements to the peat resource restoration on the Site by infilling of the eroded areas of peat. These measures provide the following benefits:

¹ United Nations (1998) Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

² United Nations (2015) The Paris Agreement

³ United Nations (2021) The Glasgow Pact

⁴ UK Government (2008) The Climate Change Act

⁵ Scottish Government (2019) Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act

⁶ Scottish Government (2018) The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan, Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032 (RPP3)

⁷ Scottish Government (2017) The Scottish Energy Strategy: The Future of Energy in Scotland

⁸ Scottish Government (2022) Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

⁹ Scottish Government (2018): Carbon Calculator Tool V1.6.1, <http://informatics.sepa.org.uk/CarbonCalculator/>

- Reducing the areas of bare peat is beneficial as areas of bare peat are more easily eroded flowing water, but also by wind scour, frost and drying as all of these remove peat particles. On steeper slopes bare peat dries due to a dewatering effect and this is more susceptible to increased erosion.
- Infill of eroded areas with excavated peat prevents continued erosion and will mitigate the effects of peat excavation required for construction of the Proposed Development. Reprofilling also has the potential to prevent erosion as peatland habitat is used to cover areas of bare peat which will also prevent slumping. Hydrological control through the installation of damming structures in eroded areas, where feasible, offers the potential for long term habitat restoration through the creation of an environment that will promote peat generation rather than erosion and therefore a net benefit to the peat resource. The level of benefit is potentially substantial; however, benefits are long term as peat restoration will take tens of years. The correct siting and installation of dams is also critical to the subsequent generation of peat forming vegetation and many areas will not be suitable to this method as this really works best earlier in the erosion cycle of peat where there are more channels. The true restoration potential of the currently identified 'additional restoration' areas will therefore need to be investigated further post-consent via field study. Based on the desk review completed to date and the process of identifying areas suitable for infill, it is currently considered reasonable to anticipate that the 6ha of currently identified additional restoration areas may yield approximately 2ha of true restoration potential.
- Peatland restoration measures will aim to restore hydrological function and reduce exposure and erosion of the peat substrate. This will promote the growth of peatland species and recovery of degraded vegetation to a complete canopy, thereby benefiting flora and fauna that are reliant on a healthy peatland structure and function.
- The above measures will provide additional opportunities for associated peatland biodiversity, including invertebrates and plant species, which in turn will benefit breeding moorland birds and foraging raptors.

1.26 Tree and montane scrub planting has also been proposed. This provides the below benefits:

- Tree and scrub planting will provide foraging and sheltering opportunities for a variety of species of conservation interest that are known to be present within the Site such as bats, otter and pine marten. Birds including upland passerines and black grouse will benefit from the increased availability of habitat resources, and prey species of golden eagle will benefit (for example black grouse, mountain hare, red squirrel and pine marten), which will in turn benefit the eagles themselves. Planting provides opportunities to connect into existing woodland blocks and introduce a more varied species mix of native tree species.
- Planting riparian trees along the Allt Seanabhaile will provide additional shelter along the riparian corridor into the Site, providing cover for species such as black grouse, otter, red squirrel and pine marten, and enhancing the foraging route for bats. As no compensatory planting for tree loss is required, all riparian planting would provide habitat and woodland enhancement.
- Riparian planting will improve watercourse quality through the introduction of shading, enhancing watercourse functioning, with additional benefits including flood risk management and bank stabilisation, with these in turn protecting freshwater habitats used by a range of species. Fisheries will benefit from riparian planting through the casting of shade (resulting in maintenance of cool water temperatures), provision of cover and sources of food from in-falling litter and insects.
- Juniper translocation and/or cultivation may be considered appropriate and beneficial to contribute to the mixed tree planting and to enhance the resilience of the existing population, but this would only be carried out in line with the checks and balances outlined above. It will be beneficial to explore the health and viability of the existing juniper population within the Site, and to identify whether conservation management may be beneficial to ensure the survival and resilience of the existing population.
- All non-riparian tree and montane scrub planting would also provide an environmental enhancement, as it is not required for mitigation purposes.
- Bird species will benefit from the additional resources afforded by the montane scrub planting. Notably, this planting would be expected to provide additional cover for species such as upland woodland passerines, black grouse and mountain hare. Native tree planting will provide cover for black grouse and also an additional winter food resource. Measures that increase prey availability will benefit golden eagle.

1.27 Grazing management which is proposed in the form of monitoring of grazing pressure, and interventions as necessary, will promote the success of other proposed OREP measures and ensure the ongoing management of sensitive upland habitats within the Site.

1.28 Water vole monitoring is proposed. Small upland water vole populations are very sensitive to non-predictable events, including predation. Monitoring of the population on Site would allow assessment of the density of and variation within the population.

1.29 Monitoring of strategically located mink raft(s) would act as a warning system of a possible predation issue.

1.30 Ornithological benefits are expected as a result of the OREP proposals:

- Three diver rafts in addition to one provided as embedded mitigation are also proposed on four lochs to provide breeding habitat for divers across the Site, while maintaining distance from the operational wind farm. 'Diver rafts' are a well-established mitigation measure, with evidence suggesting that they are the most effective means of providing optimal nesting opportunities for divers, which markedly reduces risk of nest predation, trampling by large mammals and flooding.
- The maintenance or improvement of peatland habitats as detailed above will avoid, at minimum, adverse impacts upon breeding waders such as golden plover, greenshank, dunlin and lapwing, which are all also prey species for golden eagle. It is noted that current grazing densities are considered to be below recommended maxima and it is not therefore considered essential to achieve a reduction below these baseline densities.
- As noted above, tree planting at the Site will provide additional cover and food resource for prey species of golden eagle. The initial aim of the RECOMP is to positively contribute to the regional conservation status of golden eagle within NHZ 7 Northern Highlands through improved monitoring of the species' population and breeding status. The objectives of the RECOMP could also be extended to include research and practical conservation management actions to enhance the size and productivity of the NHZ 7 golden eagle population, where possible. The RECOMP will also provide for support and contribution to research to improve species knowledge, including to further understand and address threats or constraints, and opportunities for regional population growth for golden eagle.

1.31 There is also the potential for benefits in terms of landscape and visual qualities as providing tree planting of native species offers opportunities to create a more intact, higher quality, and more diverse landscape as a result of:

- planting to increase the presence of woodland and scrub, including riparian woodland along watercourses; and
- repair of peat to reduce the presence of scarring and eroding/ hagged faces, which are visual detractors.

Community Benefits

1.32 It is estimated that the number of households that could be potentially powered by the Proposed Development is over 78,000 per year, based on installation of 6.6MW turbines with a total installed capacity of 85.8MW. This is based on the wind resource assessment for the Site and average Scottish domestic consumption of 3,520kWh per annum.

1.33 The Applicant is committed to setting up a Community Benefit Fund in line with Scottish Government Good Practice Principles. The fund would contribute £5,000 per MW of installed capacity over the operational life time of the Proposed Development, should it be consented. At this stage based on the candidate turbine, the wind farm will have a maximum installed capacity of up to 85.8MW, which will mean a maximum of £429,000 available for community benefit per annum (the amount of community benefit available will be determined by the actual installed capacity of the wind farm, should it be consented and constructed).

1.34 The Applicant is not prescriptive in the way the Community Benefit Funds are set up and administered but are keen to ensure Community Benefit Funding meets local needs and delivers projects which can meet short term needs and deliver long term sustainable benefits to the local communities. Examples of previous projects include education activities, sustainable energy schemes and schemes to promote recreation.

1.35 Separate to the Community Benefit Fund the Applicant is keen to explore the opportunity of shared ownership of the Proposed Development, should there be interest from the local community to take this forward.

1.36 A broadband feasibility study has been undertaken which suggested that communities near the Proposed Development could benefit from improved broadband. Further assessment is recommended to be undertaken once the Scottish Government's R100 programme has been completed in the area. This further study would help determine the opportunity for the provision of improved broadband provision for commercial and residential properties which could be, should the community wish be, partially or fully funded by the community benefit fund associated with the Proposed Development.

Energy Security Benefits

1.37 There is a drive to reduce the UK's reliance on fossil fuels and boost the sources of homegrown energy for better energy security in the long-term as set out within the British Energy Security Strategy (2022). This states that "Onshore wind is one of the cheapest forms of renewable power." The Proposed Development would make a notable contribution to the home grown electricity within Scotland, with the potential to power approximately 78,000 homes as noted above.

The EIA Report Structure

1.38 This EIA Report presents the findings of the assessment of potential significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. Whilst a detailed assessment of effects during the decommissioning phase has not been undertaken, a method statement will be prepared and agreed with the relevant statutory consultees prior to decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

1.39 The general methodology for the EIA Report is detailed in **Chapter 2** and the EIA process has been used to inform the iterative design process for the Proposed Development (see **Chapter 3**).

1.40 The EIA Report comprises five volumes:

- **Volume 1:** Written Text;
- **Volume 2:** Figures;
- **Volume 3a-b:** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Visualisations (NatureScot format) and (AESLQ & WLA Assessment Points);
- **Volume 4a-b:** LVIA Visualisations (THC format); and
- **Volume 5a-b:** Appendices.

1.41 In addition to the standalone Non-Technical Summary (NTS) accompanying the EIA Report, the following documents also support the application as noted above:

- A Design and Access Statement (prepared by LUC);
- A Pre-Application Consultation Report (prepared by Kane Partnership); and
- A Planning Statement (prepared by David Bell Planning).

1.42 **Chapters 1-5 of Volume 1** of the EIA Report are considered to be introductory chapters and comprise the following:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** (this Chapter) provides a brief introduction to the Proposed Development, the legislative requirements and outlines the structure of the EIA Report.
- **Chapter 2: Approach to the EIA** provides more details on the EIA process including consultation.
- **Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Strategy** summarises the reasons for selection of the location of the Proposed Development. The approach to the design strategy and information on how the layout has evolved through the EIA process is also detailed.
- **Chapter 4: Project Description** provides a detailed description of the Proposed Development, including construction.
- **Chapter 5: Statutory and Policy Framework** summarises the national, regional and local planning policy relevant to the Proposed Development

1.43 **Chapters 6-14 of Volume 1** describe the potential significant effects of the Proposed Development on a topic by topic basis as set out in **Table 1.1. Box 1** below provides further information on the structure of each chapter. The assessment section of each topic chapter is structured in a way that is most logical for that particular topic area, and whilst maintaining the general structure identified below, may include other sections specific to that particular topic.

1.44 Finally, **Chapter 15: Summary of Significant Effects** provides a consolidated summary of all likely significant effects of the Proposed Development identified through the EIA process.

1.45 The EIA Report has been compiled by LUC on behalf of the Applicant. Whilst LUC had overall responsibility for the EIA Report, sub-consultants prepared specialist chapters and provided input as outlined in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1: Structure of the EIA Report and Responsibilities

Chapter	Organisation
Chapter 1: Introduction	LUC
Chapter 2: Approach to the EIA	LUC
Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Strategy	LUC
Chapter 4: Project Description	LUC with inputs from Pell Frischmann
Chapter 5: Statutory and Policy Framework	David Bell Planning
Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity	LUC with inputs from WPAC (aviation lighting)
Chapter 7: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat	Fluidec (hydrology) and East Point Geo (peat)
Chapter 8: Ecology	LUC
Chapter 9: Ornithology	Natural Research Projects (NRP)
Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage	LUC
Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration	Hayes McKenzie
Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport	Pell Frischmann
Chapter 13: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation	MKA Economics Ltd
Chapter 14: Other Issues¹⁰	WPAC (aviation) and LUC (other issues)
Chapter 15: Summary of Significant Effects	LUC

Box 1: Structure of the EIA Report Assessment Chapters

Introduction: provides a description of the study area and outlines the effects which have been assessed in full, and those which have been 'scoped out' of the EIA.

Scope of the Assessment: details key issues, appropriate to the topic, that the assessment has addressed.

Assessment Methodology: summarises the key methods used in the assessment (desk-based study, field survey, consultation and consideration of significance of effect, including criteria used).

Existing Conditions: summarises the baseline situation, including field survey results where appropriate, and the way in which the baseline may alter as a result of climate change.

The 'Do Nothing' Scenario: describes the predicted environmental conditions and proposed or likely changes likely to occur in the absence of the Proposed Development.

Wind Farm Design Considerations: describes the constraints taken account of in designing the layout and any modifications to the layout as part of the iterative design process.

Micrositing Allowance: provides details of the way in which effects may change as a result of implementing a 50m micrositing allowance on all infrastructure.

Good Practice Measures: details the measures assumed to be in place during construction of the Proposed Development or integral to the design prior to the assessment being undertaken. These measures are considered to be 'embedded' mitigation, and are assumed to be in place for the purposes of the assessment.

¹⁰ Including aviation and climate change.

Assessment of Effects: provides an overview of the type of effects considered in the assessment:

- **Construction Effects:** describes the predicted effects, proposed additional mitigation and residual effects associated with construction of the Proposed Development.
- **Operational Effects:** describes the predicted effects, proposed additional mitigation and residual effects associated with operation of the Proposed Development.
- **Cumulative Effects Assessment:** describes the incremental construction/operational effects associated with adding the Proposed Development to the other wind farms being considered in the cumulative assessment. Proposed additional mitigation measures and residual cumulative effects are also described.

Interrelationship between Effects: describes the indirect and secondary effects resulting from the interaction of separate direct effects arising both within a topic area and interrelated with other topics areas.

Further Survey Requirements and Monitoring: describes any additional survey work or monitoring proposed, including that to monitor the effectiveness of proposed mitigation.

Summary of Significant Effects: includes a table summarising any identified significant effects including mitigation measures and residual effects.

Statement of Expertise

1.46 Regulation 5 (5)(a-b) of the EIA Regulations states:

“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”.

1.47 The EIA process was managed by LUC. LUC is a Registrant of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) EIA Quality Mark Scheme which allows organisations that lead the co-ordination of statutory EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in EIA activities, and to have this commitment independently reviewed on a regular basis.

1.48 Details have been provided in **Appendix 1.1: Statement of Expertise** of the professional expertise and qualifications of each of the lead topic authors listed in **Table 1.1** above.

Key Definitions

1.49 To ensure clarity in the EIA Report, the following terms are used:

- **The Site:** An area delineated by the red line application boundary as shown in **Figure 1.1**.
- **The Proposed Development:** Shown as the components within the red line application boundary for which planning permission is being sought. Details of the components of the Proposed Development are provided in **Chapter 4** and shown in **Figure 4.a-c**.
- **The Study Area:** The area(s) included in desk or field studies for individual topic area assessments. The Study Area varies depending on the geographical extent of receptors considered and the nature of the potential effects within each discipline, as informed by professional guidance and EIA best practice. The Study Areas are therefore explained within the approach and methods section within **Chapters 6-14** of this EIA Report.

Availability

1.50 Copies of this EIA Report and further information may be obtained by contacting Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd on 0800 772 0668 or by emailing uk-post@statkraft.com. A hard copy of the EIA Report is available at cost of £2500. Hard copies of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) are available free of charge.

1.51 The EIA Report will be available for viewing online on the Scottish Government ECU portal, THC planning portal and on the project website at www.lochliath.co.uk.

1.52 A printed copy of the EIA Report and supporting documents is available for public inspection at Glenurquhart Library and Learning Centre, Drumnadrochit, Inverness IV63 6XA.

Representations

1.53 Any representations on the application may be submitted via the ECU website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx; 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.