

MachairWind Offshore Windfarm

Chapter 6 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement



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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Term	Definition
ABRA	Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance
ALLenergy	Argyll Lomond & the Islands Energy Agency
CES	Crown Estate Scotland
CFA	Clyde Fishermen's Association
CFWG	Commercial Fisheries Working Group
CIFA	Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
ETG	Expert Topic Group
F4OR	Fit for Offshore Renewables
FMMCP	Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring & Communication Plan
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HIAL	Highlands & Islands Airport Limited
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MD-LOT	Marine Directorate – Licensing and Operations Team
MD-SEDD	Marine Directorate – Science, Evidence, Digital and Data
MIFA	Mull and Iona Fishermen's Association
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NATS	National Air Traffic Services
NESO	National Energy System Operator
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission
NLB	Northern Lighthouse Board
NTS	National Trust for Scotland
Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
OAA	Option Agreement Area
Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy



Term	Definition
OSP	Offshore Substation Platforms
PAC	Pre-Application Consultation
PAS	Planning Aid Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SEAP	Socio-economic Action Plan
SFF	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
SP=EED	Successful Planning Equals Effective Engagement and Delivery
SPFA	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
SPR	ScottishPower Renewables
SPT	ScottishPower Transmission
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths
SWCRIFG	South West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
SWFPA	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
WDA	Windfarm Development Area
WoSAS	West of Scotland Archaeology Service



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Commercial Fisheries Working Group	A forum between the Project and commercial fishing industry and communities to encourage collaborative, proactive and transparent engagement.
Community Engagement	Place-based engagement undertaken across areas of relevance to the Project, particularly with those most interested and impacted by the development.
Consultation	Formal and informal processes through which stakeholders and communities provide feedback, raise concerns, or share expectations regarding project proposals. Includes both statutory and non-statutory engagement.
Drop-in Events	Open public engagement session allowing attendees to ask questions, review materials, and provide feedback.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	The process of evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development over and above the existing circumstances (or 'baseline').
Expert Topic Groups (ETGs)	Technical workshops with statutory consultees and subject-matter experts to review EIA methods, evidence, baseline data, modelling outputs, and feedback on interim environmental findings.
Feedback Forms	Structured consultation tools used events to capture qualitative and quantitative feedback.
Hazard Workshop	Workshops to inform the Navigational Risk Assessment, through local knowledge and expertise, the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks to vessels, crew, and infrastructure.
Iterative Process	Approach where engagement is repeated, refined, and revisited, allowing new feedback to influence subsequent plans, materials, and assessments.
MachairWind Offshore Windfarm	<p>An offshore windfarm capable of exporting around 2 GW of renewable energy to the National Electricity Transmission System. MachairWind Offshore Windfarm comprises three Development Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WDA – located on the west coast of Scotland to the northwest of Islay and west of Colonsay; • The Offshore Export Cable Corridor – a preliminary boundary extending from the WDA to mean high water springs at a landfall location near Girvan, South Ayrshire; and • The Onshore Transmission Development Area – a preliminary boundary which extends landward from mean low water springs and includes the land required for the landfall of the offshore export cable(s) and their route up to but not including the proposed high voltage direct current switching station which will be developed and constructed by Transmission Owner, ScottishPower Transmission. <p>Separate consent and licence applications will be submitted for each Development Area.</p>
Non-statutory consultation	Voluntary engagement undertaken by the Applicant outside of legal requirements to gather early views and build relationships with communities and stakeholders.
Option Agreement Area (OAA)	The seabed area awarded to ScottishPower Renewables in January 2022 through the ScotWind leasing round.
Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)	A statutory consultation process required under The Marine Licensing (Pre-application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2013.
Postcard drops	Printed communication posted to homes and businesses to notify communities of consultation events, updates, and/or materials.



Term	Definition
ScotWind	A Crown Estate Scotland seabed leasing round which enabled developers to propose offshore wind projects and apply for seabed rights to plan and build windfarms in Scottish waters.
Stakeholder	Any organisation, group, or individual with an interest in or potentially affected by the Project, including statutory bodies, local communities, regulators, fishers, industry groups, and NGOs.
Stakeholder Mapping	Process of identifying, categorising, and prioritising stakeholders based on shared interests, geography, statutory roles, and relevance to the Project.
Statutory Consultee	Organisations legally required to be consulted during the marine licensing and EIA process (e.g., NatureScot, NLB, MCA, SEPA).
The Applicant	The legal entity submitting consent applications for the MachairWind Offshore Windfarm, namely MachairWind Limited.
The Project	MachairWind Offshore Windfarm including all its Development Areas and associated infrastructure.
Windfarm Development Area (WDA)	The application boundary within the OAA where consent will be sought for the proposed WDA infrastructure. The WDA infrastructure is subject to Section 36 consent and marine licence applications (generation and transmission) which are being applied for separately from the Offshore ECC infrastructure and OnTDA infrastructure.
WDA infrastructure	The offshore generation and transmission infrastructure located within the WDA including but not limited to: Wind Turbine Generator (WTGs), WTG fixed foundations (and associated scour protection), offshore substation platform (OSPs), OSP fixed foundations (and associated scour protection), Inter Array Cables (IACs), OSP link and offshore export cable(s) and their associated external cable protection (insofar as these are located within the WDA) and fibre optic cables.
Wind Turbine Generator (WTG)	A wind turbine generator which converts wind energy into electrical energy. Each wind turbine generator is a complex system composed of a high number of components. Typically, the main components include the rotor assembly (composed of three blades and a hub), the nacelle (containing a generator, shaft and gearbox, power electronic converter and transformer), and the tower (containing lifting equipment and the switchgear).



6 CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

1. Meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders is an important part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and is a central tenet of responsible development.
2. The Applicant strives to deliver an engagement approach that exceeds statutory obligations by adopting early, sustained and transparent communication with those who may be interested in or affected by MachairWind Offshore Windfarm (the Project). The proactive approach undertaken to date has enabled the Applicant to build and strengthen relationships with stakeholders and communities alike. From development through to decommissioning, the Applicant is committed to nurturing relationships and maintaining trust with stakeholders.
3. The Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive programme of engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, with the feedback and advice informing this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and contributing to wider project understanding and decision-making, with engagement including but not limited to:
 - Updating stakeholders, community organisations and members of the public on the Project, including ongoing development activities, anticipated timescales and both project and industry opportunities;
 - Seeking, addressing and incorporating, where possible, specialist advice to inform EIA scope, assessment methodologies and emerging findings;
 - Identifying and refining EIA mitigation measures in collaboration with stakeholders; and
 - Beginning and upholding relationship-building with host communities and stakeholders, maintaining two-way engagement and demonstrating how feedback has informed project decision-making.
4. This chapter outlines the engagement undertaken to date by the Applicant which has informed the approach to the EIA and project development, with topic-specific stakeholder feedback and corresponding Applicant responses presented in the relevant EIAR technical chapters. Detailed information on the statutory public consultation is provided within the **Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**, submitted alongside this EIAR.

6.2 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

5. The identification of stakeholders, structured engagement milestones, and defined key messages relevant throughout the Project lifecycle are outlined in the **PAC Report**.
6. The approach is underpinned by the understanding and implementation of the Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) SP=EED (Successful Planning Equals Effective Engagement and Delivery) Framework, which offers a practical guide to undertaking effective engagement. The framework outlines areas for practitioners to focus on (such as responsiveness, inclusiveness, learning and sharing) and encourages practitioners to have a clear idea, from the outset, of the level of engagement that is appropriate for the resources and proposals available.
7. In line with SP=EED Framework (2014), Scottish Government's Consultation Good Practice Guidance (2019) and National Standards for Community Engagement (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2024), the **PAC Report** recognises the iterative and dynamic nature of consultation, ensuring feedback is continually captured, reflected upon, and considered within the decision-making process, striving to work in partnership with communities where possible. This process is illustrated in **Plate 6.1** and the activity undertaken within each phase of the process is detailed in **Plate 6.2**.





Plate 6.1 Engagement Process



<p>01 Identifying consultation objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Building and maintaining constructive relationships with communities and stakeholders. ➤ Ensuring stakeholders' issues are heard and proactively addressed, with strong awareness of emerging and evolving issues. ➤ Delivering accessible, accurate and regular communication and consistency of key messages. ➤ Actively listening and responding to community and stakeholder concerns, suggestions, and requests in a timely manner. ➤ Embedding inclusive engagement tools to support meaningful participation. ➤ Demonstrating how feedback has informed project decision-making. ➤ Capturing lessons learned to support best-practice engagement.
<p>02 Stakeholder identification and mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An initial list of stakeholders was created and has developed through growth of networks and undertaking of project activities. ➤ Updating stakeholder database continuously to record and respond to communications.
<p>03 Updating consultation methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tracking participation levels (attendance, questions asked, requests). ➤ Identifying underrepresented groups and areas in the engagement process. ➤ Seeking stakeholder feedback in relation to consultation experience and communication preferences. ➤ Reviewing engagement methods and adapt using participation data and sentiment analysis. ➤ Highlighting how feedback influenced changes in approach.
<p>04 Engagement / consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilising well-known and well-used communication channels, such as press releases, local newspapers, social media, and email distribution lists. ➤ Updating materials based on stakeholder questions and areas of interest, such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and consultation booklets. ➤ Regularly sharing project updates, milestones reached, and consultation opportunities. ➤ Supporting and attending community events to reach wider audiences, such as music and book festivals. ➤ Delivering educational engagement to reach children and young people, ensuring activities are age and stage appropriate. ➤ Informing stakeholders and community organisations (such as councils/development trusts) about how, when and why to participate in upcoming consultations. ➤ Engaging directly with stakeholders and communities to share updates, answer questions, and collect feedback to better understand local priorities, concerns and expectations. ➤ Exceeding statutory requirements related to Pre-Application Consultation (PAC), offering multiple opportunities for in-person and online consultation.
<p>05 Seek feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inviting early feedback through non-statutory consultation events and activities. ➤ Designing inclusive engagement approaches, such as residential leaflet drops, for those unable to attend project events. ➤ Creating partnership working opportunities to share knowledge and ideas, such as Expert Topic Group meetings. ➤ Sharing interim EIA findings and supporting documents for stakeholder review, ensuring transparency and inviting constructive input. ➤ Capturing feedback in relation to project proposals through feedback forms, attending community events, and hosting information days.
<p>06 Analysing responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Undertaking thematic analysis coding for ascertaining the common themes, patterns and ideas derived from all qualitative feedback received. ➤ Undertaking statistical analysis for quantitative data, such as closed-ended questions.



07 Reporting back 'you asked, we did'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sharing feedback with Project team to ensure clear understanding of perceptions, expectations and any concerns in relation to project proposals. ➤ Updating consultation materials and, where appropriate, to demonstrate how feedback has been incorporated into decision making.
08 Evaluating success of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collecting information related to stakeholders' experience of consultation (such as direct feedback, event participation), informing continuous improvement. ➤ Seeking informal feedback through fostering open and transparent communication between the Project, communities and stakeholders.
09 Ongoing engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focusing on sharing clear, accessible information, tailored to the needs and interests of stakeholders. ➤ Providing regular updates with communities, including timelines, design details, and potential impacts and benefits. ➤ Regular updating through stakeholders' and communities' preferred communication channels (such as social media, press releases, newspapers). ➤ Reminding communities of Applicant's commitment to continue engagement, with local Community Engagement Manager remaining first point of contact for communities' questions and notifying about future engagement opportunities.

Plate 6.2 Phases of Engagement Process

6.3 STAKEHOLDER MAP

8. This section provides an overview of the breadth of stakeholders that have been consulted over the course of the Project so far.
9. Stakeholders have been identified, organised, and prioritised based on their interests, statutory functions, geographical relevance, and potential impact and interest in relation to the Project proposals. Statutory and non-statutory stakeholders have been organised into ten broad categories to enable focused engagement and ensures representation across stakeholder groups; if underrepresentation of specific interests is identified early, this allows the Applicant to adjust the engagement approach as needed.
10. The stakeholder categories used for engagement are illustrated in the graphic below (**Plate 6.3**) and the stakeholders engaged with to date are listed in **Table 6.1**. This list is not exhaustive as additional stakeholders will be identified as the Project progresses.



Plate 6.3 Stakeholder Categories



Table 6.1 Stakeholder map

Stakeholder Category	Identified Stakeholders
Governmental, Regulatory, and Statutory Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council; • Civil Aviation Authority; • Crown Estate Scotland (CES); • Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; • Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); • Historic Environment Scotland (HES); • Joint Nature Conservation Committee; • Marine Analytical Unit; • Marine Directorate – Licensing and Operations Team (MD-LOT); • Marine Directorate – Science, Evidence, Digital and Data (MD-SEDD); • Marine Scotland Science; • Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA); • Ministry of Defence (MoD) / Defence Infrastructure Organisation; • National Islands Plan Delivery Group; • NatureScot; • National Energy System Operator (NESO); • National Air Traffic Services (NATS); • North Ayrshire Council; • Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB); • Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem); • Scottish Enterprise; • Scottish Government; • Transport Scotland; • UK Government; and • UK Hydrographic Office.
Environment and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clyde Marine Planning Partnership; • Fisheries Management Scotland; • Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust; • Islay Natural History Trust; • National Trust for Scotland (NTS); • Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB Scotland, Argyll, Loch Gruinart); • West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS); and • Whale and Dolphin Conservation.
Commercial Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clyde Fishermen’s Association (CFA); • Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA); • Fisheries Management Scotland; • Mallaig and North-West Fishermen’s Association; • MOWI ASA; • Mull and Iona Fishermen’s Association (MIFA); • Scottish Fishermen’s Federation (SFF); • Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association (SPFA); • Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA); • South West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (SWCRIFG); and • Fishers operating in and around the Windfarm Development Area (WDA).
Elected Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council Leader; • Brendan O’Hara MP; and • Jenni Minto MSP. • Argyll & Bute Council Elected Representatives covering the following wards:



Stakeholder Category	Identified Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kintyre and the Islands; ○ Oban North and Lorn councillors; and ○ Oban South and the Isles.
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Estate owners (on Islay, Jura and Colonsay); ● Distilleries (Bruichladdich, Elixir, Bunnahabhain, Kilchoman, Jura); ● Local Community Councils and Development Trusts (Islay, Colonsay, Jura, Mull and Iona); ● Members of public; ● Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands Area Committee; ● Oban, Lorn & The Isles Area Committee; ● Regional Community Councils (Kishorn Community Trust, Lochcarron Community Council, Lochcarron Community Development Trust, Western Isles Development Trust); and ● Seldom heard groups (further details below).
Supply chain, Skills & Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Argyll Lomond & the Islands Energy Agency (Allenergy); ● Developing the Young Workforce coordinators; and ● Local schools (Islay High; Port Ellen Primary; Small Isles Primary, Jura; Iona Primary). ● Local and regional businesses and trade organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aggregate Industries; ○ DM Fabrication Ltd; ○ Ferguson Transport & Shipping; ○ Inverlussa Marine Services; ○ Islay Sea Adventures; ○ Jifmar Scotland; ○ MACC Developments Ltd; ○ MELLEX Group; ○ MacLeod Construction; ○ McFadyens Contractors; ○ Mecfab Limited; ○ NDT and Quality Services; ○ North West Marine Ltd; ○ Ocean Ecology; ○ Peter McKerral & Co. Ltd; ○ Renewable Parts; ○ Scottish Association for Marine Science Enterprise; ○ Scotico Project Services; ○ SeaFari Marine Services; ○ Shearwater Marine Services; ○ Specialised Marine Support; ○ TSL Contractors; ○ Tritonia Scientific; and ○ West Coast Motors. ● Regional business and trade bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BID4Oban; ○ Business Gateway Argyll and Bute; ○ Confederation of British Industry; ○ Federation of Small Businesses Scotland; ○ West Highland Chamber of Commerce (formerly Lochaber Chamber of Commerce);



Stakeholder Category	Identified Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosper; and • Skills Development Scotland.
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA); • Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult ; • DeepWind Offshore Wind Cluster; • Energy Transition Zone; • Global Underwater Hub; • Offshore Wind Industry Council; • Other offshore wind developers (Shearwater Energy; Malin Sea Offshore Wind; Spiorad na Mara; North Channel Wind; Ocean Winds; Electricity Supply Board (Ireland); Northland Power); • RenewableUK; • Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council; and • Scottish Renewables.
Electricity Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET); • Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission PLC; • Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution; and • ScottishPower Transmission (SPT).
Marine Users and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac); • Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited; • Cruising Association; • DFDS Group; • David MacBrayne Limited; • Holcim Aggregates Glensanda; • Kishorn Port Ltd; • Navantia UK; • Peel Ports Group; • Port Ellen Harbour Association; • Royal Highland Yacht Club; • Royal Yachting Association Scotland; • Scottish Maritime Cluster; • South West Mull and Iona Development; • Stornoway Port Authority; • Women's International Shipping & Trading Association UK; and • UK Chamber of Shipping.
Transport and Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlands & Islands Airport Limited (HIAL); and • Loganair.



6.4 CONSULTATION TO DATE

11. This section provides an overview of the consultation undertaken to date by the Applicant, at the time of preparing this EIAR.
12. This section summarises the early pre-bid engagement, pre-scoping engagement and details the extensive post-scoping consultation undertaken with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and communities. Topic-specific consultation feedback and Applicant responses are presented within the relevant technical chapters of this EIAR.

6.4.1 Pre-bid Engagement

13. Prior to submitting a bid for the ScotWind leasing round, the Applicant undertook early engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees to better understand the Project’s potential environmental and technical constraints, challenges and opportunities. Engagement included discussions with MD-LOT, MD-SEDD, NatureScot and RSPB Scotland. This engagement provided initial insight into key stakeholders’ perceptions of the Project.

6.4.2 Pre-scoping Engagement

14. From signing the option agreement in April 2022, the Applicant launched engagement activities to introduce stakeholders to the Project, outline the anticipated development process and timescales, and gather initial feedback. A detailed account of the pre-scoping consultation is presented in Chapter 6 within the MachairWind Scoping Report, with a summary provided below.
15. **Table 6.2** outlines the pre-scoping engagement within the context of the broad stakeholder categories. Summaries of community group meetings and public drop-in sessions held during the pre-scoping period are provided in **Table 6.3** and **Table 6.4** respectively.

Table 6.2 Pre-scoping engagement summary

Stakeholder Category	Engagement Summary
Governmental, Regulatory, and Statutory Bodies	The Applicant engaged regularly with CES, MD-LOT, and NatureScot through quarterly update meetings to present updates, seek strategic advice and obtain updates, including those relating to policy, regulations, research projects, guidance and best practice. The Applicant also consulted with MD-SEDD and HES others to seek advice through EIA topic-specific workshops (such as scoping workshops and expert topic group workshops). The Applicant regularly met with HIE, Scottish Enterprise, and Argyll and Bute Council, presenting updates, discussing industry challenges and opportunities and its implications for Argyll and Bute and the west of Scotland, and identifying opportunities for networking with regional businesses (such as supply chain events).
Environment and Heritage.	The Applicant engaged with environmental organisations, such as RSPB (Scotland, Argyll, Loch Gruinart) and (*) DAERA, to identify any data gaps, discuss expectations for the EIA (such as proposed methodologies and stakeholders to approach) and secure their feedback. The Applicant also provided updates to marine organisations, such as Clyde Marine Planning Partnership and Fisheries Management Scotland, and discussed enhancement initiatives. The Project contributed to the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund as part of early environmental engagement.
Commercial Fisheries	The Applicant met with SFF, SPFA, CFA, CIFA, SWFPA and SWCRIFG collectively and individually. These meetings enabled the Applicant to share updates and data of relevance to commercial fisheries and discuss understanding of fishing activity to inform EIA Scoping. Fisheries liaison officers supported one-to-one engagement with fishers that operate within the WDA.



Stakeholder Category	Engagement Summary
Elected Representatives	The Applicant engaged with councillors for Kintyre and the Islands and the MSP for Argyll and Bute during public information drop-in events and community events (such as Islay and Jura Senior Citizens Association). This engagement ensured the Project was cognisant of local priorities and any emerging community expectations.
Supply Chain, Skills & STEM	The Applicant collaborated with DeepWind Cluster, HIE and Argyll and Bute Council to deliver a 'Meet the Buyer' supply chain session in 2023. The Applicant kept businesses informed of the Project timescales and needs through exhibiting at conferences across the region and holding meetings with businesses. Educational engagement with schools and youth organisations introduced local young people to opportunities in STEM and the offshore wind sector and enabled discussions between the Applicant and educators (such as Developing the Young Workforce) in relation to industry-related skills and future career pathways. The Applicant raised the profile of the Project among businesses and supply chain organisations by attending key industry conferences including ORE Catapult Spotlight events, Scottish Renewables Offshore Wind Conference, All-Energy Conference, and Global Offshore Wind.
Industry	The Applicant attended bi-annual meetings with members of the ABRA, and met with Allenergy, HIE and Argyll and Bute Council to discuss shared regional supply chain challenges and to coordinate on activities. The Applicant met with offshore wind developers, including holding quarterly meetings with Malin Sea Offshore Wind (i.e. the closest offshore wind development to the Project).
Electricity Networks	The Applicant engaged with Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution PLC and Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission PLC, as the respective electricity distribution and transmission network providers for Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Mull and Iona. The Applicant has engaged with Ofgem, NESO, NGET and SPT in relation to the Project's grid connection offer, grid connection location and design.
Marine Users and Infrastructure	Port operators, maritime organisations and transport bodies were consulted to understand infrastructure constraints and future ambitions. This early engagement supported preliminary port feasibility assessment work. The Applicant also sought opportunities to support these stakeholders, for example by sponsoring and exhibiting at the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (UK) UK Offshore Wind and Renewables event in 2024.
Communities	The Applicant recognises Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Ross of Mull and Iona as host communities of this project. Non-statutory engagement began on Islay, Jura and Colonsay in 2022 and later expanded to the Ross of Mull and Iona. The Project's Community Engagement Manager, based on Jura, has supported local relationship-building since their appointment in 2023. Activities included meetings with community councils, development trusts, estates, local businesses, attendance at public events and festivals, delivery of interactive STEM events in local schools, and hosting public information drop-in days across all five islands. Detailed information on the non-statutory community engagement is presented within the accompanying PAC Report , submitted alongside this EIAR.



Table 6.3 Summary of meetings with community groups and local organisations

Date	Locations	Community Groups and Local Organisations	Engagement Summary
October 2022	Islay and Jura	Community Councils and Development Trusts (Islay, Jura)	Introductory meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand local priorities (community benefits, infrastructure constraints, fisheries, supply chain opportunities); and • Strengthened stakeholder mapping.
April 2023	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	Island businesses, estates, Community Councils and Development Trusts	
February 2024	Online and in-person (Jura, Colonsay)	Community Councils and Development Trusts	Series of meetings with Community Councils and Development Trusts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project updates; • Outlined engagement plans for 2024/25; and • Discussions regarding establishment of a community advisory group.
March – May 2024	Online and in person (Islay, Mull and Iona)	Community Councils, Development Trusts and Islay Energy Trust	Series of meetings with Community Councils and local Development Trusts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project characteristics and development activities; • Ongoing engagement; • Update on timelines and feasibility studies; • BiGGAR Economics Opportunities and Impacts report; and • Explored current and future energy demand, and associated infrastructure needs, on Islay.

Table 6.4 Summary of non-statutory public drop-in events hosted and community events attended

Date and Time	Locations	Number of Attendees	Description
25 October 2022 12 - 3pm	Jura Village Hall, Craighouse	Approximately 55 people attended these events.	Public information drop-in event in central venues. Local people met the Project team, who answered their questions and gained a better understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and skills needs and interests; • Support for local initiatives; and • The distinct challenges between island communities.
27 October 2022 3 - 6pm	Islay Gaelic Centre, Bowmore		
09 August 2023 5 - 7pm	Colonsay Village Hall, Scalasaig		
10 August 2023 10 - 4pm	Islay, Jura and Colonsay Agricultural Show, Bridgend, Islay	Approximately 1,600 attended the Show, with around 180 people attending the	Hosted a stand encouraging attendees to stop by, ask questions. Materials available included printed copies of the community newsletter and maps of the WDA. High footfall event helped the team reach community members who may not have previously heard about the Project, and/or;



Date and Time	Locations	Number of Attendees	Description
		Project's stand specifically.	would not typically attend or were unable to attend the first round of public drop-in events.
07 May 2024 3 - 6.30pm	Jura Care Centre, Craighouse	Approximately 100 people attended these events.	<p>Second round of public information drop-in events to update on key developments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refinement of the WDA; and The BiGGAR Economics Opportunities and Impacts report. <p>The event featured information boards, printed maps and leaflets.</p> <p>Materials also highlighted opportunities related to supply chain investment and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) learning.</p>
08 May 2024 2.30 - 6.30pm	Colonsay Village Hall, Scalasaig		
09 May 2024 1.30 - 4.30pm	Islay Gaelic Centre, Bowmore		
09 May 2024 6 - 8.30pm	Ramsay Hall, Port Ellen		
12 June 2024 2.30 - 4pm	Iona Village Hall, Iona	Approximately 20 people attended these events.	<p>Public information drop-in event in central venues.</p> <p>Local people met the Project team, who answered their questions and gained a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for renewable energy; Concerns about existing infrastructure constraints; and Suggestions for future engagement and communication. <p>Ongoing engagement to build strong working relationships.</p>
12 June 2024 5 - 7.30pm	Creich Hall, Fionnphort, Mull		
08 August 2024 10 - 4pm	Islay, Jura and Colonsay Agricultural Show, Bridgend, Islay	Approximately 1,000 people attended the Show, with approximately 300 people attending the Project's stand.	<p>Hosted a stand for the second year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information boards, printed maps and information leaflets, and merchandise; and Interactive activities for community members, especially young people.

6.4.3 EIA Scoping Engagement

- Following submission of the MachairWind Scoping Report to Scottish Ministers on 11 October 2024, the Scottish Ministers initiated a 30-day consultation process, which commenced on 17 October 2024. The Scoping Opinion for the MachairWind WDA was received on 09 January 2025.
- The Scoping Opinion detailed a summary of the key points raised by Scottish Ministers and consultees on the proposed scope of the MachairWind WDA EIAR. The list of bodies that were consulted is presented within **Appendix 2 Scoping Opinion**. Scottish Ministers' and consultees' feedback to the Scoping Report is referenced in detail throughout this EIAR; this, along with the Applicant's response to the feedback, can be found within the consultation section of the relevant EIAR topic chapter(s).



18. A copy of the Scoping Report and a direct link to the Scoping Opinion are available in the Document Library on the Project website (www.machairwind.com).

6.4.4 Post-scoping Engagement

19. This section provides an overview of engagement undertaken by the Applicant following submission of the MachairWind Scoping Report in October 2024.
20. Community and stakeholder feedback in relation to EIA receptor topics is detailed in the Consultation section of each chapter in this EIAR. To read how the Applicant has sought, listened to, and incorporated public feedback into the decision-making process, please read the **PAC Report** accompanying this EIAR.

6.4.4.1 Environment and Heritage

21. The Applicant has consulted with DAERA, RSPB Scotland, HES and WoSAS through Expert Topic Groups (ETGs) and follow-up meetings to discuss key EIA topics including marine mammals, offshore ornithology, cultural heritage, and offshore archaeology.
22. In relation to offshore ornithology, the Applicant continued engagement with RSPB Loch Gruinart, RSPB Argyll, Arran and Ardnamurchan, and RSPB Scotland to seek stakeholder feedback on findings and Project studies and request local and regional updates. The Applicant met with NTS to discuss NTS' view of offshore wind and potential interactions between seabirds and the Project and share plans of interest (such as the Project's draft Nature Positive Strategy). The Applicant funded some fieldwork undertaken by NTS to track Manx shearwaters on the island of Lunga (Treshnish Isles), which aimed to learn more about their foraging habits and movements near the site; the findings have informed this EIAR.
23. In relation to heritage, the Applicant has sought feedback from HES in relation to key assets and the initial EIA settings assessment, and the Applicant received offshore archaeology support from WoSAS advisors through detailed discussion on the advice received to date, datasets and survey findings, and the Project's approach to assessment and mitigation.

6.4.4.1.1 Expert Topic Groups (ETGs)

24. The Applicant held a series of ETG meetings post-scoping to enable detailed technical engagement on EIA receptor topics, allowing stakeholders to provide specialist advice and review emerging assessment outputs. This enabled the Applicant to confirm their understanding, ensure stakeholder feedback is incorporated from the pre-scoping and scoping stages, present interim EIA findings, and stakeholders' advice and requests.
25. Meetings held post-scoping covered:
- Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA);
 - Marine mammals;
 - Seabed;
 - Offshore ornithology; and
 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.
26. ETGs allow for partnership working and expertise sharing between the Applicant and subject matter specialists, providing transparency to stakeholders on approach and results related to assessments. The objectives of the ETGs are to:
- Elicit expert advice from stakeholders on the proposed approach to EIA receptor topic;
 - Demonstrate how stakeholder feedback on key issues and findings has been addressed;
 - Eliminate the need for additional or further information following application submissions;



- Provide an EIAR that meets expectations; and
- Encourage discussion between the Project team and stakeholders.

27. **Table 6.5** summarises the scope and attendees for each ETG. In total, the Applicant undertook nine ETG meetings, with five ETG meetings being held in the post-scoping stage. Outputs and stakeholder feedback are addressed in the relevant EIAR technical chapters.

Table 6.5 Expert Topic Group (ETG) meetings scope and attendees

ETG Topic	Scope of ETG	Attendees	Related EIAR Chapters
Seascape, landscape and visual impact (SLVIA), 09 October 2025 – 1 ETG on this topic	Presenting and discussing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping responses; • Realistic Worst-Case Scenario; • Study Area and Viewpoints; • Coastal Character Assessment; • Photomontages; and • Questions and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council • NatureScot 	Stakeholder feedback received during and following this ETG, and the Applicant’s response to this feedback, can be found in Chapter 16 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts .
Marine Mammals, 15 October 2025 – 2 nd ETG on this topic	Presenting and discussing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping responses; • Marine mammal density estimates/ref population; • Recap of impacts scoped in for assessment; • Results from underwater noise modelling; • Disturbance Assessments; • Cumulative Effects Assessment; and • Questions and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council • DAERA • NatureScot 	Stakeholder feedback received during and following this ETG, and the Applicant’s response to this feedback, can be found in Chapter 10 Marine Mammals and Leatherback Turtle .
Seabed, 13 November 2025 – 1 ETG on this topic	Presenting and discussing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Physical Environment, including scoping responses, approach to assessment, numerical modelling and stratification; • Fish and Shellfish Ecology, including scoping responses, impacts scoped in, assessment for underwater noise modelling, cumulative effects assessment; • Benthic Ecology, including scoping responses, approach to assessment, overview of Site-Specific surveys, scoping of Impacts; and • Questions and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council • MD-LOT • MD-SEDD • NatureScot 	Stakeholder feedback received during and following this ETG, and the Applicant’s response to this feedback, can be found in Chapter 8 Benthic Ecology .
Offshore Ornithology: 02 December 2025 – 4 th ETG on this topic	Presenting and discussing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Technical Report baseline data decisions; • Summary of design-based methods and results; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Council • MD-LOT • NatureScot • RSPB Scotland 	Stakeholder feedback received during and following this ETG, and the Applicant’s response to this feedback, can



ETG Topic	Scope of ETG	Attendees	Related EIAR Chapters
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Collision Risk Modelling methods and results; Updated displacement methods and results; Manx shearwater and storm petrel assessment; Unexploded Ordnance and underwater noise assessment; Apportioning methods; Project Alone Mortality and PVA requirement; Cumulative and in-combination project list; and Questions next steps and future engagement. 		be found in Chapter 11 Offshore Ornithology .
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, 12 December 2025 - 1 ETG on this topic	Presenting and discussing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting Assessment Update; Setting Assessment Initial Conclusions (10 sites); and Questions and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute Council HES WoSAS 	Stakeholder feedback received during and following this ETG, and the Applicant's response to this feedback, can be found in Chapter 14 Offshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage .

6.4.4.2 Commercial Fisheries

28. Engagement with fisheries stakeholders continued throughout the post-scoping period, including meetings with SFF, SPFA, SWFPA, CFA, CIFA, and SWCRIFG. Discussions focused on capturing and incorporating feedback in relation to the refinement of the WDA, the assessment of fisheries-related impacts, and the development of the Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring & Communication Plan (FMMCP).
29. The Project also met with MIFA to present updates on the refined project characteristics, discuss upcoming engagement plans with fishers and the wider community, and to share information on short and long-term Project initiatives to better understand the key priority areas for MIFA.
30. The Project Fishery Liaison Officers, Brown and May Marine, supported the Applicant with one-to-one and collective discussions with fishers across Islay, Mull and Northern Ireland, in addition to remaining the first point of contact for fishers. Engagement included meetings and calls to capture feedback in relation to the Project site investigation campaign in 2023; inviting fishers to PAC events for face-to-face discussions with the Project team; and holding dedicated workshops with fishers, such as the Hazard workshop in June 2025 (as detailed in **Section 6.4.4.3.1**) and the FMMCP workshop in February 2026.
31. The stakeholder feedback, and corresponding Applicant response, is presented in **Chapter 12 Commercial Fisheries**. The Project's approach to fisheries mitigation, monitoring communication, informed by fisheries stakeholders, is outlined in **Appendix 10 Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan**.



6.4.4.2.1 Commercial Fisheries Working Group

32. To facilitate collaborative, proactive and transparent engagement with the fishing industry and communities, the Applicant has committed to working together with key commercial fisheries stakeholders, as part of a MachairWind Commercial Fisheries Working Group (CFWG).
33. The CFWG will be led by the appointed FLO, with Project information being shared and discussed between the Applicant and the following organisations:
 - CFA;
 - CIFA;
 - SFF;
 - SPFA;
 - SWFPA; and
 - SWCRIFG.
34. The key objective of the CFWG is to facilitate meaningful engagement with commercial fisheries, and share information in a timely manner, enabling coexistence wherever possible during the construction, O&M and decommissioning phases of the Project, to reduce the overall impacts of the Project on commercial fisheries. The purpose and governance of this forum is outlined in **Appendix 10 Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan**.

6.4.4.3 Marine Users and Infrastructure

35. The Applicant met with harbours associations and port operators, providing an overview of the Project's anticipated timescales and presenting the initial high-level due diligence undertaken to explore ports that might be suitable based on expected requirements during the construction and/or maintenance stages. Agreement was sought to include their port in the indicative short-list of ports set out in this EIAR, noting that further technical and commercial due diligence would be undertaken post-consent before a decision is made as to the final ports that will be used for the Project.
36. To ensure marine users' local knowledge and needs are listened to, the Applicant held meetings with shipping and navigation stakeholders (such as NLB, DFDS, Chamber of Shipping) to share, and receive feedback on, the Project's understanding of shipping routes and marine activity in relation to the WDA. The Applicant continued engagement with stakeholders to demonstrate how their feedback has been incorporated, where possible, into the Project decision making process during the refinement of the WDA.
37. The Applicant met with the MoD to discuss feedback received in relation to the Scoping Opinion and continued to update the MoD in relation to refinements to the WDA boundary and infrastructure to seek understanding around potential impacts.
38. To read about this engagement in full, including the Applicant's response to feedback, please refer to **Chapter 17 Infrastructure and Other Marine Users**.

6.4.4.3.1 Hazard Workshops

39. As detailed in **Appendix 13.1 Navigational Risk Assessment**, the Applicant hosted two NRA workshops meetings:
 - Local hazard workshop (11 June 2025) held in Bowmore, Islay with a hybrid set up, attended by small-craft users such as fishers and recreational marine users, in addition to the NLB and CFA; and
 - Mainland hazard workshop (02 July 2025) held in Edinburgh with a hybrid set up, attended by fisheries (SFF, SWFPA, CFA, SWCRIFG), CalMac Ferries, Chamber of Shipping, MCA and Royal Yachting Association.



40. This engagement enabled the Applicant to gather and discuss expert opinion and local knowledge to incorporate into the risk assessment, ensuring the hazard log was site-specific.

6.4.4.3.2 Marine Activity Requests and Notifications

41. The Applicant notified relevant stakeholders (such as NLB, CES, NatureScot, MoD and MCA) of licence request submissions to the Marine Directorate, prior to undertaking marine activities, such as the Project's second geophysical survey (April 2025). The purpose of this notification is to outline the operations planned, protocols and mitigation that will be followed and to ensure the works and information provided are satisfactory to stakeholders.
42. Notice to Mariners were issued in advance of offshore survey works being undertaken in and/or nearby the WDA; these notices detail the location, estimated timescales and the vessels involved. The notices were emailed directly to fishers and marine users, submitted to the Kingfisher website and are available to view and download from the Marine page on the Project website (<https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/offshore/machairwind/marine>).

6.4.4.4 *Transport and Aviation*

43. The Applicant met with HIAL to present the Project characteristics and discuss the assessment of potential impacts. Engagement has continued with HIAL to discuss the Project and next steps in relation to mitigation measures. The Applicant shared the updated Project parameters and timescales with NATS Safeguarding team to assist with their mitigation option studies and consultation with the MoD; in November 2025, NATS confirmed the approval of an available mitigation solution which has been agreed between NATS and the MoD for the Project. To read the stakeholders' feedback in full, including the Applicant's response to feedback, please refer to **Chapter 15 Military and Civil Aviation**.
44. The Applicant engaged with Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council to relay the Project's understanding of their feedback relating to the MachairWind Scoping Report and to outline the 'water first' approach for transporting components via sea and the related port requirements. In March 2026, it was agreed with Transport Scotland that traffic generation would be outlined in within **Chapter 3 Project Description**, with traffic and transport scoped out of this EIAR.

6.4.4.5 *Elected Representatives*

45. The Applicant notified local councillors, the MSP, and the MP for Argyll and Bute in advance of consultation events, providing opportunities for elected members to review materials and attend sessions. The Applicant met with elected members on request to share updates and consultation findings. Through this continued engagement, the Applicant has been able to strengthen awareness of ambitions and constraints across the region and has been able to discuss concerns from constituents. The Applicant presented at the Argyll and Bute Council Elected Members Renewables Seminar in September 2024 to share updates related to the Project activities and to learn about other renewable energy developments and their progress across the region. To read the stakeholders' feedback in full, including the Applicant's response to feedback, please refer to **Chapter 18 Socio-economics**.
46. Elected representatives have been informed about key opportunities taking place which may be of interest to their constituents, such as the 'Fit for Offshore Renewables - Islands and Coastal Communities programme (F4OR)', available to eligible businesses within the Argyll region. The Applicant also reached out to elected members regarding the MachairWind Small Donations Fund, which has supported 21 community initiatives within the Project's host communities to date.



6.4.4.6 Supply Chain, Skills, and STEM

47. Demonstrating the Applicant's commitment to inclusive growth and promoting green skills development, educational engagement workshops have been delivered to local schools across the Project's host communities and further afield. By providing hands-on experiences and finding creative ways to bring MachairWind to life, young people have been encouraged to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and maths; essential fields for building a sustainable future and resilient workforce. The Applicant has continued discussions with educators (such as local teachers and Developing the Young Workforce coordinators) in addition to reaching out to skills-based agencies (such as Skills Development Scotland and ALLenergy) to better share information related to jobs of the future, existing learning needs and knowledge gaps between industry and education. Stakeholder discussions and learnings related to skills and STEM are outlined in **Chapter 18 Socio-economics**.
48. Post-scoping, the Applicant has further raised Project awareness with the supply chain by supporting and attending key events, including Offshore Wind Growth Partnership and ORE Catapult Spotlight events (2024 and 2025), Scottish Renewables Offshore Wind Conference (2025 and 2026), All-Energy Conference (2024 and 2025), Global Offshore Wind (2025), Highlands and Islands Green Energy Conference (2025), and West Highland Vision Conference (2026). The Applicant engaged widely with enterprise agencies, local and regional trade bodies, chamber of commerce, and with businesses to encourage Argyll businesses to participate in the fully funded 12-to-18-month business excellence F4OR programme. Four businesses from the Argyll and Bute region were successfully accepted into the 2025/26 cohort, comprising of 12 Scottish companies, to build skills and capabilities to help them target future opportunities from the growing offshore wind market.
49. The Applicant's commitments to STEM, Skills, Capability and Market-Ready Capacity are outlined in the **Socio-economic Action Plan (SEAP)**, which has been submitted as an accompanying document to this EIAR.

6.4.4.7 Industry

50. The Applicant consulted with other offshore wind projects off the west coast of Scotland and Ireland, including Spiorad Na Mara, North Channel Wind and Malin Sea Offshore Wind, to share information related to project timescales and planned development activities, including future engagement plans, in addition to discussing potential collaboration opportunities, such as regional supply chain engagement events, and current and anticipated industry constraints and challenges. As the closest neighbouring project to MachairWind, the Applicant held quarterly meetings with Malin Sea Offshore Wind; discussion points included sharing information around community engagement plans to minimise engagement fatigue for the Project's host communities.
51. Recognising the value of collaborating with renewable energy developers, particularly those in offshore wind, to address industry challenges, the Applicant is a member of the North and West Developer Group; the purpose of this forum is detailed below.

6.4.4.7.1 North and West Developer Group

52. The Applicant is a member of the North and West Developer Group, which comprises OceanWinds, Electricity Supply Board (Ireland), Northland Power and ScottishPower Renewables (SPR). The Group focuses on addressing data gaps and stakeholder feedback relating to the uncertainties, and the approach to assessment, for novel bird species, namely Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels.

6.4.4.8 Governmental, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies

53. The Applicant continued sharing reports and attending quarterly meetings with CES, NatureScot, and MD-LOT. These updates provided the Applicant with the opportunity to present recent activity



and developments, including milestones reached; to outline experienced and/or anticipated challenges and discuss any associated risks; and to seek strategic advice, such as updates to guidance and recommendations following industry consultations.

54. Following Scoping, the Applicant developed a proposed change to the Project's consenting approach. The MachairWind Scoping Report did not describe transmission infrastructure that would be located within the WDA. As discussed with MD-LOT and NatureScot on 10 June 2025, the transmission infrastructure that will be located within the WDA (Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs), OSP link cables and a portion of the offshore export cable), has now been assessed within the WDA-alone assessment as part of the WDA EIAR consent submission. This ensures that all infrastructure within the boundary of the WDA (i.e. the WDA infrastructure), for which marine licences to construct, alter or improve are being sought as part of the WDA consent application, has been adequately assessed (see **Chapter 1 Introduction** and **Chapter 3 Project Description** for further details).
55. Topic-specific advice was sought from NatureScot, MD-SEDD, HES, Argyll and Bute Council and others through expert topic groups (ETGs); the scope and purpose of these meetings are detailed in **Section 6.4.4.1.1** above.
56. One-to-one and collective engagement was also undertaken with NLB and MCA in relation to navigational safety and statutory responsibilities. This engagement enabled the Applicant to seek their advice as a statutory consultee in addition to identifying ways of working as neighbouring operators (such as the Applicant's planned survey works and NLB's access to Dubh Artach lighthouse).
57. Engagement with public bodies such as HIE and Scottish Enterprise continued to focus on skills, supply chain development and regional collaboration opportunities, such as socialising the F4OR Islands & Coastal Communities programme to eligible and potentially interested businesses.
58. Project engagement activities were complemented by the Applicant attending structured partnership forums and hosting collaborative workshops, as detailed below.

6.4.4.8.1 Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA)

59. SPR has been an active member of ABRA for more than two decades and the Applicant has met with members on a bi-annual basis since the outset of this Project. Discussions with both public and private sector partners in the Argyll and Bute region, enables the Applicant to learn about public bodies' evolving priorities and related works (such as the Argyll and Bute Council Renewable Energy Action Plan), and enables the Applicant and other developers to provide transparency around opportunities to be harnessed and to find ways to address challenges collectively.

6.4.4.8.2 Argyll and Bute Concordat

60. In recognition of SPR's and Argyll and Bute Council's joint ambition to work together positively to deliver green energy within the region, a concordat is in place to ensure consistent and transparent engagement between the parties, such as discussions around local and regional constraints, emerging and building expectations, and the changing policy and industrial landscape. Meeting attendees also include key regional stakeholders, such as HIE and Allenergy.

6.4.4.8.3 NatureScot Collaborative Working

61. A series of collaborative workshops were organised between the Project and NatureScot to facilitate the refinement of the MachairWind WDA design objectives and associated design response to safeguard the integrity and objectives of nationally important landscapes. The objectives and scope



of these workshops is outlined in **Appendix 15 Design Strategy**, and the outcomes of these discussions is outlined in **Chapter 16 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact**.

6.4.4.9 Electricity Networks

62. Engagement has continued between the Applicant, NGET and SPT in relation to the Project's grid connection, to facilitate alignment of the design, procurement and delivery of the proposed Western Link 2 project, which includes a switching station near Girvan (into which the Project will connect) that links to the grid via two HVDC interconnectors: one north to Kilmarnock South (constructed by SPT) and one south to Wales (constructed by NGET).

6.4.4.10 Communities

63. The Applicant's focus on strengthening relationships within the Projects' host communities has been central to the community engagement undertaken in the post-scoping stage. With both non-statutory and statutory consultation, the Applicant has shared information of interest and relevance to communities, including but not limited to the refined WDA characteristics, statutory consultation information and associated key findings, and upcoming opportunities for communities (such as sponsorship, donations and educational engagement workshops).

64. To ensure those interested and impacted by the Project know how, why and when they can participate in consultation, the Applicant has advertised community engagement events using multiple communication channels, including on the Projects' website, posters displayed in community facilities, printed and digitised Project newsletters, residential and business postcard drops, community organisations' social media pages and project email distribution lists.

65. The Applicant engaged with seldom heard groups, such as senior citizens, in recognition that they may face barriers – such as digital, mobility or social - to accessing Project information. During this engagement, the Applicant sought feedback in relation to preferred methods of communication and accessible and suitable venues for the forthcoming consultations; this feedback was incorporated where possible, such as the use of Port Mor (Islay) for both consultations. The Applicant also undertook educational engagement in local schools with children and young people, to ensure the Project was understood by the full range of communities likely to be interested and impacted by the proposed development.

66. In recognition of potential physical access and social isolation barriers, the Applicant adopted a multi-channel communication approach, including door-to-door postcards for residences and businesses across Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Ross of Mull and Iona and a virtual consultation room for those unable to attend the in-person events. Consultation materials were available in alternative formats on request, with information booklet front covers and executive summaries provided in English and Gaelic as standard.

67. In total, the Applicant hosted 11 public drop-in events, sponsored and attended five community events, and delivered 16 statutory public consultation events. The accompanying **PAC Report** outlines the non-statutory and statutory engagement in full.

6.4.4.10.1 Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)

68. The Applicant held two rounds of PAC, comprising 12 in person events and four webinar events across Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Ross of Mull and Iona. The first round of PAC was live for six weeks, from 26 May 2025 to 06 July 2025 (inclusive), and the second round of PAC was live for six weeks, from 20 October 2025 to 30 November 2025 (inclusive).

69. The PAC enables stakeholders and members of the public to provide comments to an applicant on a proposed licensable marine activity. PAC is not considered to be a direct representation to the



Scottish Ministers. As outlined in Section 1.9 of **Chapter 1 Introduction** there are procedures, and timescales, for formal representations to be made to the Scottish Ministers via MD-LOT upon application submission.

70. To read about the Applicant's approach to PAC, compliance with regulations, and response to feedback received during the PACs, please read the **PAC Report**.

6.5 FUTURE CONSULTATION

71. As outlined in the **SEAP**, the Applicant is committed to engaging with stakeholders and local communities throughout the lifetime of the Project, including:

- Providing transparent updates on project design, timelines, and assessments;
- Supporting inclusive participation in decision-making;
- Further consideration of opportunities to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits for host island communities, Argyll and Bute, the West of Scotland, and Scotland more broadly
- Maintaining relationships with stakeholders and communities through construction, operation, and decommissioning stages; and
- Ensuring that engagement remains responsive, accessible, and inclusive to deliver meaningful, lasting value for communities and stakeholders.



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