

Ireland's EIA Conference

6th March 2025

Advancing EIA Practice: The Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland

Prepared by LUC

Jo Wotton

Associate Director of Environmental Planning



Scottish Onshore Wind: In Pictures and Numbers

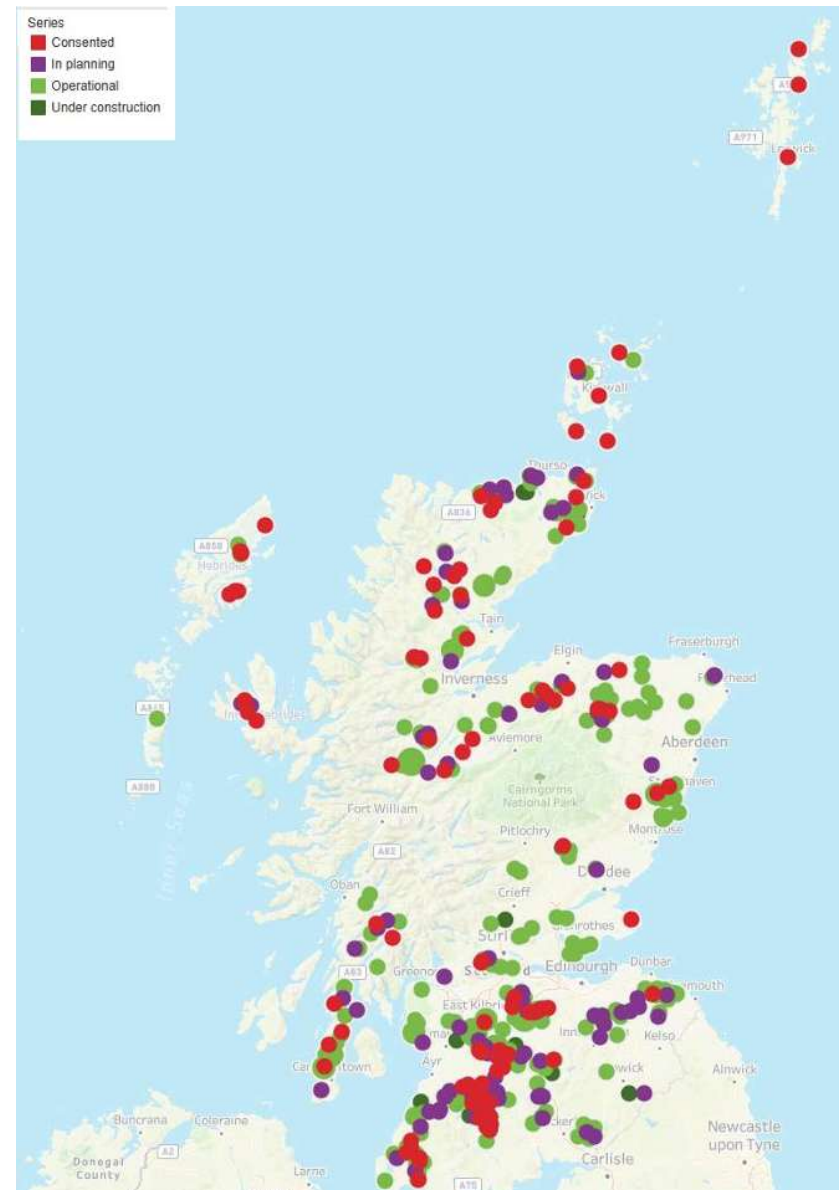
Scotland currently has **9.6GW** of installed onshore wind capacity, with **243 sites** over 5MW.

Onshore wind currently supports over **12,000 jobs** and contributes **£3.44bn** to the Scottish economy.

Between 2018 and 2022, onshore wind projects have committed over **£106 million** in **community benefits**.

Scotland's ambition is to double current installed capacity to 20GW by 2030.

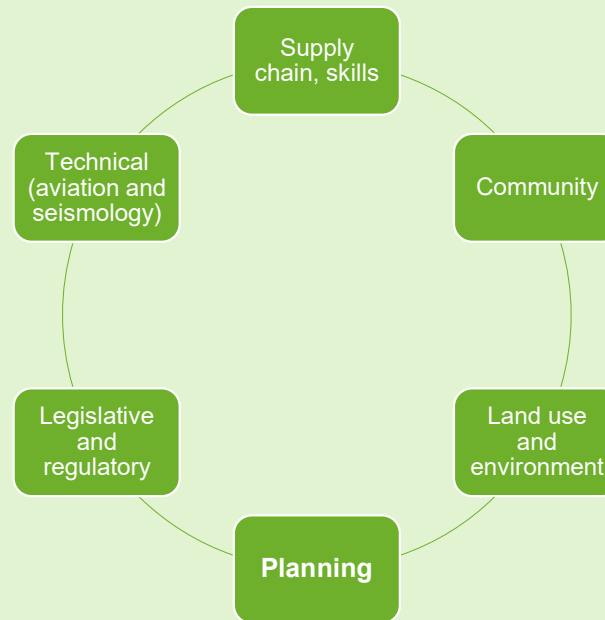
(Image and data from Scottish Renewables, October 2024)



Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland



63 commitments (government / industry / collaborative) across **six themes** (to deliver **20GW** of onshore wind by **2030** whilst delivering maximum benefit to Scotland).



Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland: Planning Objective

Planning Objective:

*“We will reduce the time it takes to determine ... applications for onshore wind projects by ... **streamlining approaches to scoping Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs) by using template formats and associated guidance.**”*

Collaborative Action:

- Set up a **working group** *“to develop a **recommended standard scope and format** for EIARs for onshore wind farms, designed to reduce the burden on consultees and other stakeholders”.*
- Focus on proportionality to identify potentially **significant** environmental effects.
- Scope when sufficient information known to allow informed focus on potentially **significant** effects.

Sector Action:

- Proactively engage with consultees to improve scoping of the environmental information required in EIARs, focusing on potentially significant environmental effects.
- Ensure EIARs are based as far as is possible on the agreed templates, scopes and formats.

Government Action:

- Aim to determine applications for new sites within 12 months where there is no public inquiry, or 24 months if there is a public inquiry.

OWSD EIA Task and Finish Group Members and Focus Groups

TFG members

- Scottish Government
- SEPA
- HES
- NatureScot
- Developers (RES, SPR)
- Legal experts (Eversheds and KC)
- EIA practitioners (LUC, Ramboll, RSK, Savills)

Wider Consultation

- Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals
- Scottish Government Consultee List
- Heads of Planning Scotland
- RTPi
- IEMA

Focus Groups

- LVIA
- Historic Environment
- Ecology and Ornithology
- Hydrology and Peat
- Noise
- Traffic and Transport
- Planning and EIA Report Presentation / Format etc.

“Standard Scope and Format for EIA Reports”...

Quick wins

- Consolidate introductory chapters.
- Remove planning chapter.
- Are all assessments required? Remove socio-economics, ‘other issues’, others?
- Remove some standard supporting information (e.g. legislation appendices).

Other considerations

- Need to retain flexibility within guidance / format / structure / template.
- Timing of scoping – scope later?
- Importance of ECU and consultee ‘buy in’.
- Compliance with EIA Regulations.



OWSD EIA TFG Outputs and Recommendations

Outputs:

- Overarching guidance document
- 'Evidence notes':
 - Ecology and ornithology
 - Hydrology and peat
 - Landscape
 - Noise
 - Traffic and transport
 - Historic environment

Recommendations:

- 'Bolder' scoping – we have a lot of evidence!
- Scope later – make best use of consultee time
- Assess with clarity and brevity where topics scoped in
- Remove need for further information through effective scoping and assessment
- Some structural recommendations (Scoping and EIA Report)

Guidance Publication and Next Steps

Consultation (government, sector, consultees)

Publish recommendations Q1 2025

Measure impact / 'buy in' from practitioners and developers (how?)

Roll out recommendations to other regimes and development types

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Thank you

Jo Wotton

Associate Director of Environmental Planning

0141 403 0912

07770 272 976



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