

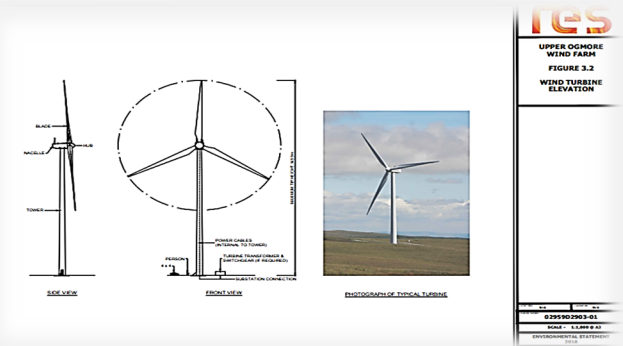


Upper Ogmore Wind Farm EIA Assessment

Environmental Planning and Policy
Conference Meeting

Proposed Development Outline

- **Proposed by:** Renewable Energy Systems Limited (RES) in 2018, (Schedule 2, DNS status).
- **Location:** South Wales (Bridgend County), south of the A4107
- **Design:** 7 three-bladed, horizontal axis wind turbines of maximum heights of 130m to 150m.
- **Land Alterations:** significant land alterations during construction phase required.
- **Habitats:** Post-industrial landscape, Werfa summit (568m ASL), sheep grazing land, upland moorland consisted of acid and marshy upland grassland including mosaics of dwarf shrub heath scatter across, and some adjoining larch *Larix decidua*.



Project Description, Design Evolution & Alternatives

Relevant Policy: Common Act 2006, TCPA 2017 (Schedule 4), DNS (Wales) Regulations 2016.

Actions in Line With EIA Legislation	Non-compliance	Best Practice Examples Elsewhere
• Detailed Description (In line with TCPA 2017 (Schedule 4). • Water Quality addressed (NRW expertise) (In line with DNS requirements). • GIS Design Tool used; no alternative sites considered (compromise). • Design Change due to Public Consultations (Local Landscape) (EIA guidance).	• Stone blasting, material shifting and excavation practices: proposed mitigation unclear, lacking specific details. <u>RES Limited comment:</u> "appropriate dust suppression at the borrow pits and any materials storage areas will be provided as required" (RES Limited, 2020, p:10)".	EIA in Pembrokeshire WF proposed Dust Mitigation Plan to protect surrounding vegetation: • Dampening down of potentially dusty areas. • Dust covers used on vehicles and stockpiles. • Restrictive speed limits to minimise dust creations. • Wheel washing facilities. (Rhoscrowther Windfarm Ltd, 2016).



Impacts evaluation and Proposed Mitigation

Relevant Policy: Directive 2014/52/EU (climate change, The National Peatlands Action Programme), TCPA 2017 EIA Regulations (Schedule 4) Cumulative Effects, IEMA Guidance for DNS Projects, SuDs Solutions.

Actions in Line With EIA Legislation	Non-compliance	Best Practice Examples
- ES mainly focused on the Construction phase (in line with IEMA guidance). Site hydrology (SuDs Management Plan in line with SuDs Solutions), NRW involved. Peat bog protection (CO2 sequestration and climate change trends) National Peatlands Action Programme. Socioeconomics addressed and multiple benefits offered for local community (Oxford Economics method) (RES Limited, 2020c, p:25).	Tourism is affected, according to some studies, but assessed ES only shows research proving opposite (other EIAs do the same). Cumulative effects not addressed (Eight WFs in the Area)? - Much more could be done (post-construction) in line with The National Peatlands Action Programme (Welsh Government, 2020).	- WF located in Scottish highlands and Viking Energy Windfarm (Shetlands) in their EIAs proposed: Peat restoration post-construction phase through Peat Management Plan. - All excavated peat to be stored and re-used on site. - Peatland enhancement post-construction phase (Lewis Wind Power, 2018; Duncan and Robb, 2019).



Ecology & Biodiversity Assessment

Relevant Policy: TCPA 2017 Regulations, IEMA and Planning Directorate (2019) recommending ‘no net loss’ and post-construction Habitat Enhancement, Bridgend County Borough Local Biodiversity Action Plans, The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), The Environment (Wales) Act (2016), Friends of the Earth Guide.

Actions in Line With EIA Legislation	Non-compliance	Best Practice Examples
- Project supervised by senior ecologist from BSG Ecology and NRW (use of competent experts in line with TCPA 2017). Environmental Management Plan created upon PINS and NRW Request (construction phase only). Two-year Bird Surveys plus Critical Collision Risk Analysis V2 resulted in: “no migratory pathway for Severn Estuary SPA birds”) (RES Limited, 2020d, p: 23). Mitigations for ground-nesting birds to protect nests during (March-August) breeding season (in line with Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)).	- Actions of clearing of areas (cutting vegetation short) to prevent birds from nesting (against habitat enhancement requested by Welsh Government). - Phase 1 Extended habitat survey (2 years) resulted in the location of protected species on site: water voles <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> and kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>. Mitigation offered in the form of “contribution to local moorland habitat restoration initiatives” (RES Limited, 2020e, p:80). - The improvement of crucial moorland/wetland habitat lost in construction concerning the long term (post-construction) phase is not included in the plan.	Rooley Moor WF (North England) EIA proposed mitigation for water voles, including: - Creation of 50m micro sites left for mammal species including water vole and not to be disturbed with WF development (Coronation Power, 2014). - Other WF in Scotland proposed maintaining 50m buffer strips near all watercourses (Starkraft, 2020).



Conclusion

EIA is a very complex, constantly evolving procedure; however, it is also a very powerful tool and collaboration of specialist, licenced experts, local authorities, and public participation can be very effective in eliminating severe environmental threats imposed by new structures.

On the negative side, it was observed that big energy projects developers like Upper Ogmore WF, can sometimes bend the rules, especially when it comes to environmental mitigation and cumulative effects including post-construction enhancement of the affected environment.

Thank You

Any Questions?



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