

Eskdalemuir Working Group Minutes – 29 August 2023

Welcome/Apologies

A Scottish Government official opened the meeting and noted apologies from a RenewableUK representative and welcomed a substitute attendee from Scottish Renewables.

Acoustic Noise – Enforcement and Mitigation Processes

A representative from the Onshore Wind SLG provided a background to acoustic noise, setting out how this led to the development of ETSU-R-97 and how this is considered in the planning system.

The group discussed the similarities and potential synergies between the process applied for acoustic noise and how this may translate across for seismic noise procedures. Enforcement measures were touched on and it was noted that MOD would need to minimise risk and ensure enforcement is not solely left to the planning system. The group discussed the potential for a standardised agreement which could be put in place between MOD and applicants, highlighting that transparency and consistency would be key.

The MOD representative agreed to take this point back for internal discussion.

Phase 4 and 5 Studies – update

It was confirmed that MOD's seismic expert has reviewed Phases 4 and 5 and there is a rework underway to reflect their comments, with the expected timeframe for this to be completed by the end of September. Further engagement with MOD on this would be expected to take place following these revisions.

The group discussed the Seismic Impact Limit elements of Phase 5, with most group members supportive of maximising as far as possible. It is noted that MOD do not consider it to be in their remit to comment on what limit is most appropriate.

It was agreed that the SG representative would take away an action point to discuss potential regulatory requirements to ensure an agreed upon SIL is robust and enforceable.

Future Work - expectations

The group discussed three key elements of work that may be required in future:

- Methodology for measuring operational seismic emissions of turbines;
- Methodology for predicting seismic emissions of turbines; and
- Development of an open access management tool.

It was recognised by the group that there will be financial implications for each of these workstreams, if taken forward, as well as logistical factors such as who bears responsibility for these and any sub-groups that may need to be established.

Group members were largely in agreement that a scope for each piece of work would be needed.

In relation to the open access management tool suggestion, the group discussed the need to ensure technical and planning aspects could be captured in a way that maintained MOD's position for budget management whilst ensuring transparency for applicants. It was agreed this point would be covered in more detail at a workshop being held by Scottish Government with MOD in attendance on 6th September 2023.

The potential for upgrading or expanding on the capabilities of RUK's Energy Pulse system was discussed, noting that this is currently only accessible to RUK members.

Draft Approach to Budget Management

This document was previously discussed at the EWG meeting held on 18th July 2023. The discussion on this point was focussed on agreement between members that this paper sufficiently covered the key points required.

Following group agreement that this paper is accurate, the SG representative agreed that this would help form the basis of the draft guidance document and that they would commence this process.

Action Points

- SG to host workshop with MOD, SR, RUK representatives and Xi Engineering on 6th September 2023.
- Xi Engineering to continue work on proposals for additional future workstreams
- Update to be provided when revisions to Phases 4 and 5 are complete