

## **Eskdalemuir Working Group Minutes – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### **Welcome**

A Scottish Government official opened the meeting and noted a formal agenda had not been provided in advance of the meeting as this was an opportunity to provide updates following the festive break. However, group members had been given a list of topics which would be useful to cover as part of the discussions.

### **Draft guidance update**

A Scottish Government representative provided an update in relation to timings and work underway on the draft guidance, noting that conversations had taken place during December with MOD on the timescales for their consideration of Phase 4 and 5.

As a result, it was agreed that the original deadline set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal to consult on the guidance by end of January 2024 was no longer achievable. Discussions are ongoing on a new deadline, and this will be communicated to the group once agreed.

It was also confirmed that BVGA have taken over responsibility for collating group member comments and changes to the draft, managing the iterative process of moving this towards a finalised consultative draft.

A BVGA representative provided an update on the status of the document, confirming that the aim was to collate versions of the document with separate comments as soon as possible and provide Scottish Government with a list of outstanding comments to be addressed by end of w/c 15 January.

Scottish Government will then consider these comments with a view to establishing sub-groups to have directed discussions with a focus on resolution. Sub-group meetings will ideally be sent out to group members by 19 January though this is dependent on how quickly BVGA can action the above.

### **MOD update**

The MOD representative confirmed that several work strands remain ongoing, with two key focuses at this stage. The first is developing a consultative draft on MOD's management approach for seismic budget and the MOD representative noted that Scottish Government and UK Government will be contacted regarding this in the first instance, with wider EWG members engagement to follow.

The second focus is the consideration of Phases 4 and 5 and the MOD representative confirmed that had agreement to bring in external consultant support on this matter. Timescales for this process were not available at present but it was agreed that further updates will be given by MOD on this matter at future EWG meetings.

### **Future Work Packages – implications and costings**

The AIFCL/SLG representative and a representative from Xi Engineering led on a discussion around forward planning future workstreams and establishing estimated costs for these. The workstreams briefly discussed by the group included development of a forecasting tool for industry to understand available SGV budget and estimate seismic impact for prospective developments, development of an updated safeguarding tool for MOD to enable effective management of SGV budget and work on technical mitigation solutions.

As part of the discussion on costs it was noted that there is not an unlimited funding stream available for any of the organisations present. To ensure effective planning for this it was agreed Xi Engineering would provide a rough estimate for each workstream by the end of January.

It was acknowledged that pipeline analysis conducted by BVGA would be beneficial to Xi Engineering providing these estimates and it was agreed that a BVGA representative and the Xi Engineering representative would take an action to discuss this following the group meeting. A further action point was noted for MOD and Xi Engineering to have further discussion on the potential to update their current safeguarding tool.

## **Industry Update**

Scottish Renewables held a seminar on 12 December 2023 to provide its members with an update on progress and offer an opportunity for industry to ask questions. It is anticipated another seminar will be useful, potentially once the draft guidance is out to consultation.

In addition, it was noted the delays to the guidance document timelines were discussed and accepted by Scottish Renewables' G12 group in advance of this group meeting.

Scottish Renewables have also updated their website to provide a page dedicated to information relating to the Eskdalemuir Seismic Array which includes EWG meeting minutes and access to the technical studies conducted. The Scottish Government representative noted that several meeting minutes remain outstanding and agreed an action to address this backlog and circulate meeting minutes as soon as practicably possible.

## **Actions List**

- Scottish Government and Scottish Renewables to meet and discuss timeline implications for draft guidance
- BVGA to issue list of comments in draft guidance to Scottish Government ASAP
- Scottish Government to ensure comments received from group members not yet provided to BVGA are passed over
- Xi Engineering to engage with BVGA on pipeline analysis
- Xi Engineering to engage with MOD on safeguarding tool requirements