

A photograph of an offshore wind farm at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, with a few clouds. The sea is dark with white-capped waves in the foreground. Several wind turbines are visible, their silhouettes against the bright sky. The overall mood is serene and powerful.

Salamander Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore EIA Report

Volume ER.B.2, Chapter 5: Stakeholder Consultation



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Simply Blue Group

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Applicant	Salamander Wind Project Company Limited (formerly called Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited), a joint venture between Ørsted, Simply Blue Group and Subsea7.
Energy Balancing Infrastructure (EBI)	Energy Balancing Infrastructure which will provide services to the electrical grid, such as storing energy to meet periods of peak demand and improving overall reliability, as well as additional services such as system monitoring and computing. EBI will be housed within buildings and / or containers which will be co-located with the Onshore Substation.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A statutory process by which the likely significant effects of certain projects must be assessed before a formal decision to proceed can be made. It involves the collection and consideration of environmental information, which fulfils the assessment requirements of the EIA Regulations, including the publication of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).
EIA Regulations	The regulations that apply to the Onshore Development are the Electricity Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 and the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.
Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)	A document reporting the findings of the EIA and produced in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
Landfall	The generic term applied to the entire landfall corridor between Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS) tide and the Transition Joint Bay (TJB) inclusive of all construction works, including the offshore ECC, and landfall compound, where the offshore cables come ashore north of Peterhead.
Offshore Development	The entire Offshore Development, including all offshore components of the Project (Wind Turbine Generators, Inter-array Cables and Offshore Export Cable(s), floating substructures, mooring lines and anchors, and all other associated offshore infrastructure) required across all Project phases from development to decommissioning, for which the Applicant is seeking consent.
Onshore Development	The entire Onshore Development, including Construction Compounds at the Landfall, temporary working areas, Onshore Export Cables, Transition Joint Bay, Joint Bays, Onshore Substation and Energy Balancing Infrastructure, Construction Compounds, any associated landscaping (if required) and access (and all other

Term	Definition
	associated infrastructure) across all Project phases of the Onshore Development from construction to decommissioning, for which the Applicant is seeking consent.
Onshore Substation	The electrical components for transforming the power supplied from the Salamander Project to 132 kilovolt (kV) and to adjust the power quality and power factor, as required to meet the UK Grid Code for supply to the National Grid.
Salamander Project	The proposed Salamander Offshore Wind Farm. The term covers all elements of both the offshore and onshore aspects of the project.
Salamander Project Team	The project team from Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited, responsible for developing the Salamander Project.
Scoping	An early part of the EIA process by which the key potential significant impacts of the project are identified, and methodologies identified for how these should be assessed. This process gives the relevant authorities and key consultees opportunity to comment and define the full extent of the final EIA – which can also then be tailored through the consultation process.

Acronyms

Term	Definition
ASCO	Aberdeen Service Company
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CES	Crown Estate Scotland
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
EBI	Energy Balancing Infrastructure
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Term	Definition
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
kV	Kilovolt
LVIA	Landscape Visual and Impact Assessment
MAU	Marine Analytical Unit
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MD-LOT	Marine Directorate - Licensing Operations Team
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NLB	Northern Lighthouse Board
NZCT	Net Zero Technology Centre
PAC	Pre-Application Consultation
PoAN	Proposal of Application Notice
RGU	Robert Gordon University
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RSPB	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland
RYA	Royal Yachting Association (Scotland)
SBES	Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SGN	Scottish Gas Networks
SSEN	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
SWPC	Salamander Wind Project Company Limited (formerly called SBES)

5 Stakeholder Consultation

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1.1 This chapter describes the stakeholder engagement undertaken by Salamander Wind Project Company Limited (SWPC) (formerly called Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited) (hereafter known as ‘the Applicant’) for the Onshore Development of the Salamander Project. In accordance with best practice in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), the consultation and engagement process has aimed to inform statutory and non-statutory stakeholders early in the development process of the Salamander Project and seek feedback at key milestones of the pre-application process. This chapter focuses on the stakeholder engagement undertaken that aligns with the EIA process.
- 5.1.1.2 Further information on the public consultation undertaken can be found in **Volume RP.B.3: Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**, which accompanies the consent applications to Aberdeenshire Council and the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government.
- 5.1.1.3 This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the technical and statutory engagement that has been undertaken relating to the onshore components of the Salamander Project.

5.2 Stakeholder Identification and Characterisation

- 5.2.1.1 In order to understand the types of stakeholders relevant to the Onshore Development, stakeholder identification and mapping was undertaken (detailed in **Section 5.2.2**).
- 5.2.1.2 Of these stakeholders, the technical stakeholders, which are defined as those stakeholders which are specific to certain EIA topic areas of the onshore application, were consulted with predominantly on a topic-by-topic basis.
- 5.2.1.3 Engagement with technical and other key stakeholders that were identified early in the engagement process, were continually engaged with throughout pre-application, including via Aberdeenshire Council’s pre-application advice service. Broader engagement on the application process for the Onshore Development has also occurred via regular meetings with Aberdeenshire Council and NatureScot.
- 5.2.1.4 Specific responses to consultation and pre-application advice for each topic are presented and discussed in the relevant technical assessment chapters within this EIAR (**Volume ER.B.3, Chapters 7 to 18**).
- 5.2.1.5 Consultations with other key stakeholders, such as members of the public and local community councils, has focused on providing general information, and seeking feedback on the development as a whole, including the onshore aspects. Further detail on this aspect of the engagement and associated feedback, and how feedback has been gathered during the EIA process, can be found in the PAC Report which will be submitted alongside both the Offshore and Onshore applications - therefore, only a summary will be provided here.

5.2.2 Stakeholder Mapping

- 5.2.2.1 **Table 5-1** shows the stakeholder list, identified through stakeholder mapping and analysis undertaken at the inception of the Salamander Project which acted as a live document and covered both onshore and offshore aspects. The list also includes stakeholders consulted through the formal scoping consultation process.
- 5.2.2.2 The list includes the identified relevant stakeholders which are a combination of statutory, technical, government, marine, and industry consultees. In addition to this list shown, there are also key interest groups and relevant community networks and organisations. The Stakeholder list was reviewed periodically throughout the EIAR development and pre-application process.

Table 5-1 Stakeholders identified through the Mapping Exercise

Government and Administration	
Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department	Longside Community Council
Buchan East Community Council	Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT)
Crown Estate Scotland (CES)	Peterhead Community Council
Cruden Community Council	Rathen, Cortes and Memsie Community Council
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DEZNZ) – (formerly Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS))	Scottish Government
Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government	Strichen Community Council
Invercairn Community Council	
Technical (Statutory and Non-statutory)	
Civil Aviation Authority	NatureScot
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB)
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
Marine Directorate	Scottish Water
Marine Directorate Science	Transport Scotland
Ministry of Defence (MoD)/Defence Estates	
Interest Groups	
Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)	Scottish Wildlife Trust
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland	Visit Scotland
Royal Yachting Association (RYA) (Scotland)	
Industry/ Supply Chains/ Academia/ Education	
Aberdeen Service Company (ASCO)	Peterhead Academy
Aberdeen Harbour Board	Peterhead Developers Forum

Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)
Aberdeen's Robert Gordon University (RGU)	Scottish Development International
European Marine Energy Centre	Scottish Enterprise
Fraserburgh Academy	Scottish Gas Networks (SGN)
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Scottish Maritime Academy
Mintlaw Academy	ScottishPower Renewables
National Air Traffic Services	The University of Edinburgh
North-East Scotland College	University of Aberdeen
Net Zero Technology Centre (NZTC)	University of St Andrews - Sea Mammal Research Unit
Pale Blue Dot	
Community and Media	
Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust	Peterhead Gazette
Aberdeen Group	Peterhead Golf Club
BBC Scotland	Peterhead Sailing Club
Buchan Development Partnership	Public/Local Community
Buchan East Community Council	Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers
Buchanhaven Harbour Trust	Scottish sub-aqua Club
Buchanhaven Heritage Centre	Scottish Surfing Federation
Cruden Bay Community Association	Scottish Wildlife Trust (Aberdeenshire)
Cruden Bay Harbour Trustees	Sport Scotland
Local golf clubs	Surfers Against Sewage (Scotland)
Moray & Firth Coastal Partnership	VisitScotland
Peterhead Canoe Club	Ythan Biodiversity Volunteers

Peterhead Community Council	
Fisheries and Marine	
Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW)	The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)
Fisheries Management Scotland	Scottish Fisheries Sustainable Accreditation Group (SFSAG) - Northern shelf saithe
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)
Marine Directorate – Marine and Fisheries	Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group (SPSG) - Atlanto-Scandian herring
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA)

5.3 Engagement Approach and Key Engagement Activities

5.3.1.1 The Applicant's engagement approach has sought to identify and engage all stakeholders, including organisations, individuals, and communities, who may have an interest in the Onshore Development. This enabled the Salamander Project to benefit from stakeholders' experience and expertise to inform and refine the development of both the offshore and onshore project aspects.

5.3.1.2 The Applicant is committed to a stakeholder engagement process with both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. Stakeholders have been identified, informed, and consulted on the Salamander Project from an early stage. The Salamander Project Team has continued ongoing communications and meetings throughout the pre-application process and gathering feedback at key pre-application milestones of the Salamander Project.

5.3.2 Onshore Policy Consultation Requirements

5.3.2.1 As the Salamander Project is considered to be a major development under Scottish legislation, therefore under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, pre-application consultation (PAC) is required for the Salamander Project. Pre-application discussions with both Scottish Ministers and relevant stakeholders are also encouraged at the early stages of a development proposal, under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

5.3.2.2 As amended by The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021, requirements include:

- Submission of a screening notice (optional);
- Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) to be submitted, which should also include details on consultation that will be undertaken (when, with whom and what form it will take);
- Public consultation to be advertised in local newspaper circulating in the locality of the proposed development – including a notice for both the first and second public consultation events. This must include:
 - A description of, and location of, the proposed development

- Details on how further information can be obtained (in-person and online)
- The date and place for the public event
- How participants can make comments on the proposals
- A statement that this feedback to the applicant are not official representations to the planning authority, and that there will be an opportunity for these representations to be submitted at a later date once the application is submitted.
- Two public in-person events to be held, after agreement on consultation in the PoAN notice with the planning authority, with the final event to be held at least 14 days after the first public event.
 - At the final event the applicant must provide feedback to the public in respect to comments received by the prospective applicant in regards to the proposed development.
- A pre-application consultation report must be developed and submitted, in line with Regulation 7B¹.

5.3.2.3 All the above regulations have been met in the pre-application phase, which is detailed further in the PAC Report.

5.3.3 Key Stakeholder Meeting Summary

5.3.3.1 The Applicant held meetings with statutory and non-statutory consultees throughout the EIA process. These meetings were used to inform consultees on the progress of the Onshore Development, to enable consultees to raise concerns and discuss them with the Applicant, and to ensure the assessment process was transparent and robust. In addition to written communications and meetings, public consultation has also taken place via PAC events and online exhibitions, which are detailed further in the PAC Report.

5.3.3.2 Engagement with specific consultees is detailed in **Table 5-2** and **Table 5-3**, including the consultee, the topic of discussion and phase of engagement, and the date the meeting was held.

Table 5-2 Meetings with Statutory Consultees for the Onshore Development

Consultee	Topic of discussion (Phase)	Meeting	Date
Aberdeenshire Council	Pre-application Advice (Pre-Scoping)	✓	30 August 2022
	Quarterly meetings (with MD-LOT)	✓	6 December 2022 start date
	Landscape Visual and Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Cultural Heritage and Archaeology (Scoping)	✓	24 November 2022
	Onshore Ornithology, Ecology and Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology (Scoping)	✓	30 November 2022

¹ [The Town and Country Planning \(Pre-Application Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Consultee	Topic of discussion (Phase)	Meeting	Date
	L VIA Viewpoint Consultation (Scoping)	✓	14 July 2023
	Meeting on approach to Net Positive Impact for Biodiversity	✓	08 March 2024
	Pre-application Advice Meeting	✓	23 May 2024
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Scoping workshops and communications (Scoping)	-	Didn't attend
	Pre-application Advice Meeting	✓	23 May 2024
NatureScot	Salamander Project Introduction and Site Selection (Pre-scoping)	✓	06 July 2020
	Quarterly meetings (with MD-LOT)	✓	30 August 2022 start date
	Advised location of proposed onshore cable route and habitat characterisation via letter	✓	September 2022
	Onshore Ornithology, Ecology and Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology (Scoping)	✓	30 November 2022
	Post-scoping meetings across various EIA topics (EIAR)	✓	Various
	Pre-application Advice Meeting	✓	23 May 2024
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	Onshore Ornithology, Ecology and Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology (Scoping)	✓	30 November 2022

Table 5-3 Meetings with Non-Statutory Consultees for the Onshore Development

Consultee	Topic of discussion (Phase)	Meeting	Date
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland	Salamander Project Introduction and Site Selection (Pre-Scoping)	✓	03 July 2020
	Proposed breeding bird survey methodology	✓	21 March 2023
	Meeting to discuss Scoping comments (EIAR)	✓	25 January 2024
Transport Scotland	Onshore substation access meeting	✓	09 March 2023

Consultee	Topic of discussion (Phase)	Meeting	Date
Ministry of Defence (MoD)	Project Introductory call	✓	20 June 2023
	Project update (EIAR)	✓	5 December 2023

5.3.3.3 Throughout the development of the Salamander Project, the Salamander Project Team have sought to keep Community Councils informed about the Salamander Project’s progress. Representatives from Peterhead Community Council and Buchan East Community Council attended the first round of Pre-Application Consultation events (Scoping phase) in June 2023, in Peterhead and Crimond, respectively. Two representatives from Cruden Bay Community Council attended the second round Pre-Application Consultation events (EIAR phase) in Peterhead in November. The Salamander Project Team met with Cruden Bay Community Council in February 2024 to present an introduction, field discussion and answer questions from members. Community Council representatives also attended the third round Pre-Application Consultation event (EIAR phase) in Peterhead in May 2024. This engagement is detailed further in the PAC Report (**Volume RP.B.3: Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**).

5.4 Stakeholder Engagement Phases

5.4.1.1 While stakeholder engagement was generally fluid throughout the pre-application process, the purpose of these engagements can be divided into three phases: Pre-scoping, Scoping and EIAR. The section below summarises the key objectives and activities undertaken in each phase, and any public consultation which is detailed separately in the PAC Report (**Volume RP.B.3: Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**).

5.4.2 Phase 1 - Pre-scoping

5.4.2.1 Pre-scoping engagement aimed to start initial conversations with key stakeholders and understand any concerns or issues early in the process of site selection. This phase started to build relationships and contacts with key stakeholders and built the foundation for future stages of consultation.

5.4.2.2 A series of targeted but informal workshops were scheduled via Microsoft Teams to inform consultees of the Salamander Project. This was to gain initial views to feed into the site selection process and pre-scoping as well as discussing the consenting process for the Salamander Project.

5.4.2.3 There was no public consultation during the pre-scoping phase.

5.4.3 Phase 2 - Scoping (and First Round Pre-Application Consultation Events)

5.4.3.1 The scoping process is discussed in further detail in **Volume ER.B.2, Chapter 4: EIA Methodology**. Engagement with stakeholders during this phase was undertaken in the following stages:

- Scoping briefing packs and workshops: Distribution of briefing packs to stakeholders in advance of meetings (two weeks), which included a high-level baseline, the Scoping methodology (embedded mitigation and an overview of the impacts scoped in and out), and the EIA methodology). Followed by meetings (with presentations and discussion) that took place for ten key receptor topics. The feedback from these workshops was used to inform the Scoping Report;
- Engagement with regulators and other stakeholders: in relation to licences and permits associated with pre-development surveys took place;
- Formal submission and publication of the Scoping Report and request for a Scoping Opinion; and

- Public / stakeholder-specific engagement events: including outreach and communications to notify the public of the events, and updates to the Salamander Project website.

5.4.3.2 The Salamander EIA Scoping Report (SBES, 2023) was submitted to MD-LOT and Aberdeenshire Council in February 2023. Subsequently a Scoping Opinion was received from MD-LOT in June 2023 and separately from Aberdeenshire Council in April 2023 regarding the Onshore Development of the Salamander Project.

5.4.3.3 As the Applicant will seek consents separately for the components of the Offshore and Onshore Developments, and a separate Offshore EIAR has been submitted to MD-LOT, only feedback that relates to the Onshore Development is included within this Onshore EIAR.

First Round Public Consultation

5.4.3.4 The first round of public consultation took place in June - July 2023, to inform and gather feedback on the Salamander Project. A detailed summary of the public consultation can be found in the PAC Report, which accompanies the consent application.

5.4.4 Phase 3 – Environmental Impact Assessment Report (and Second and Third Round Pre-Application Consultation events)

5.4.4.1 This phase considered the feedback received in the Scoping Opinions, and the first round PAC events, as well as other ongoing stakeholder engagement, to refine the Salamander Project proposals and inform the impact assessments provided in the EIAR.

5.4.4.2 This included targeted engagement with key statutory and technical stakeholders where further engagement was deemed necessary.

Second Round Public Consultation

5.4.4.3 The second round of public consultation took place in November – December 2023, to provide an update on the further development of the Salamander Project since the first PAC event and where feedback had been taken into consideration. A detailed summary of the public consultation can be found in the PAC Report, which accompanies the consent application.

Third Round Public Consultation

5.4.4.4 The third round of PAC took place in April – May 2024, to communicate how feedback had been considered from the previous PAC stages, and address how this feedback has been incorporated into the Salamander Project, where relevant. While this stage did not actively seek feedback from the community, comments were recorded from the in-person events or via email.

Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation Questionnaire

5.4.4.5 In response to the Salamander EIA Scoping Report, the Marine Analytical Unit (MAU) noted within the Scoping Opinion received from MD-LOT that further focused engagement with a wider range of interest groups should be undertaken in relation to socio-economic impacts. The Salamander Project therefore conducted further consultation with key stakeholders, including local marine recreational groups and community organisations. The identified stakeholders were contacted via email on 01 December 2023 inviting responses to a questionnaire.

5.4.4.6 The consultation largely focused on socio-cultural and distributional issues however, no responses were received from these consultees.

5.4.5 Ongoing Engagement

5.4.5.1 The Applicant will carry out ongoing engagement and conversations with key stakeholders throughout and beyond the consenting process, through to construction and operational phases. For further information on the progress of the Salamander Project, updates can be viewed on the Salamander Project's website: <https://salamanderfloatingwind.com>

5.5 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.5.1.1 Through this stakeholder engagement process, all statutory and legislative requirements have been met, and key statutory and technical stakeholders have been involved throughout the EIA process, and involved in ongoing conversations and provision of feedback as the Salamander Project has progressed through the pre-application stage.
- 5.5.1.2 Further detail on the statutory and technical stakeholder engagement undertaken, including the discussion topics and feedback received, and how this has been considered and incorporated throughout the EIA process, can be found in the technical assessment chapters of this EIAR (**Volume ER.B.3, Chapters 7 to 18**).
- 5.5.1.3 Detail on the public consultation process and feedback received, and how this feedback has been considered, can be found in the PAC Report that accompanies this application (**Volume RP.B.3: Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**).

5.6 References

Aberdeenshire Council (2023). Scoping Opinion for Salamander Offshore Wind Farm.

MD-LOT (Marine Directorate - Licensing Operations Team), (2023). Scoping Opinion for Salamander Offshore Wind Farm.

Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Ltd. (2023). Salamander Offshore Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report. Available online at:

https://marine.gov.scot/sites/default/files/salamander_offshore_wind_farm_-_scoping_report.pdf

Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations (2009)