



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Cossans Solar & BESS EIA Report

### TRIO POWER Limited

Prepared by:

**SLR Consulting Limited**

Office 6.01, Clockwise Offices, Savoy Tower, 77  
Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3BZ

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Figure 1.1: Site Location



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| BESS     | Battery Energy Storage System          |
| EIA      | Environmental Impact Assessment        |
| GWh/p.a. | Gigawatt hours per annum               |
| LVIA     | Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment |
| MW       | Megawatt                               |
| MWp      | Megawatt peak                          |
| NPF4     | National Planning Framework 4          |
| NTS      | Non-Technical Summary                  |
| PV       | Photovoltaic                           |



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background & Site Description

1.1.1 TRIO POWER Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') is applying to the Scottish Ministers for Section 36 consent, under the terms of the Electricity Act 1997, to install and operate a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) array and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Cossans, near Forfar, Angus (the 'Site').

1.1.2 The Section 36 application is supported by this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as 'the EIA Regulations').

1.1.3 This chapter provides an introduction to the Proposed Development and the background to the application, as well as providing an overview of the purpose of the EIA Report, its structure and the EIA project team.

### Site Description

1.1.4 The Proposed Development is located approximately 1.6 km west of Forfar, 3.5 km southeast of Kirriemuir and 2.6 km northeast of Glamis within the Angus Council administrative area. The Site largely comprises two land parcels on either side of a minor road, surrounded by agricultural fields and woodland. The total area of the Site is approximately 87 ha (refer to **Figure 1.1**).

1.1.5 The existing land use is mainly agricultural, with small sections of woodland. The Site is bordered by trees to the west, while the other boundaries are more open. A buried gas pipeline traverses the eastern portion of the Site, running from north to south, which has been appropriately accounted for in the overall design and layout of the Proposed Development.

### The Proposed Development

1.1.6 The Proposed Development will comprise a ground-mounted solar PV array and associated infrastructure with an estimated export capacity of 49.9 MW with a solar build out of 65 megawatt peak (MWp). The panels will have a maximum height of 2.87 m above ground level. It is proposed that the solar array will operate for up to 42 years. The Site will be fully restored to agricultural use after a decommissioning process.

1.1.7 The Proposed Development also includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an approximate capacity of 35 MW. The BESS will store excess energy generated by the solar PV array during periods of low demand or high generation and release it during periods of high demand or low generation. This system will enhance the reliability and efficiency of the renewable energy supply. The BESS will consist of battery units housed in containers, inverters, transformers, and associated infrastructure. The BESS will be designed to operate for the same



- duration as the solar PV array and will be decommissioned and removed at the end of the project's life.
- 1.1.8 The annual power output of the Proposed Development is estimated at 62.5 Giga-Watt hours per annum (GWh/pa), which would provide enough electricity to power approximately 23,000 average Scottish households. The Proposed Development would contribute towards international and national targets for the generation of renewable energy and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
  - 1.1.9 The BESS would be contained in a compound enclosed by a 2.4 m high stock proof perimeter fence. A small substation with inverters and transformers will be located adjacent to the BESS. The total area fenced off for the BESS and substation will be approximately 3,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The indicative maximum height will be 2.58 m for the BESS and 2.7 m for the substation.
  - 1.1.10 The associated infrastructure will include CCTV mounted poles, a temporary construction compound, perimeter fencing around the PV arrays, underground cabling and access tracks across the site, and landscaping.
  - 1.1.11 The precise grid connection route to Lunanhead substation would be subject to a separate application, which would require consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, which is to be the subject of a separate consenting process. The Section 37 application would be progressed by the transmission network operator, Scottish Hydro Electricity Power Distribution (SHEPD).

## 1.2 The Applicant

- 1.2.1 BLC Energy was set up in 2022 to develop solar and BESS projects in the UK. The three partners have over 60 years' experience in developing renewable energy projects and have so far secured planning consent for three solar projects in Scotland.
- 1.2.2 BLC are currently developing eleven solar and BESS projects throughout the UK including five in Scotland.
- 1.2.3 In 2023, BLC entered into a development services agreement with Octopus Energy (via Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT)). TRIO POWER Limited was set up as the development company and is wholly owned by ORIT and managed by BLC Energy. BLC are developing the Site on behalf of the Applicant, TRIO POWER Ltd.
- 1.2.4 ORIT is an Impact Fund with a core objective to accelerate the transition to net zero through its investments, building and operating a diversified portfolio of Renewable Energy Assets. ORIT is managed by Octopus Energy Generation.
- 1.2.5 Octopus Energy Generation are one of Europe's largest investors in renewables, operating around £4 billion of green energy generation across seven countries. Octopus Energy Generation operate solar and wind projects across the UK.



- 1.2.6 Further information on Octopus Energy Generation and Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust can be found on its company website at <https://www.octopusenergygeneration.com/> and <https://www.octopusrenewablesinfrastructure.com/>.

## 1.3 Renewable Energy & Planning Policy

- 1.3.1 A separate Planning Statement has been provided which contains a detailed appraisal of the Proposed Development against the relevant statutory Development Plan policies, national planning and energy policy and other material considerations. The statutory Development Plan is made up of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Angus Local Development Plan.
- 1.3.2 In recent years, United Kingdom and Scottish Government policies have focused increasingly on concerns about climate change. Each tier of Government has developed targets, policies and actions to achieve targets to deal with the climate crisis and generate more renewable energy and electricity.
- 1.3.3 The UK Government retains responsibility for the overall direction of energy policy, although some elements are devolved to the Scottish Government. The UK Government has published a series of policy documents setting out how targets can be achieved. Solar PV and battery storage are important technologies to achieve these various goals.
- 1.3.4 The Scottish Government has published a number of policy documents and has set its own targets. The most relevant policy, legislative documents and more recent policy statements published by the Scottish Government include:
- The Scottish Energy Strategy (December 2017);
  - The Scottish Government's declaration of a Climate Emergency (April 2019);
  - The Scottish Climate Change Plan Update (2020);
  - The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the legally binding net zero target for 2045 and interim targets for 2030 and 2040;
  - The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (January 2023); and
  - The Scottish Government's annual 'Programme for Government' (September 2024).
- 1.3.5 The Proposed Development is for the generation of electricity from renewable energy sources and comes as a direct response to national planning and energy policy objectives.
- 1.3.6 The Proposed Development would make a significant contribution to the attainment of emissions reduction, renewable energy and electricity targets at both the Scottish and UK levels. Detailed reference to the renewable energy policy framework is provided in the Planning Statement.



## 1.4 Purpose of the EIA Report

- 1.4.1 SLR Consulting has been commissioned by the Applicant to coordinate the EIA process for the Proposed Development in accordance with the EIA Regulations. The EIA process is the systematic process of identifying, predicting and evaluating the environmental impacts of a proposed development. The EIA process is reported in this EIA Report, which identifies the methodologies used to assess the environmental effects predicted to result from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Where appropriate, it also sets out mitigation measures designed to prevent, reduce and, if at all reasonably possible, offset potential significant adverse environmental impacts. An assessment of residual effects, those expected to remain following implementation of mitigation measures, is also presented.
- 1.4.2 The main findings and conclusions of this EIA Report are summarised in a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), as required by the EIA Regulations. The NTS, provided as a stand-alone document, summarises the key findings of the EIA in easily accessible, non-technical language, ensuring everyone with an interest in the project can understand and access information on its predicted environmental effects.

## 1.5 Structure of the EIA Report

- 1.5.1 The EIA Report is split into three volumes, with the NTS forming a separate document.
- 1.5.2 Volume 1 of the EIA Report (this document) is structured as follows:
- Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the EIA Report and its authors;
  - Chapter 2 provides a description of the site selection and design iteration process, detailing how the Proposed Development evolved through the course of the assessment process and the elimination of alternative development options;
  - Chapter 3 provides a description of the existing site, details of the Proposed Development, the construction, operation and maintenance processes, decommissioning process and need for the project;
  - Chapter 4 outlines the EIA approach, including the regulatory framework, assessment methodology, consultation, significance criteria, mitigation measures, and cumulative impact considerations, ensuring compliance with environmental legislation and planning policies;
  - Chapter 5 assesses the effects on landscape and visual amenity;
  - Chapter 6 assesses the effects on ecology, biodiversity and ornithology;
  - Chapter 7 assesses the effects on flood risk and drainage;
  - Chapter 8 assesses the effects on the historic environment;
  - Chapter 9 assesses the effects of noise;
  - Chapter 10 assesses the effects on transport and access;





- Chapter 11 assesses the effects of glint and glare;
  - Chapter 12 is the Schedule of Environmental Mitigation and Residual and cumulative effects, which summarises all the mitigation measures and predicated residual and cumulative effects presented in this EIA Report.
- 1.5.3 Volume 2a contains the figures that inform the EIA Report;
- 1.5.4 Volume 2b contains the Landscape and Visual Impact (LVIA) visualisations that inform Chapter 5.
- 1.5.5 Volume 2c contains the Cultural Heritage Wirelines that inform Chapter 8.
- 1.5.6 Volume 3 contains supporting information and technical appendices for each of the technical chapters, and any additional studies that will be prepared to inform the relevant assessments to be reported in the EIA Report.
- 1.5.7 Volume 4 contains the confidential Technical Appendices.
- 1.5.8 A suite of additional supporting documents has been prepared to accompany the application. Included in this, a Planning Statement sets out an assessment of the Proposed Development in the context of national planning, energy policy, local development plan, and emerging planning policies. It also considers the potential benefits and harm which may arise and concludes as to the overall acceptability of the Proposed Development in relation to the planning context.
- 1.5.9 In addition to the Planning Statement, a Pre-Application Consultation Report (undertaken directly by Represent Comms) has been submitted to support the application. These additional documents do not form part of the EIA Report.

## 1.6 Assessment Team

- 1.6.1 The assessment was undertaken by SLR Consulting's environmental teams supported by external consultants. **Table 1.1** outlines the key members of the EIA team and their experience.
- 1.6.2 SLR has provided over 30 years of expert advice to help deliver environmental and advisory solutions. Operating from over 100 offices with approximately 3,500 staff across Europe, Asia, Americas, Africa and Australasia, SLR offers significant experience in delivery of environmental planning and technical assessment for a range of renewable energy developments.

**Table 1.1: EIA Project Team**

| Consultant    | Input to the EIA     | Company        | Experience  |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|---|
| Gavin Spowage | EIA Project Director | SLR Consulting | BSc (Hons) Environmental and Management Sciences<br>MSc (Distinction)<br>Environmental Management<br>Gavin has over 20 years' |



| Consultant       | Input to the EIA                | Company             | Experience  |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
|                  |                                 |                     | experience as an Environmental Consultant   |
| Bronwyn Fisher   | EIA Project Manager             | SLR Consulting      | BSc (Hons) Conservation Ecology with 12 years' environmental consulting experience  |
| Gregory Walton   | EIA Assistant Project Manager   | SLR Consulting      | MSc Environmental Sciences<br>2 years' experience in the environmental consultancy industry.  |
| Isabel Romero    | Solar Designer<br>Glint & Glare | SLR Consulting      | BEng (Hons) Chemical Engineering, MEng Chemical Engineering, MSc Renewable Energy with 6 years' experience in solar PV design, energy yield assessments, and glare studies. |
| Adegboye Adejumo | BESS Designer                   | SLR Consulting      | Eng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering, MSc Renewable Energy<br>10+ years' experience in PV design, technical advisory, and feasibility studies for solar and BESS projects.     |
| Alasdair Baxter  | Noise (Lead)                    | SLR Consulting      | BSc Natural Sciences, MSc Environmental Management, PGDip Acoustics and Noise Control<br>20+ years' experience in noise and vibration assessments.                          |
| Alison Hood      | Ecology & Ornithology (Lead)    | SLR Consulting      | BSc (Hons) Physical Geography, MSc Environmental Consultancy<br>10+ years' experience in ecology, biodiversity assessments, and environmental consultancy                   |
| Allan Taylor     | Ornithology                     | SLR Consulting      | BA Geography (Hons), MSc Environmental Management, ACIEEM<br>Over 10 years' experience in undertaking ornithological survey and assessment.                                 |
| David Bell       | Planning and Energy Policy      | David Bell Planning | BSc (Hons) Town & Country Planning, Diploma Urban Design, MCIHT, MRTPI.<br>30 years' experience in planning and development.  |



| Consultant      | Input to the EIA                     | Company             | Experience  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Pippa Gardner   | Planning and Energy Policy           | David Bell Planning | BLE (Hons) Land Economy, PGDip Town & Country Planning, MRTPI<br>24+ years' experience in planning, EIA, and renewable energy projects, including wind, solar, BESS, and grid infrastructure. |
| Craig Scott     | Landscape & Visual (Lead)            | Stephenson Halliday | BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture, GradDip Landscape Architecture<br>20+ years' experience in renewable energy project design.   |
| Riley Frew      | Landscape & Visual                   | Stephenson Halliday |   |
| Lynne Roy       | Cultural Heritage (Lead)             | AOC Archaeology     | BA (Hons) Archaeology and Prehistory, MSc Geoarchaeology<br>FSA Scot, MCIfA<br>20+ years' experience in cultural heritage impact assessments, archaeology, and renewable energy developments. |
| Juan Chacon     | Cultural Heritage (Lead)             | AOC Archaeology     | BA & MA in Art History, MA in Classical Art and Archaeology<br>7 years' experience in commercial archaeology  |
| Stephen Donnan  | Hydrology, drainage and flood (Lead) | Gondolin            | MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering.<br>7+ years' experience in hydrology.  |
| Richard Lucey   | Hydrology, drainage and flood        | Gondolin            | MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering, GMICE<br>Over 13 years' experience in flood risk, drainage design, and civil engineering for renewable energy projects.  |
| Michael Summers | Transport (Lead)                     | ECS                 | BSc (Hons), MSc, MCiHT, CMILT<br>20+ years' experience in transportation planning, infrastructure design, and development consultancy.  |



## 1.7 Availability of the EIA Report

- 1.7.1 Electronic copies of the EIA Report, including all figures, appendices and accompanying documents are available to view on the project website: <https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/cossans-solar-and-bess/>
- 1.7.2 Electronic copies of the EIA Report can also be accessed on the Energy Consents Unit online portal, <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationSearch.aspx>.
- 1.7.3 A physical copy of the EIA Report is available for viewing at the following location:  
Forfar Library  
West High Street  
Forfar  
DD8 1BA
- 1.7.4 Hard copies of the NTS are available free of charge upon request from:  
SLR Consulting Limited,  
The Tun,  
4 Jackson's Entry,  
Edinburgh,  
United Kingdom,  
EH8 8PJ

## 1.8 Representations to the Application

- 1.8.1 Any representations to the Section 36 application should be made directly to the Energy Consent Unit at [Representations\\_Mailbox@gov.scot](mailto:Representations_Mailbox@gov.scot).
- 1.8.2 Representations should be dated, clearly stating the name of the project (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations.



## 1.9 References

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