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CARES CASE STUDY NORTH UIST WIND

BACKGROUND

UistWind is a project owned by the North Uist Development Company (Trading) Ltd (NUDC-T), a Community Benefit Society (BenCom). The BenCom was set up to enable the development of their community wind project with the purchase and installation of two 900kW wind turbines. The full generation from the wind turbines commenced in September 2019.



- **Location:** Criongabhal, near Clachan, North Uist
- **Technology:** Onshore Wind
- **CARES funding:** CARES Pre-Planning Loan of £150K; CARES Post-Consent Loan of £45K; CARES Enablement Grant of £20k to assist the share offers.
- **Date operational:** September 2019

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The North Uist community first initiated the early stages of development of the renewable energy scheme in 2010. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar approved the planning application in December 2013, however the Ministry of Defence (MOD) objected on the grounds that the turbines would interfere with air defence radar systems at South Cletraval.

The Scottish Government called-in the planning application for a local public enquiry and Scottish ministers agreed with the reporter's conclusions in respect of radar issues and refused planning permission.

The NUDC-T sought various ways to find a mutually agreeable solution while continuing to progress development work on the financial, legal and logistical aspects of the project.

Planning approval was granted in June 2017 subject to several planning conditions, including reaching eventual agreement with the MOD on a radar mitigation scheme. A mutual agreement was finally reached in late 2018 and the project was then able to move on to achieve financial close and start construction. The turbines became operational in September 2019 and were one of the last community wind schemes to receive the Feed-in Tariff.

OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Wind yield analysis forecasted that the two turbines (1.8MW in total) can generate more than 6,370MWh of electricity each year.

In addition to a return for the BenCom investors, the project will create a long-term community fund that will be managed locally for the benefit of community projects.

At the launch of its community share offer, it was predicted that the project will generate up to £2.3 million over its expected lifetime of c.25 years, generating electricity sales that will result in an annual income to the community of c.£105,000.

LESSONS LEARNED

Murdo Murray, Local Energy Scotland's Development Officer for the Western Isles and Skye, was involved with the project from November 2013.

Murdo said: "The project's completion demonstrates what can be achieved when a community has the determination and resilience to persevere against the many setbacks and hurdles which may come its way.

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“The biggest challenge with this project was dealing with the MOD which took a large amount of time and effort.

“However, once we got through this it was actually heartening to find the helpfulness of the officers in the various departments that had to be negotiated to reach a final settlement.

“For other communities in a similar situation – I would say keep on keeping on and don’t give up!”

When dealing with such difficult to solve issues we recommend that community developers have on-call support and the correct technical and negotiating expertise in place - and that’s where we can help.

Website: uistwind.com

To find out more about funding from the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme, visit localenergy.scot/funding



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