



Glen Strathfarrar VISTA Project

October 2023



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Who we are

We are SSEN Transmission, the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission. We are responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland, maintaining and investing in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network.



Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

Our first priority is to provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to our communities. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

Our operating area is home to vast renewable energy resources and this is being harnessed by wind, hydro and marine generation. Working closely with National Grid, the GB transmission System Operator, we also enable these electricity generators to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections and allowing the electricity generated by them to be transported to areas of demand across the country.

Scotland's transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK and Scotland's Net Zero targets. We're already a mass

exporter of renewable energy, with around two thirds of power generated in our network area exported to demand centres further south. By 2050, the north of Scotland is expected to need 40GW of low carbon energy capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have around 8GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland.

As a natural monopoly, we are closely regulated by the GB energy regulator, Ofgem, who determines how much revenue we are allowed to earn for constructing, maintaining and renovating our transmission network in the north of Scotland. These costs are shared between all those using the transmission system, including generation developers and electricity consumers.

Following a minority stake sale which completed in November 2022, we are now owned 75% by SSE plc and 25% by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board.

As a stakeholder-led business, SSEN Transmission is committed to inclusive stakeholder engagement, and we conduct this at an 'Advanced' level as assessed by AccountAbility, the international consulting and standards firm.

VISTA Overview

Background

The electricity and gas markets regulator, Ofgem, is responsible for administering a £500m fund for GB electricity transmission owners to mitigate the impact of existing electricity infrastructure on the visual amenity of nationally designated landscapes.

In response to Ofgem's funding, SSEN Transmission is taking forward a number of engineering and landscaping proposals across its network region, including the VISTA (Visual Impact of Scottish Transmission Assets) initiative.

VISTA represents an opportunity to reassess the historic electricity infrastructure within, and in some instances, in close proximity to National Parks and National Scenic Areas (NSAs) in the north of Scotland.

Ofgem funding may be awarded and utilised to further enhance designated landscapes by reducing the visual impact of existing overhead electricity transmission lines and substations.

SSEN Transmission has published a policy document that sets out further information on VISTA, which is available online:



[ssen-transmission.co.uk/
about-us/sustainability
-and-environment/vista
-visual-impact-of-scottish
-transmission-assets/](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/about-us/sustainability-and-environment/vista-visual-impact-of-scottish-transmission-assets/)



Stakeholder engagement



Since November 2018, we have sought stakeholders' views on how VISTA should be delivered in the future, and we published our "Visual Impact of Scottish Transmission Assets (VISTA): Our Approach for RIIO-T2" Policy Document in December 2019.

As part of updating this Policy Document in 2021, we invited comments from core stakeholders, including those who provided input to the original schemes. We also presented the intended changes to the Policy Document at an online discussion meeting. An overview of the comments received and how these have been incorporated into our policy is detailed on our website.





Read our
Policy Document

Key objectives of VISTA

The key objectives for the VISTA initiative are set out in the policy document. SSEN Transmission aims to consider projects which will:

- Deliver the most beneficial enhancements for Scotland's precious landscapes while keeping undesirable environmental impacts associated with specific mitigation measures (such as habitat impacts of undergrounding) to a minimum
- Enable users of National Parks and NSAs to benefit further from their recreational, educational and social offering
- Provide wider benefits in addition to the landscape mitigation (such as biodiversity enhancement)
- Protect the technical viability of the wider transmission network
- Be economical and efficient
- Involve a wider range of stakeholders

Background

1 Identifying priorities

- Identification of transmission infrastructure Screening of transmission infrastructure
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Identify most important impacts

2 Defining the projects

- Review priority areas in more detail
- Identify mitigation options
- Appraisal of options and potential benefits
- Selection of infrastructure and mitigation proposals

3 Developing the projects

- Review priority areas in more detail
- Technical, Environmental and Economic
- Feasibility Detailed development of projects in collaboration with Stakeholders

4 Developing the projects

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Consent applications
- Submission of Potential Projects to OFGEM
- Implementation - Construction and maintenance

What is there now?

The existing overhead line comprises a steel lattice tower with a 132kV circuit on one side and a 33kV circuit on the other. The line links the existing Deanie Hydro Power Station at the western edge of the NSA with Culligran Hydro Power Station to the east, and then continues onto Beaulieu (via Aigas and Kilmorack), linking the four generators to the grid. The power line was built in the 1960s along with the hydroelectric power stations.

Existing line



Modified view - overhead lines and pylons removed



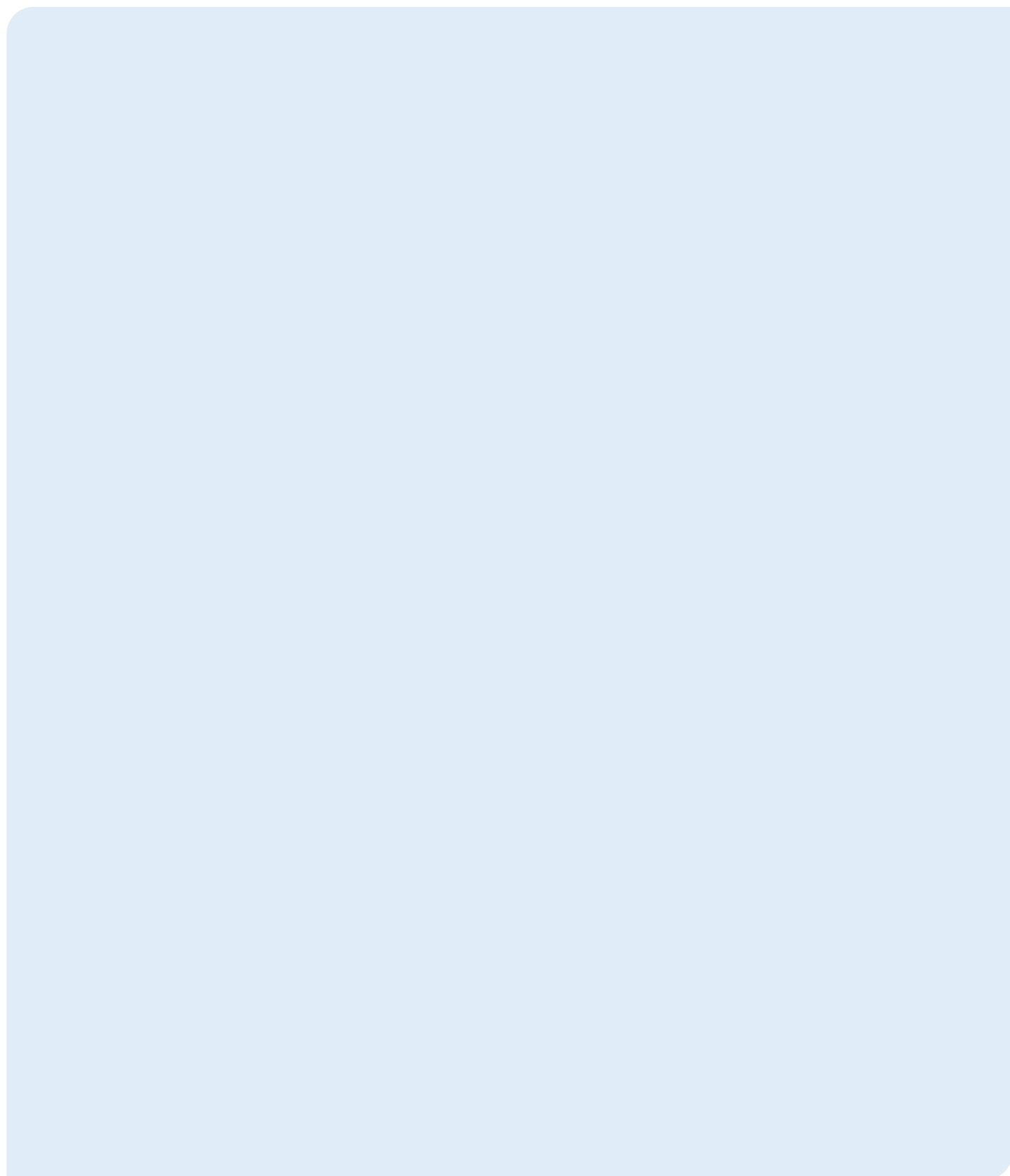
What is proposed?

Approximately 4km of the existing 132kV and 33kV overhead line from the new Deanie Substation to Tower 13 will be underground. This section of overhead line is within Glen Strathfarrar National Scenic Area and is highly visible from the road along Loch Bennacharan and surrounding hills.

At the western end, the new underground cable will connect into a new replacement Deanie Substation site. Tower 13 at the eastern end will be replaced with a new tower and cable sealing end compound, which will bring the underground cables onto the overhead line.



Notes



Feedback and letters of support

We encourage feedback and letters of support from stakeholders and other interested/affected parties on our proposals and progress with the VISTA projects work stream. Feedback can be provided by filling in the form below or can be emailed to Sally Cooper, Community Liaison Manager at: Sally.cooper@sse.com.

Name:

Organisation:

Email:

.....

Q1 Have you found the information within this leaflet helpful and informative?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Unsure

Please explain your reasoning for your selection:

Q2 Are you supportive of SSEN Transmission seeking to secure funds for the implementation of the undergrounding scheme?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Unsure

Please explain your reasoning for your selection:

Q3 Are you supportive of the VISTA project?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Unsure

Please explain your reasoning for your selection:

☐

Tick here if you would like to be kept updated on SSEN's VISTA work stream



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 SSEN Community

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 SSEN Transmission



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