

## Renewed interest in Scotland

On 18th November 2013, Kim Sanderson attended a conference in Edinburgh on the Renewable Energy Sector in Germany and Scotland. This was a welcome local opportunity to find out more about one of her specialist areas.

The Renewable Energy Sector in Germany and Scotland Conference was organised by the British Chamber of Commerce in Germany. BCCG is a privately-funded, non-profit membership network organisation established in 1921. Perhaps the event would also provide networking opportunities for me?

A variety of talks covered the conditions for businesses operating in the renewables sector in Scotland, the UK and Germany both now and in the future. Naturally, both the Scottish referendum on independence and the German post-election coalition talks are the cause of some uncertainty on several specific issues; my report aims to paint an overall picture of the current market conditions.

### Scotland in particular

In Scotland, renewables are the second-biggest generators of electricity after oil and gas. The Scottish government's targets for renewables are higher than those of the UK government. Unfortunately, the cost of connecting remote offshore generation and island networks to the grid is prohibitive. However, renewable heat is a technology of particular interest to Scotland, given the climate. District heating is due to be installed for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (this will be gas-fired, but the infrastructure will remain in place as a legacy of the games). There are also plans to expand the

Port of Ardersier, in Inverness and Nairn, into an offshore wind manufacturing hub which could support the development of wind arrays in the Moray Firth.

### Onshore Wind Development in the UK - A German Perspective

The perspective was provided by Duncan Scott, a Brit working for the German company Abo Wind AG, with operations in Livingston and Inverness. Although conditions for developers in the UK are initially more complex and uncertain than in Germany, entailing greater costs, success can be achieved here once wind farms are up and running. The legal and planning situation here can be summed up by two figures. Firstly, senior Scottish judge Lady Clark of Calton recently issued a Court of Session opinion that almost all turbines require an electricity-generating licence from the regulator Ofgem before planning consent is given. Secondly the Little Britain character Vicky Pollard represents the climate of policy and legal uncertainty across the UK.



Other points of difference between the UK and Germany:

- Connection to the grid makes up around 5% of development costs in Germany, but around 20% in the UK.
- Communities in Germany can and do commission companies to develop on their behalf; the general public in the UK does not engage with wind farms in a 'grown-up' way. If more benefit from UK wind farms flowed to the community, there would be fewer objections and more projects would go ahead.
- In the UK the wind conditions are better, meaning the same model of wind turbine which was built to a height of 126m (to tip) in the UK needed to be 138m (to hub) in Germany.
- The design of wind farms is subjected to closer scrutiny in the UK and therefore tends to be better than in Germany.
- To develop in the UK, an understanding of the UK mindset and conditions is required; German finance is useful too.



*Photo source:*

[www.rechargenews.com/news/policy\\_market/article1297708.ece](http://www.rechargenews.com/news/policy_market/article1297708.ece)

## The position in Germany

### Feed-in

Dr. Axel Zitzmann explained the current position. The 2000 German Renewable Energies Act (EEG) provides for a feed-in tariff with a 20-year guarantee. The tariff is not state aid and not tax, and as such cannot be challenged by the EU. The feed-in tariff to promote renewable energy will exceed €20 billion in 2013. The feed-in of renewables takes priority over that from conventional generation, for example lignite (brown coal) power plants will be shut down in the long run. As a consequence of renewables being given priority, conventional plants are no longer operating profitably. More efficient new conventional plants are not being built, although such generation is still needed for times of weak wind and little sun.

### Offshore wind

Near-shore wind turbines are not popular in Germany; turbines further out to sea obviously cost more to install and maintain. Furthermore, EU competition law dictates that ownership of the transmission grid needs to be separate from production. This is an additional source of difficulty when it comes to connecting offshore wind parks to the grid: neither producer nor grid is keen to fund the connection.

### National coordination

A German 'Autobahn' power line is planned, to provide a better link between the north and south of the national grid, but it faces opposition from local communities.

There is also widespread criticism of a lack of coordination between national ministries and

between the Länder, as well as the absence of a master plan.

### Less certain future

The future in Germany is currently less certain than usual. Besides the coalition talks, a review of the EEG renewables legislation and the feed-in tariff are due by 2015.

### News and interest

I certainly learned some salient facts about the sector and gained an overview of some of the different subsegments and companies involved. I was also struck by the huge potential impact of the independence referendum on business conducted in Scotland. And I found it refreshing to hear a

German delegate's view of the market there, which was more critical than I had anticipated.

However, I did fail to approach many delegates to offer my translation services; I had not anticipated such a large proportion of speakers and attendees representing law firms. Given the apparent complexity of the planning process and the legal position in the UK, I suppose this is unsurprising. I did get a chance to admire a fellow ScotNetter's remote marketing approach – a colleague of his distributed postcard-sized flyers. These acted as an introduction to his services although he was unable to attend in person. ◆

## Translator's Table at the Goethe-Institut Glasgow

In November 2013, German-speaking translators had the chance to attend a translation event at the Goethe-Institut, which promises to be the first in a regular series. Here, Karin Bosshard describes the literature translation table she attended and provides more information on future events.

On 27 November 2013, I attended an event on literature translation at the Goethe-Institut in Glasgow together with two other ScotNetters. One of the institute's aims is to support the translation of German fiction into other languages through grants for publishers and therefore the "Translator's Table" brought together publishers and translators to discuss aspects of literature translation. Eva Baillie, who is responsible for Library and Information Services at the Goethe-Institut Glasgow and had organised the event, welcomed us and introduced the speakers.

Katy-Lockwood Holmes from Floris Books ([www.florisbooks.co.uk](http://www.florisbooks.co.uk)), a publisher of children's books and non-fiction books for adults, gave an interesting overview over how she chooses foreign language books and how the process works from selecting a particular book to its publication in Scotland. Of the 58 books Floris Books published in 2013, 28 were translated from other European languages, in many cases from German. Katy explained how she works together with the translators and how important it is to build long-standing relationships with translators in specialist fields. She finds new translators