

Stornoway Deep Water Terminal

CASE STUDY

Multi-purpose port infrastructure enabling cruise growth, freight and renewables logistics.



LOCATION: Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

STATUS: Current

 ENERGY TRANSITION

 ASSET AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



Summary

Stornoway Port Authority (SPA) has delivered a new Deep Water Terminal (DWT) providing alongside berthing for large vessels (up to 360m length, 10m draught) with a dedicated freight ferry berth and 6.5 hectares of laydown for unloading, storage and industrial uses. The development establishes the only deep-water alongside berth on Scotland's west coast north of Greenock, positioning Stornoway as the sole port in the north-west capable of accommodating large vessels. This unlocks significant potential for the islands across cruise tourism, renewable energy infrastructure, and freight logistics. Construction began in May 2022, and the first cruise ship berthed in April 2024.

Background

The DWT is a strategic component of SPA's masterplan to diversify the island's economy. In addition to cruise ships, the facility is designed to service larger cargo vessels, provide a freight ferry berth, and support renewables supply-chain activity (heavy-lift slab, haul route to Arnish fabrication yard).

The port markets the DWT as an energy hub for onshore/offshore wind and associated projects, with Stornoway also set to host a 1.8GW subsea HVDC interconnector connection by 2030.

Strategy

The DWT has been designed as a place-based, multi-sector asset that integrates cruise, freight, and renewable energy logistics. This integrated approach aligns with the Outer Hebrides' strategic opportunities in tourism and energy transition.

By supporting multi-sector use, the terminal diversifies revenue streams, optimises asset utilisation, and enhances financial resilience.

Investment

The project has been enabled by the Scottish Government's Growth Accelerator, which Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) developed and advises upon for local-authority-led economic growth; the same model has supported major schemes such as Edinburgh's St James Quarter and Dundee's V&A waterfront.

A public-sector partnership finance package of around £49m included £33.7m from the Scottish Government and £10m from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), with further support from SPA, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CES), SFT and VisitScotland.

Delivery

Alongside capacity for large vessels, the ability to berth large vessels is the core value of the terminal. The overall facility and berth arrangement enables handling of larger ships up to 360m, which allows for the promised gains in cruise tourism, freight and renewable energy logistics.

The core value of the terminal lies in its ability to berth large vessels alongside. Its overall layout and berth arrangement are designed to handle ships up to 360m, enabling the forecast gains in cruise tourism, freight, and renewable-energy logistics.

Management

Under the Growth Accelerator, Scottish Government payments are tied to agreed performance targets, such as attracting 46,500 cruise passengers by year three and providing tourism skills training for 180 people. The partnership between SPA, HIE, CES, SFT, and the government is focused on developing local supply-chain participation and maximising commercial opportunities associated with cruise, freight and energy projects. This approach aligns

financial incentives with inclusive growth and local supply-chain benefits.

Stornoway is actively marketed as a west-coast deep-water cruise gateway, and HIE, CES, SPA and Outer Hebrides Tourism have hosted a business engagement event to help local firms understand the market, build relevant products and services, and maximise commercial opportunities.