

NEW ISLAY FERRY PROJECT UNDERWAY

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Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) has appointed naval architecture consultancy, naValue GmbH, to support the project for the new ferry to operate on the busy Islay route.

Scottish Ministers have agreed that the next major CalMac vessel to be commissioned will be for Islay. The Islay ferry project is now in its early stages and is being led by Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), CalMac and Transport Scotland. The project will be shaped by consultation with the island community and a robust business case.

The new ferry will be designed to complement the service provided by MV Finlaggan, which currently operates on the Islay route, although it will be developed with a clear focus on freight, including the capability to operate a possible overnight freight service. The Islay route is one of the busiest services for freight on the Clyde and Hebrides network, and the incoming ferry will support the island's growing demand. Sufficient passenger accommodation will also be designed to meet anticipated passenger demand.

Flensburg-based naValue specialises in custom ferry design and consultancy and has significant experience in the marine industry. The firm's lead naval architect led on the design of MV Loch Seaforth, which operates on the Stornoway-Ullapool route.

Representatives from CMAL met with key stakeholders in Islay last month to brief them on the status of the project. The meeting was also attended by Transport Scotland and CalMac. Meetings to update the wider community will be arranged soon.

Jim Anderson, director of vessels, CMAL, said:

“We are working closely with all parties to develop a vessel which will satisfy the island's vital economic activities.

“We are currently at the early stage of concept design discussions with naValue and aim to design a modern vessel which meets legislation and ensures project plans, proposals and specifications are feasible and realistic. We expect the vessel tender programme to be undertaken early next year, with the award of a shipbuilding contract scheduled for autumn 2020.

“We plan to hold further meetings with the extended Islay community in the near future and we will update relevant stakeholders on the progress of the project along the way.”