



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-305388-19 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-305388-19 Construction of 14-18 number wind turbines in excess of 50 MW Glenard, Inishowen, County Donegal.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	12/12/19	<b>Time</b>	11.00 – 12.40

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
<b>Staff Members</b>
Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Dónal Donnelly, Planning Inspector
Rob Mac Giollarnáth, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the prospective Applicant</b>
Jimmy Green, MKO
Eoin McCarthy, MKO
Emmet McLoughlin, Coillte
Sinéad O'Malley, Coillte

## **Introduction:**

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The Board will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

## **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The proposed development is for the construction of a windfarm comprising of approximately 14-18 number wind turbines in excess of 50 MW Glenard, Inishowen, County Donegal. The prospective applicant gave an overview of the project under the headings of:

- Introduction

- Site Location
- Site Selection
- Policy Context
- Wind Farm Design Process and Emergence of Optimal Layout
- Scoping and Pre-Application Consultation
- Public Consultation
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- Strategic Infrastructure Development Criteria

Some background information was given regarding Coillte (the prospective applicant) and its approach to renewable energy including wind energy. A site location map was shown of the proposed application.

The planning policy context was set out regarding the proposed development along with maps detailing nearby designated sites and also a map showing wind farm development in the vicinity (both existing and permitted).

The project design/constraints were set out along with an accompanying map. The proposed project was described as comprising 'up to 15 no. turbines with a generating capacity of approximately 4.8MW each giving a total installed capacity of 72MW' with a blade tip of approximately 170 metres.

A map was shown detailing the proposed wind farm layout showing the proposed layout of turbines and the proposed compound locations. A map was shown of the proposed grid connections (2 options shown). A map was shown detailing the turbine delivery route.

The prospective applicant set out the scoping and background consultation surrounding the project. Details were given regarding community liaison with local people. Criteria proposed to be set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report were detailed and the criteria regarding Strategic Infrastructure were set out.

## **Discussion:**

The following matters were discussed:

- The cumulative impacts of the proposed project and other windfarms in the area on properties should be fully addressed in any application.

- The height of the turbines at 170 metres was discussed which the prospective applicant saw as being suitable for the area taking into account facts such as the wind resource, distance to nearby dwellings and the existence of other turbines in the area.
- The proposed grid connection would be underground and both proposed routes would be fully assessed. The proposed connection would eventually link into an existing 110kV substation at Trillick.
- Regarding the turbine delivery route it would be expected that there would be minor accommodation works required, there would be no effect on any protected structures, bridges etc and there was reference to the transportation of turbines by the sea.
- In relation to scoping it would be important to be in contact with the relevant prescribed bodies to include City of Derry Airport. There has been contact with Donegal County Council but there is a lacuna in their wind energy policy at the moment as a result of a legal ruling.
- With regard to the proposed EIAR the Board advised that it would be prudent in the headings to reflect the criteria as set out in the relevant Directive.
- Regarding the impact on climate the Board stressed that this area should be fully and as widely assessed as possible particularly in the light of the Climate Action Plan. Factors such as carbon balance calculation, loss of trees, alternatives, the production and transportation of the turbines themselves, the 'do nothing' scenario, the offset in felling trees by planting elsewhere etc.
- Draft maps/photomontages were produced showing projected views from various distances. The Board stated that it would like to see the different wind-farms colour-coded on any maps submitted. In addition views/photomontages should be submitted from the local community/townland near Bunrana and from relevant roads and locations marked as "high scenic amenity". It would be advised to incorporate the viewpoints that Donegal County Council would have regard to in any such application.
- Regard should be had to the position of certain turbines particularly with regard to peat stability susceptibility. There was a GSI map on landslide susceptibility which the prospective applicant should have regard to. The

prospective applicant stated that engineers had investigated the site and that even where there was a steep gradient they did not foresee any peat instability.

- The Board queried as to whether there were any ecology issues such as whopper swans, plover birds including in the nearby SPA's and wider SPA's. Issues such re-location, pathways between SPAs and assessment of qualifying interests should all be addressed.
- It would appear that there were transboundary issues involved.

## **Conclusion:**

The record of the instant meeting will issue. The preliminary view is that the project would constitute strategic infrastructure.

When the prospective applicant wishes to request formal closure to the pre-application consultation, a request must be made in writing and, upon receipt, the reporting inspector will complete his/her report and recommendation and the file will be forwarded to the Board for SID determination. The Board advised the prospective applicant that this final stage of the process might take approximately four weeks.

A copy of the procedures associated with the making of an application are attached.

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**Anne Marie O'Connor**  
**Assistant Director of Planning**