



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-312282-21 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Description</b>	ABP-312282-21 – Proposed Kilsallagh wind farm consisting of 13 wind turbines and ancillary equipment including 110kV substation infrastructure, Kilsallagh and adjacent townlands, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application Consultation.		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting		
<b>Venue</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
<b>Date</b>	02/03/2022	<b>Time</b>	11:00am -12:08pm

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)

Niall Haverty, Senior Planning Inspector

Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer

s.caulfield@pleanala.ie

01-8737287

### Representing the Prospective Applicant

Jenny Howard – EDF Renewables (Applicant)

Jimmy Green – MKO (Agent)

John Willoughby – MKO (Agent)

Niamh Igoe – MKO (Agent)

Ellen Costello – MKO (Agent)

## **Introduction:**

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021, 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 that 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 in any legal proceedings.

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

The prospective applicant began the presentation by providing a company introduction and background. The prospective applicant, EDF Renewables Ireland opened its Dublin office in 2019 and has been actively involved in renewable generation development in the Irish market since.

The proposed Kilsallagh wind farm site is located approximately 8.5 kilometres south-east of Bangor Erris, 15 kilometres from Glenamoy and 17 kilometres west of Crossmolina, Co. Mayo. The proposed development consists of 13 wind turbines and all associated site development works and services, including 110kV substation infrastructure, control buildings, battery storage and construction compounds. It was submitted that the total generating capacity of the proposed development ranges between 65MW and 91.5MW.

The prospective applicant said the site topography is relatively flat and noted that the EIAR study area measures approximately 1,047 hectares. The site is accessed via local roads from the N59 and is served by existing forestry roads and tracks.

It was submitted that both underground and overground grid connection options at Bellacorrick 110kV substation are currently being assessed. Additionally, there are three turbine delivery route options being assessed, from Galway Port towards the site.

The prospective applicant said a national site selection process was carried out and the proposed site was chosen as it performed strongly across all relevant criteria and it emerged as the preferred location for the provision of a significant wind energy development.

The prospective applicant provided an overview from a national and regional policy context and referred to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which aims to meet climate neutrality by 2050 and a target of 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

The prospective applicant said the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020 (as varied), and the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027, are both forward

facing and acknowledge the importance of renewable energy. It submitted that both plans highlight broad support for additional renewable projects within county Mayo. In relation to the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027, the prospective applicant highlighted some of the relevant recommendations from the Chief Executive's Report and said the new Development Plan is anticipated to be adopted in Q3 2022.

The prospective applicant provided a map which highlighted the strategic wind energy designations in the area. It was submitted that the proposed development is designated as 'Tier 2 – open for consideration' within both the current and draft Mayo County Development Plan.

The prospective applicant presented a map giving an overview of existing/proposed wind farms in the locality (copies on file). These included the operational Oweninny Phase 1 (29 turbines), the permitted Oweninny Phase 2 (32 turbines), the proposed Oweninny Phase 3 (18 turbines), the permitted ABO wind farm (8 turbines) and the proposed Sheskin South (up to 21 turbines) and Glenora (up to 22 turbines). The prospective applicant also noted a grid connection application in the area which is currently on appeal with the Board (ABP-311157-21).

It was submitted that the design for the proposed development has been constraints and facilitators led. The key physical and environmental constraints were identified within and surrounding the site and the relevant buffers were applied. The prospective applicant presented a map which highlighted these constraints and the relevant buffers. It also highlighted an Annex 1 habitat Exclusion Zone and designated sites within 15 kilometres of the site.

The prospective applicant advised that scoping commenced in August 2021 with relevant prescribed bodies. A pre-application consultation has been requested with Mayo County Council and consultations have also been sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

In relation to public consultations, the prospective applicant said consultations commenced in May 2021. A community liaison officer has been appointed and information has been distributed via a leaflet drop to all households within a 10-kilometre radius of the site, door-to-door meetings with households within 3

kilometres of the site and through an online project website. A public meeting is anticipated in late Q2 2022.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the indicative EIAR chapters and said several consultants have been appointed in this regard.

Landscape appraisal was highlighted in the form of two drawings (copies on file) and the prospective applicant identified some differences between the designations in the current and draft Mayo County Development Plan.

In relation to turbine locations and landscape and visual impact, a number of viewpoints and photomontages surrounding the site were presented.

Preparation of the EIAR and NIS is ongoing, and the prospective applicant's current intention is to lodge the planning application in Q4 2022.

## **Discussion**

The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives stated their preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development but noted that the ultimate decision is a matter for the Board.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be cognisant of matters such as cumulative impacts and in-combination effects particularly given the number of permitted and proposed wind farms in the area.
- In relation to the Renewable Energy Strategy designations, the Board's representatives said justification and a robust assessment of cumulative impacts would be required for development on 'Tier 2 – open for consideration' lands, particularly with regard to landscape and visual impacts, noting that the proposed wind farm would be the first to the south of the N59.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said the specific turbine details have not been finalised but said it hopes to identify a particular turbine for the application. However, if a range of hub and tip heights are instead brought forward, all options would be fully assessed in the EIAR. The Board's representatives recommended that the prospective applicant review how this issue was addressed in recent wind farm decisions.

- The Board's representatives noted that the site appeared to be particularly wet, with numerous ponds/small lakes and was underlain by peat. They also noted that a review of the GSI mapviewer indicates that historic landslides are recorded in the vicinity and recommended comprehensive peat stability assessments on the site. The Board's representatives also reminded the prospective applicant to be cognisant of the number of bog related SAC's in the vicinity, and the potential for impacts arising from changes to drainage patterns.
- The Board's representatives noted that the site appears to drain into the Owenmore River and that water pollution prevention and water quality issues be comprehensively considered.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said the forestry re-plant locations have not been finalised but said all locations will be cumulatively assessed within the EIAR where relevant.
- The prospective applicant said the Annex 1 Habitat present on the site consists of a dystrophic pool.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said there are no national monuments recorded within the site.
- The Board's representatives noted that the site layout plan indicates a new access from the N59 national road and a bridge of the Owenmore River and queried if this had been discussed with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The prospective applicant said two site access options are currently being assessed and consultations are ongoing with TII, noting that the use of the access would be temporary during construction. The Board's representatives advised that Inland Fisheries be consulted with regard to the proposed bridge.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said discussions are ongoing with Eirgrid in relation to the grid connection and said it may form part of the planning application, but this has yet to be finalised. They advised that the nature of the grid connection (underground or overhead) was still under review.
- The Board's representatives reminded the prospective applicant to include details in relation to major accidents as part of the EIAR, particularly in relation to peat stability.

## **Conclusion**

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant, and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. It is anticipated that a second meeting will be required, and it will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board when it wishes to schedule this meeting.

Ciara Kellett 7/3/22

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**

