



An Bord Pleanála
Strategic Infrastructure Development 64
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
Dublin

Our ref: 190723

Your ref: ABP-316466

Date: 22nd May 2025

Re: Section 37CC (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Design Flexibility Request–Development of a 9 no. Turbine Wind Farm at Cooloo and adjacent townlands, Co. Galway.

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of our Client, Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited (the Applicant), MKO are seeking to request a design flexibility meeting with An Bord Pleanála under Section 37CC (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (“the Act”) in relation to the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm and all associated works at Cooloo and adjacent townlands, Co. Galway (the Proposed Development).

This flexibility meeting request is being made in accordance with the recently commenced (S.I No. 645 of 2023) legislative provisions relating to design flexibility introduced by the Planning and Development, Maritime and Valuation (Amendment) Act 2022. The legislation provides for a process whereby prospective applicants may request a meeting with the Planning Authority for the purpose of receiving an opinion as to whether it is appropriate that an application for permission be made before certain details of the proposed development are confirmed.

The Prospective Applicant

The prospective applicant for the Proposed Development, Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited, are a subsidiary of Neoen, established in 2008 and headquartered in Paris, France. Neoen currently has nearly 8.9GW of renewable energy projects in operation or under construction worldwide.

The company entered the Irish energy market in 2016 and has quickly accumulated a vast experience in renewable energy development and management. Neoen currently own a portfolio of 53MW comprised of 8 operating wind farms, along with 3 operational solar farms.

Background

The Applicant engaged with An Bord Pleanála (the ‘Board’) (ABP Ref: PC07.316466) under the provisions of Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as to whether the Proposed Development would meet the thresholds of the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. A SID meeting under the provisions of Section 37B was held with the Board on the 19th June 2023. The Applicant’s intention to apply for design flexibility was outlined during the course of this meeting.

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Site Location and Context

As illustrated in Figure 1 enclosed, the Proposed Wind Farm is located within a rural, agricultural setting in east Galway, approximately 12km southeast of Tuam. The village of Brierfield is located approximately 1.3km south of the nearest proposed turbine, and the village of Moylough is located approximately 5.3km east of the nearest proposed turbine.

The N63 National Road runs south of the Site in a general northeast-southwest orientation entering the settlement of Abbeyknockmoy and then heading northeast towards Moylough, passing within 1.27km of the nearest proposed turbine.

The site is accessed via local roads from the R332 Regional Road, which travels in a southeast-northwest direction between Tuam and the N63 National Road, Co. Galway. The site itself is served by a number of existing agricultural roads and tracks.

The site measures approximately 319 hectares and falls within the townlands Cloondahamper (Blake), Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eighter, Gorteenlahard and Lissavally (Slievegloom).

Land use within the Site is predominately agricultural with some adjacent areas to the north of the site occupied by active raised blanket bog. Land-use in the wider landscape comprises a mix of pastoral agriculture, peat bogs and low-density residential development.

Development Description and Possible Effects on the Environment

The Proposed Development is nearing the final stage of design and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) are currently being prepared. A draft site layout plan prepared by MKO (Figure 2) is enclosed. The main elements of the Proposed Development comprise of 9 no. wind turbines and associated infrastructure, including an underground electrical 33kV and communications cable connecting the wind turbines and meteorological mast to the on-site 110kV electricity substation.

The Proposed Grid Connection (on-site 110kV electricity substation and underground grid connection cabling route to the existing Cloon 110kV substation, Co. Galway) is an integral part of the planning application for the Proposed Development and is assessed in the EIAR, however, it will be subject to a separate planning application at a later stage. The future planning application for the Proposed Grid Connection will be made to the Board in accordance with the provisions of 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, identifies classes and scales of development that require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The relevant class of development in this case relates to *“installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms) with more than 5 turbines or having a total output greater than 5 megawatts”*, as per item 3(i) of the Schedule. The Proposed Development exceeds 5 Megawatts in scale and proposes more than 5 turbines and therefore is subject to EIA. All elements of the Proposed Development are assessed as part of the EIAR that will form part of the planning application.

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The EIAR uses the grouped structure method to describe the existing environment, the potential impacts of the Proposed Development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures. Background information relating to the Proposed Development, scoping and consultation undertaken and a description of the Proposed Development will be presented in separate sections. The grouped format sections describe the impacts of the Proposed Development in terms of population and human health, biodiversity, with specific attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EEC; land, soils and geology, water, air quality, climate, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, cultural heritage and material assets such as traffic and transportation, and vulnerability to natural disasters together with the interaction of the foregoing, and schedule of mitigation and monitoring.

The EIAR will comply with the EIA Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Industry-wide, best practice methodologies and standards will be used in preparation of the EIAR. The likely significant effects of the Proposed Development will be described using standard, best-practice terminology. In consultation with the project design team, appropriate mitigation measures will be proposed in the EIAR to reduce, remedy or eliminate any likely negative effects identified.

The EIAR that will be submitted by the applicant provides the relevant environmental information to enable the EIA to be carried out by the competent authority. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and NIS will also be prepared in line with the Habitats Directive.

Proposed Design Flexibility Parameters

The details of the Proposed Development unlikely to be confirmed at the time of the proposed application are as follows:

- Turbine rotor diameter
- Turbine hub height

The parameters within which the turbine specifications will fall are as follows and illustrated in Figure 3:

- Rotor diameter range of 150m to 162m
- Hub height range of 99m to 105m

In accordance with the new legislative provisions, the proposed application for permission will include the sufficient information, in respect of the parameters outlined above, within which the unconfirmed details fall as is considered necessary to enable the competent authority to make a decision on the application.

The turbine parameters described above will be clearly shown on the suite of planning drawings, including elevations, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The proposed application will also include an EIAR and NIS with the necessary information to enable the Board to carry out an assessment of all the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment. The assessment of the wind turbine parameters will be complete and of sufficiently high quality, in accordance with Annex IV of the EIA Directive.

The design flexibility requirement arises due to the inherent lengthy timescales associated with developing a wind farm project. It can be a number of years between planning submission and

commencement of construction due to various factors including planning determination timescales, timing of support scheme auctions, and grid availability.

During this time, wind turbine technology is continuously evolving. There is therefore a degree of uncertainty as to which make/model of wind turbine will be available to the project at the time of construction. Therefore, it is difficult to establish exact turbine dimensions at the pre-planning stage.

The final wind turbine type will be chosen at the pre-construction stage, following a competitive tender process with eligible turbine suppliers. The dimensions of the chosen turbine will fall within the range specified above. The final turbine dimensions will be confirmed with the Planning Authority at least 2 weeks prior to the erection of the turbines at the proposed site.

Request for Meeting under Section 37CC

On behalf of Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited, MKO wishes to request a design flexibility meeting with the Board at the earliest convenience, in order to discuss details of the Proposed Development that are unlikely to be confirmed at the time of the proposed application.

We note that the Regulations, facilitate the making of this request in the form set out at Form No. 20 of Schedule 3, or a form substantially to the like effect. A copy of this completed form accompanies this request. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 15(J)(2) of the Regulations, we request the Board consents for this request (i.e., to enter into a meeting referred to in sub-article (1)) be made in electronic form.

Payment of the required fee in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Regulations will be arranged with the Board upon submission of the flexibility request.

In support of this request, we have enclosed following

- > Completed flexibility meeting request form (Form No.20)
- > Figure 1: Site Location Context Map
- > Figure 2: Draft Turbine Layout Map
- > Figure 3: Wind Turbine Elevation and Plan

We trust the above is in order and look forward to hearing from An Bord Pleanála in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Feithlinn Morgan

Feithlinn Morgan

Planner- MKO

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Schedule

Form No. 20

Article 15J

Flexibility meeting request form

BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS FORM PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

Failure to complete this form or attach the necessary documentation, or the submission of incorrect information or omission of required information, **will** lead to the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála refusing to deal with your request. Therefore, ensure that each section of this request form is fully completed and signed, entering n/a (not applicable) where appropriate, and that all necessary documentation is attached to the request form.

HOLDING OF MEETING WITH THE PLANNING AUTHORITY OR AN BORD PLEANÁLA

Under section 32J of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, neither the taking place of a meeting under section 32H nor the provision of an opinion or notification under section 32I shall prejudice the performance by the planning authority of its functions under this Act or any regulations under this Act or any other enactment and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

Under section 37C of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the holding of consultations under section 37B shall not prejudice the performance by An Bord Pleanála of any other of its functions under this Act or regulations under this Act and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

Under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, neither the holding of consultations under subsection (1), nor the provision of an opinion under subsection (3), shall prejudice the performance by An Bord Pleanála of any other of its functions under this Act or regulations under this Act, or any other enactment and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

Under section 288(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the performance by An Bord Pleanála of functions under section 287 shall not prejudice the performance by it of any of its other functions in relation to the prospective applicant, proposed application or proposed development concerned, or be relied on by any person in relation to; an application or request under this Chapter, the consideration by An Bord Pleanála of such application or request, or the making of a decision under this Chapter in respect of such application or request, or in proceedings before a court relating to, or in connection with, such application, request, consideration or decision.

DATA PROTECTION

It is the responsibility of persons or entities wishing to use any personal data on this form for direct marketing purposes to be satisfied that they may do so legitimately under the requirements of the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018. The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner states that the sending of marketing material to individuals without consent may result in action by the Data Protection Commissioner against the sender including prosecution.

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Form No. 20	Planning Authority Logo
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Flexibility Meeting Request to **An Bord Pleanála** regarding

Flexibility with regard to Proposed Application for Permission or Approval

1) Prospective Applicant's Name:	Neoen Renewables Ireland Ltd
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2) Request for meeting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 32H(1) Request- section 34 application
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Section 37CC(1) Request- section 37E application (SID)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 182F(1) Request- section 182B Strategic Electricity Application
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 182F(1) Request- section 182D Strategic Gas Application
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 287A(1) Request- section 291 Maritime Area Application

3) Contact details of person authorised to operate on behalf of the Prospective Applicant (Applicant or Agent): (Not for Public release)	
Name:	Feithlinn Morgan
Correspondence Address:	MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, Ireland, H91 VW84
Telephone:	091 735 611
Email:	fmorgan@mkoireland.ie

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4) Proposed Development	
Address of the proposed development:	In the townlands of Cloondahamper (Blake), Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eighter, Gorteenlahard and Lissavally (Slievegloom).
Description of the proposed development:	<p>The main elements of the Proposed Development as of the latest design includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 9 no. wind turbines with an overall turbine tip height of 180 metres; a rotor blade diameter of 150 - 162 metres; and hub height of 99 - 105 metres, and associated foundations and hard-standing areas; ii. Underground electrical (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines and meteorological mast to the on-site substation; iii. 1 no. temporary construction compound (including site offices and welfare facilities); iv. A meteorological mast with a height of 100 metres, security fencing and associated foundation and hard-standing area; v. A new temporary site entrance on the R332; vi. Construction of 1 no. operational access site entrance either side of the L6301 Local Road in the townlands of Lecarrow and Cooloo; vii. Upgrade of existing site tracks/roads and provision of new site access roads, junctions and hardstand areas; viii. Accommodation works along the public road network along the N63

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	<p>national road and R332 Regional Road in the townland of Slievegorm to facilitate the delivery of turbine components and other abnormal sized loads;</p> <p>ix. Demolition of an existing derelict house (Area c.61m²) and adjacent outbuilding (c. 36m²) in the townland of Cooloo;</p> <p>x. Peat and Spoil Management Areas;</p> <p>xi. Tree felling and hedgerow removal;</p> <p>xii. Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan measures (including establishment of a riparian buffer and hedgerow enhancement);</p> <p>xiii. Site Drainage;</p> <p>xiv. Operational Stage site signage; and</p> <p>xv. All ancillary works and apparatus.</p>
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5) Declaration:

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information given in this form is correct and accurate and fully compliant with the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the Regulations made thereunder.

6) Signature of person authorised to operate on behalf of the Prospective Applicant:

Feithlinn Morgan

Date: 22/05/2025

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7) Formal Request:

In accordance with section 37CC of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended*,* and article 15J of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, **Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited** formally requests to enter into a meeting with **An Bord Pleanála** regarding the **Proposed Wind Farm at Cooloo, County Galway**.

8) Information to be included where relevant, with a meeting request under section 32H, 37CC, 182F or 287A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and article 15J the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Information

Enclosed with Request

(a) A site location map sufficient to identify the land on which the proposed development would be situated.	Yes:[X]	No:[]	A site location map is included.
(b) A brief description of the nature and purpose of the proposed development and of its possible effects on the environment.	Yes:[X]	No:[]	A brief description of the nature of the development is provided in response to Question 4 of this form. The purpose of the proposed development is the provision of a renewable energy project. A brief description of the possible effects on the environment is set out in the cover letter included.
(c) A draft layout plan of the proposed development.	Yes:[X]	No:[]	A draft layout showing 9 no. turbines is included.

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(d) A description of the details, or groups of details, of the proposed development that, owing to the circumstances set out in paragraph below, are unlikely to be confirmed at the time of the proposed application.	Yes:[X]	No:[]	<p>Wind turbines with the following parameters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotor diameter range of 150m to 162m • Hub height range of 99m to 105m
(e) A description of the circumstances relating to the proposed development, that indicate that it is appropriate that the proposed application be made and decided, before the prospective applicant has confirmed the details referred to in paragraph (d) above.	Yes:[X]	No:[]	<p>The design flexibility requirement arises due to the inherent lengthy timescales associated with developing a wind farm project. It can be a number of years between planning submission and commencement of construction due to various factors including planning determination timescales, timing of support scheme auctions, and grid availability.</p> <p>During this time, wind turbine technology is continuously evolving. There is therefore a degree of uncertainty as to which make/model of wind turbine will be available to the project at the time of construction. Therefore, it is difficult to establish exact turbine dimensions at the pre-</p>

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			<p>planning stage.</p> <p>The final wind turbine type will be chosen at the pre-construction stage, following a competitive tender process with eligible turbine suppliers. The dimensions of the chosen turbine will fall within the range specified above.</p>
<p>(f) An undertaking to provide with the proposed application, either -</p> <p>i. two or more options, in respect of each detail or group of details, referred to in paragraph (d) above, containing information on the basis of which the proposed application may be made and decided, or</p> <p>ii. parameters within which each detail referred to in paragraph (d) above will fall and on the basis of which the proposed application may be made and decided, or</p> <p>iii. a combination of (i) and (ii).</p>	Yes:[X]	No:[]	<p>Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited., as the prospective applicant undertakes to provide [ii] “parameters within which each detail referred to in paragraph (d) above will fall and on the basis of which the proposed application be made and decided,” with the proposed application.</p>
<p>(g) Such other information, drawings or representations as the prospective applicant may wish to provide or make available. (Turbine Drawing)</p>	Yes:[X]	No:[]	<p>The following drawings are enclosed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Figure 1: Site Location Context Map ➤ Figure 2: Proposed Project Site Layout ➤ Figure 3: Wind Turbine Elevation and Plan
<p>(h) The appropriate fee.</p>	Yes:[X]	No:[]	

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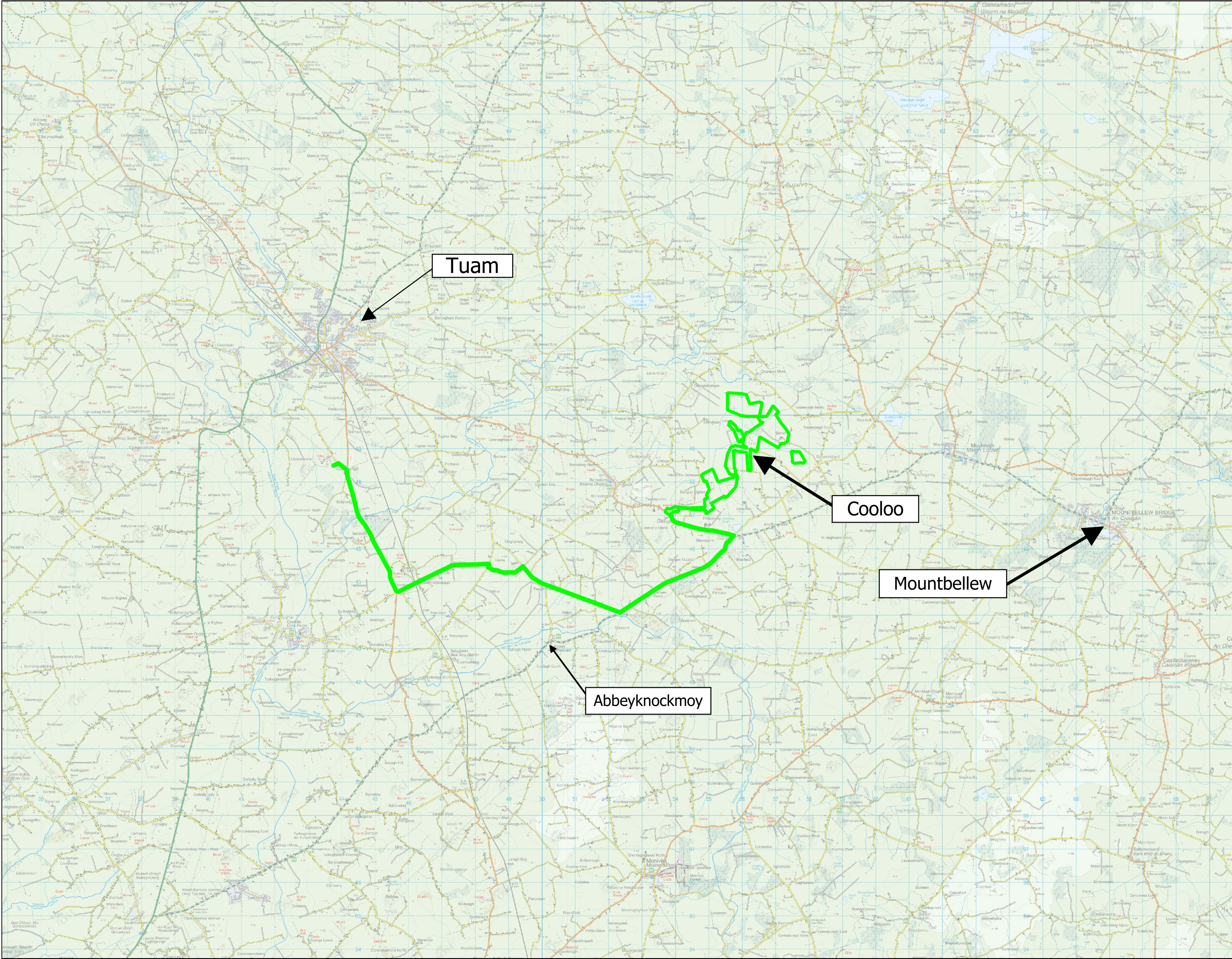
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9) Official Use only:	
Planning Reference:	
Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála Stamp:	


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Map Legend

 EIAR Site Boundary



Drawing Title

Site Location Context

Project Title

Neoen Cooloo WF

Drawn By

EC

Checked By

JF

Project No.

190723

Drawing No.


Figure 1-1

Scale

1:100,000

Date

2025-04-18



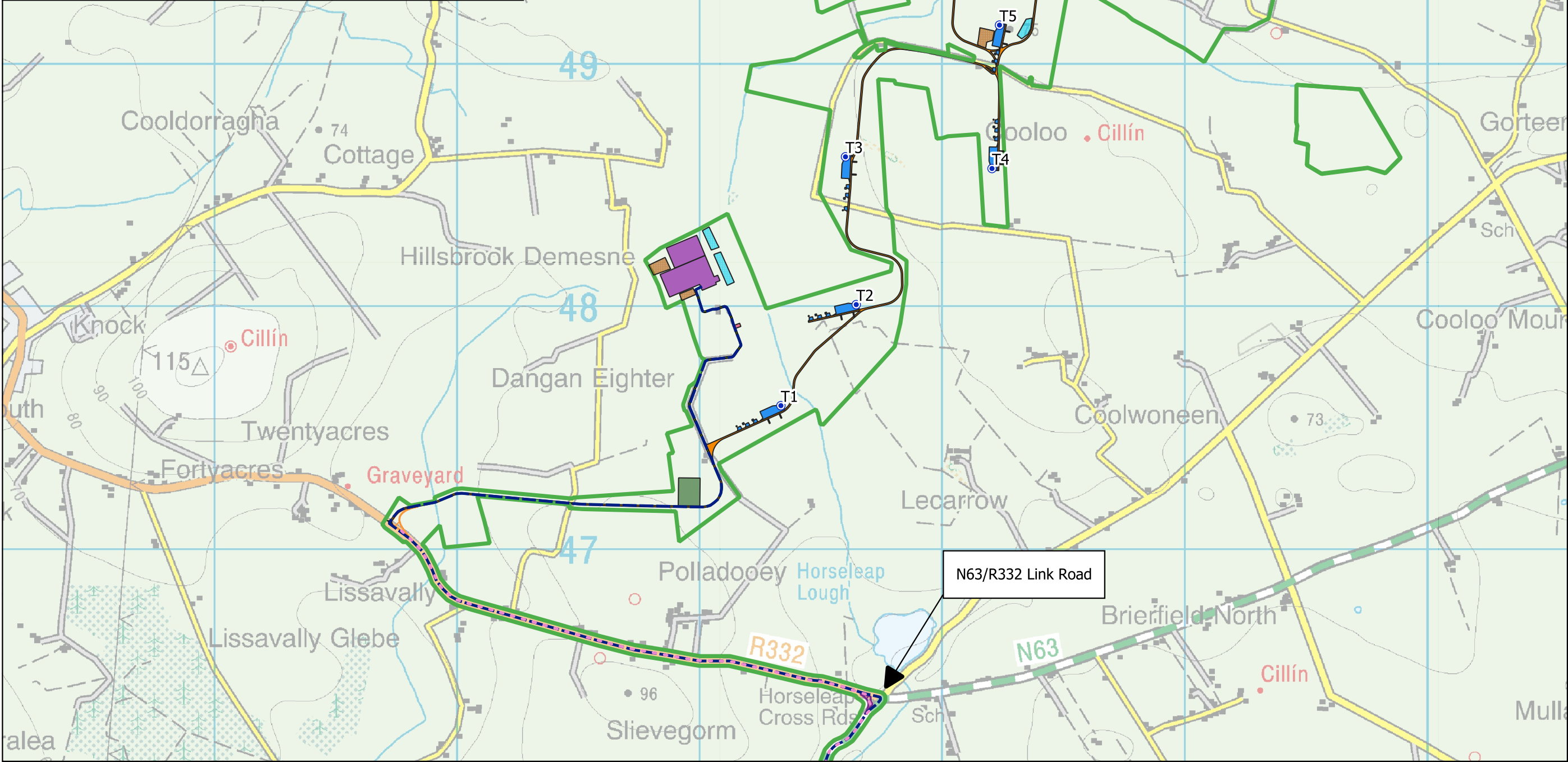
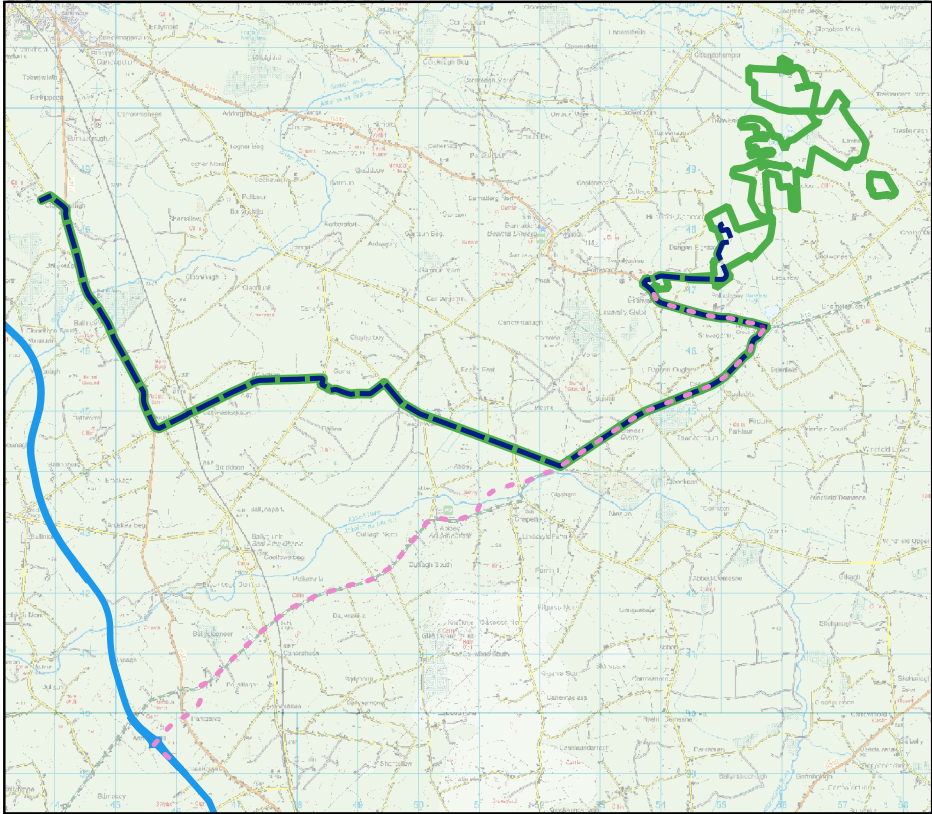
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Map Legend

- EIAR Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Layout
- Proposed Turbine Foundations
- Proposed Turbine Hardstands
- Proposed New Roads
- Proposed Existing Roads to be Upgraded
- Proposed Met Mast
- Proposed Temporary Construction Compound
- Proposed Turbine Delivery Route
- Proposed Turbine Delivery Route Overrun Area
- Proposed Turbine Delivery Junction Accommodation Area
- Proposed Grid Connection Route
- Proposed Onsite 110kV Substation and Battery Storage Compound
- Proposed Peat and Spoil Repository Areas
 - Peat Repository Area
 - Spoil Repository Area

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Drawing Title

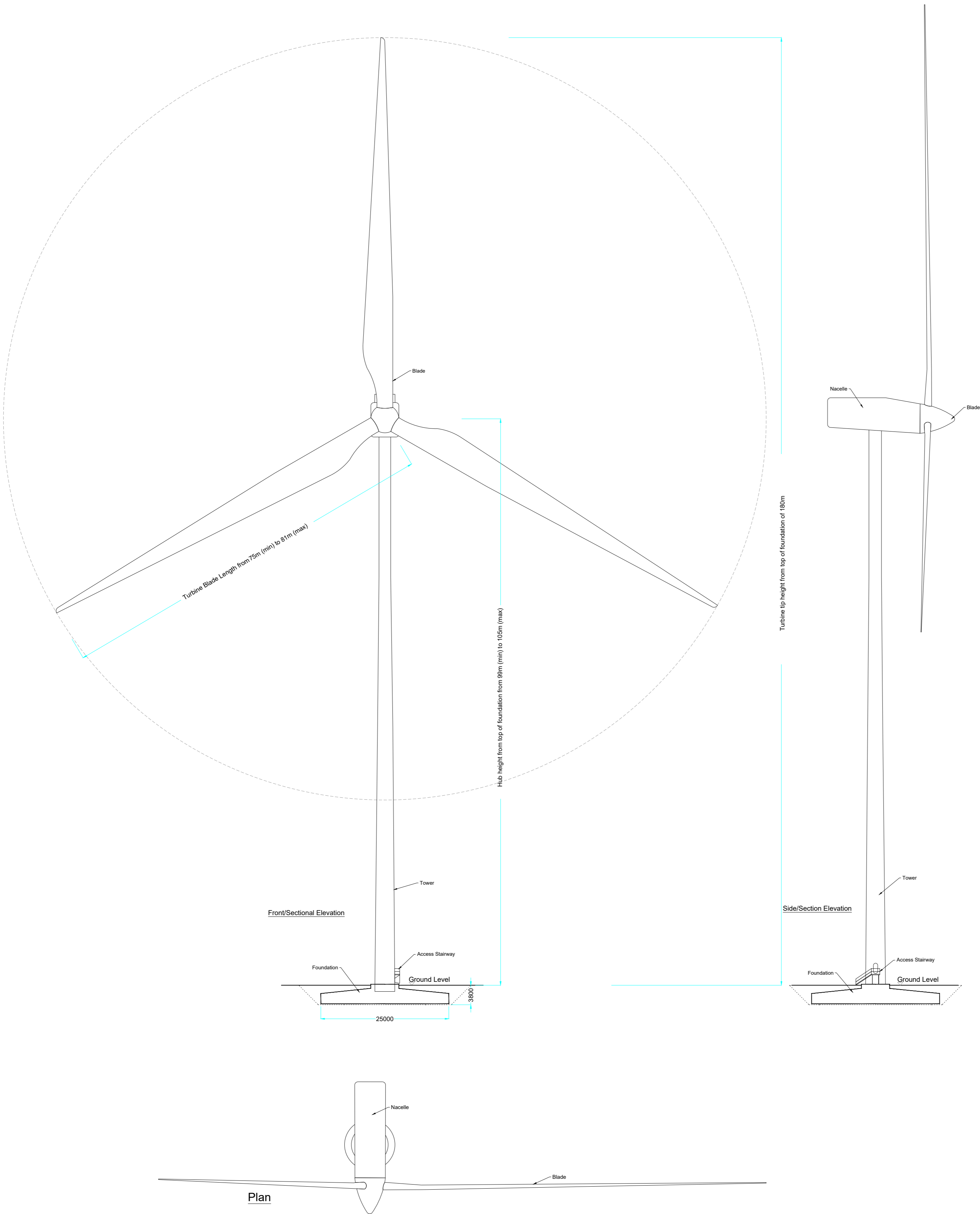
Proposed Project Layout

Project Title

Cooloo Wind Farm, Co. Galway

Drawn By	BT	Checked By	BT
Project No.	190723	Drawing No.	Figure 1
Scale	1:17,500	Date	2025-05-19

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Website



- Drawing Notes**
- Proposed wind turbines to have a maximum ground to blade tip height of 180m.
 - Exact make and model of the turbine to be dictated by a competitive tender process.
 - Ground level represents the top of turbine foundation.

PROJECT TITLE:			
Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm			
DRAWING TITLE:			
Wind Turbine Elevations & Plan			
PROJECT No.: 190723	DRAWING No.: 190723 - 1	SCALE: 1:500 @ A1	
DRAWN BY: JF	CHECKED BY: FM	DATE: 24.04.2025	REVISION.: D1
OS SHEET No.:			



Email: info@www.mkoireland.ie /Website: www.mkoireland.ie