



APPENDIX 2-2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Community Engagement Report was prepared by MKO on behalf of Neoen to document the process of community consultation and public engagement during the pre-planning phase of the nine-turbine Cooloo Wind Farm ('the Proposed Project') in County Galway. Neoen is a French producer of renewable energy, with operations in Dublin, Ireland among its presence across fourteen countries with 8.9GW total capacity of electricity in operation or under construction at the end of 2024. The report sets out how the objectives of a proactive community engagement approach have been met and further demonstrates Neoen's commitment to a programme of ongoing engagement with the local community over the lifespan of the Proposed Project.

This report will outline the steps that Neoen have taken since project inception to ensure transparent community engagement through all phases of the project to date. It will also demonstrate the values and objectives applied by Neoen to the processes of public consultation and stakeholder engagement. Effective and timely community consultation is important to ensure that communities have a say and are heard. Engaging with stakeholders enables developers of projects to understand their needs, their preferences and their expectations. It can also help build trust.

This report has been prepared in line with the requirements as set out in the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (December 2019) – Community Engagement which state that developers of wind farms should, in advance of submitting applications for planning permission, take "active steps to: inform local communities as they begin to develop their proposals; take the views of local communities into account in designing their proposals; demonstrate what practical effect that process of engagement has had; and, set out how the project will perform as a good neighbour in the context of the long-term economic and social development of the community or communities within which it is situated."

All community engagement activities have been carried out according to the fundamental principle that proactive consultation and open discussion with local stakeholders is a crucial element of any wind energy project. In carrying out these community engagement activities, Neoen put the community at the heart of the process to ensure meaningful consultation was carried out which generated goodwill and feedback.

1.1 Background to Community Consultation

Prior to the commencement of community engagement, Neoen appointed MKO to consult on the process. MKO devised a Community Engagement Strategy which set out the steps involved in the community consultation approach and introduced a phased timeline for the successful rollout of the engagement process. The developers were cognisant at all times of the need to include the local community in every stage of the process and to ensure openness, transparency and inclusiveness in the development of this critical project.

Initial meetings were held between Neoen and MKO in February 2022, prior to the commencement of the public consultation process. The purpose of these meetings was to establish the specific goals of the consultation programme and to plot out the steps required.

Arising from these meetings, MKO was appointed as Community Liaison Officer (CLO) on the project, with responsibility for acting as the point of contact for members of the public with questions or queries about the Proposed Project. A dedicated CLO email address and phone number were established in April 2023 to allow members of the public to communicate directly with the project team.

Objectives of Community Consultation

Before the process of community consultation was initiated, it was important to make clear the specific objectives and goals of the process. The overarching philosophy of the project team was to manage communications around the Cooloo Wind Farm, to provide clear, accurate and timely information to members of the local community, and to provide the means and opportunities by which the local community could give their feedback, ask questions, or lodge complaints about the Proposed Project.

As such, the primary objectives of the community consultation process were as follows:

- To put the needs of the local community at the centre of the engagement process;
- To identify the appropriate groups with whom to engage, based on their proximity to the Proposed Project and the impact the development was likely to have on their day-to-day lives.
- To reach out to the community in a manner that was timely, proactive and respectful.
- To identify the main concerns expressed by members of the community in relation to the Proposed Project and to address these concerns as comprehensively as possible.
- To create and maintain an open, two-way dialogue between the developers and the local community for the duration of the development process, beginning in the pre- planning phase and continuing through to project realisation and operation.
- To counteract the potential spread of speculation and misinformation relating to the Proposed Project.

The Community Engagement Strategy, in which the process of community consultation was laid out, was an evolving document which could be continually reviewed and amended throughout the consultation process to reflect both the specific aspects of the project as they were encountered as well as community feedback.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process consisted of a range of different methodologies. These included:

- The setting up of a dedicated project email address and CLO phone number.
- The design and development of a project website with frequently updated information on the project and contact information.
- Use of several different channels of communication including face-to-face meetings, email, phone calls, door-knocking and online tools.
- Direct engagement with local political representatives including local councillors, TDs and senators.
- Door-to-door engagement with residents within a 1km radius of the Proposed Wind Farm and along the R332 regional road and L2302 local road.
- Wider consultation with groups, clubs and businesses within a 2km radius of the Proposed Project, and schools/clubs within 10km to consist of a mailout of an introductory letter and a project brochure, with additional follow-up meetings held when requested.
- A Virtual Consultation Room on the project website.
- A Public Information Event

Engagement with Local Representatives

To ensure the local elected representatives were aware of the project and the benefits it would bring to the community in terms of economic and social benefits from the Community Benefit Fund (as outlined in Chapter 4 of the EIAR), the wider environmental advantages, and how the project aligned with the Government's Climate Action targets, it was important that contact was established early in the consultation process.

In tandem with consultation with the wider public, MKO on behalf of Neoen informed the elected members of Galway County Council representing the Tuam and Ballinasloe Municipal Districts, and TDs for the constituencies of Galway East and Roscommon-Galway, in which the Proposed Project is situated, of the plans to develop the wind farm.

An introductory letter and project brochure was mailed to each elected representative in April 2023, which was followed up by an email with the introductory letter attached (see Appendix 1). This email also informed elected representatives of the plans to host a Public Information Event in the coming months. It also invited the representatives to contact the project team with any questions they may have or to request a meeting.

Door-to-Door Engagement

In April 2023, the project CLO commenced the programme of 'door-knocking' in the designated zone where 55 homes were visited (map provided in Appendix 1). Where the door was answered, the CLO introduced the Proposed Project and MKO's involvement. The benefits to the local community as well as the wider environmental benefits and how the Proposed Project aligned to the Government's climate action targets were explained. The CLO also explained the process of ongoing community engagement, the many channels available to the residents to get in touch with the project team, and next steps. Feedback was invited.

Each resident was given a brochure with information on the project, such as the location of the development study area, the estimated project timeline and contact details. Residents were also given a feedback questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and asked to respond with any concerns or questions they may have. The questionnaire asked four questions about the development:

- If the proposed project is developed, what types of benefits should the Cooloo Wind Farm provide to the local community?
- Do you have any concerns about this proposed wind farm and if so, what are they?
- Have you any further comments in relation to the proposed project?
- Neoen is committed to keeping the local community informed about the proposed project. Please help us identify any other local groups which you feel should be consulted with.

These project brochures and questionnaires were also left at those houses where the door-knock was unanswered. An online version of the questionnaire was also available on the project website and the link to the website was included.

To date, the project team has received correspondence from members of the local community in the form of phone calls from 4 different local residents, email communications from 9 residents, and completed feedback questionnaires from 10 residents.

The reception to the initial door-knock was mixed. Some residents were supportive of the Proposed Project, while others expressed concerns over the noise of the wind turbines, shadow flicker, property values, visibility of the turbines, the impact the turbines would have on their livestock, and the potential impact on the native wildlife. Several residents requested more detailed information and precise maps

of the Proposed Project and were told that these would become available and would be shared as the project developed over the coming months.

2.3

Wider Community Consultation

Businesses, schools, groups and clubs within a 2km radius of the Proposed Wind Farm received an information pack containing an introductory letter, project brochure and questionnaire during the ‘door-knocking’ exercise in April 2023. These project brochures contained up-to-date information on the project plans, including:

- An outline description of the project.
- Information about the design team, Neoen and MKO.
- The main advantages and benefits of wind energy.
- Details of the planning process and next steps.
- Information about the Community Benefit Fund.
- Contact information.

The CLO met/contacted a number of GAA representatives from clubs in the area. Such GAA clubs included Killarney GAA, Clonbern GAA and Mountbellow/Moylough GAA in Co. Galway.

During the information pack drops the CLO provided details to a number of National School principals in the surrounding area. These included Briarfield National School, Cooloo National School, Barnaderg National School and Lavally National School, Co. Galway.

Following the Public Information Event held in January 2024 (see Section 3 below), Councillor Michael Connelly and the secretary of the Moylough Community Council both reached out to the CLO by telephone requesting a meeting regarding the Proposed Project. The meeting was arranged for February 28th 2024 in the Moylough Community Centre, Co. Galway. In advance the Community Council submitted a list of questions to Neoen which had been gathered from members of the Community Council. The questions were all answered and issued back to the community council prior to the meeting taking place. All questions were discussed at the meeting and answers were uploaded to the project website. Assurance was given to the Community Council that further questions would be welcome and encouraged the committee to remain in contact. See Appendix 1 for the full list of questions.

As a period of time had passed since the PIE, updated information was issued via post to the wider community in September 2025. The details provided included the full description of the Proposed Project seeking planning permission, as well as a map of the final layout of the Proposed Wind Farm (see Appendix 1)

2.4

Project Website

A dedicated project website (<https://www.cooloowindfarm.com/>) was designed and went live in April 2023 on the same day as the Door-to Door Engagement was carried out. The website was constantly updated with the latest information over the following months as the project plans took shape. The website contained an FAQ section answering the most frequently asked questions about the development, as well as details about the government’s wind energy policies under the Climate Action Plan. The website also contained contact information.

In January 2024, on the day of the Public Information Event, the project website was updated with all information being presented at the Public Information Event (see Section 3 below) which included:

- Specific locations for the proposed nine turbines.
- An introduction to the project and a list of the environmental and economic benefits for the local community.

- Further information on site constraints, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), the planning process and the planned next steps.
- An explanation of how the Community Benefit Fund can benefit the area.
- Aerial imaging of the wider area showing the broader location of the Proposed Project relative to the nearest settlements.
- A map showing Proposed Grid Connection being assessed within the EIAR to bring power from the wind farm to the Cloon 110kV substation.
- A map of the proposed Turbine Delivery Route (TDR)
- Photomontage impressions showing what the turbines, if built, would look like from seven locations surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm site at varying distances and angles.

Documents issued in the past to the wider community in September 2023 were also uploaded to the project website.

3.

PUBLIC INFORMATION EVENT

A Public Information Event (PIE) was originally organised for Tuesday October 17th 2023, however this was postponed following updates to the Proposed Wind Farm layout. The PIE was therefore rescheduled to January 31st, 2024 which presented a near finalised layout for the Proposed Wind Farm. The venue chosen for the event was the Barnaderg Community Centre, Co. Galway, the closest town to the Proposed Wind Farm site. The event was staged between 3pm and 8pm and was attended by representatives of the project team including:

- Grace Curran, Neoen
- Niall Quane, Neoen
- Clíodhna Gormley, Neoen
- Toni Bourke, MKO Project Communications
- Mark Higgins, MKO Project Communications
- Sean Creedon, MKO Associate Director
- Owen Cahill, MKO Senior Environmental Scientist
- Jonny Fearon, MKO Environmental Scientist

3.1

Event Advertisement

To bring the PIE to the attention of as many people as possible, newspaper adverts were placed in the local newspaper, the *Tuam Herald*, one week out from the event (see Appendix 1).

On Wednesday January 24th 2024 and Thursday January 25th 2024, the CLO carried out a leaflet drop to approx. 300 homes within a 2km radius of the turbine locations of the same details that had appeared in the local newspaper to ensure as many of the residents as possible were made aware of the PIE.

3.2

Event Format

The PIE was run in an exhibition format, with boards erected on either side of the hall to display posters carrying information on the Proposed Project background, the planning process, site constraints, the environmental and economic benefits of the Proposed Project, etc. Also on display were various maps showing the layout of the Proposed Wind Farm site, the turbine locations, the proximity of dwellings to each of the turbines, the Proposed Grid Connection and turbine delivery routes, as well as technical drawings of the proposed substation and battery storage compound.

In addition to these display posters, three stations were set up around the hall with photomontage booklets and accompanying maps, showing what the proposed turbines, if built, will look like from various points around the Site.

Each attendee was asked to sign-in at the welcome desk upon their arrival at the event. They were then provided with an information booklet, which contained copies of the posters and maps on display at the event, as well as a biodiversity brochure outlining some of the species and habitats which had been identified at the Proposed Wind Farm site over the course of the ecological surveys.

Comment sheets were available for attendees to fill out as they left the event. All of the project information on display at the event was also published on the project website and timed to go live as the event kicked off.

The event ran from 3pm to 8pm and was attended by approx. 130 people in total, with 104 of these attendees electing to leave their names and contact details.

Feelings toward the Proposed Project was largely neutral amongst the attendees; some members of the local community involved in the Proposed Project were firmly supportive of the development and others were keen to learn the precise locations of the nine proposed turbines, which had not been made publicly available up to that point, while some of the attendees were in strong opposition to the Proposed Project and made their positions known to the project team.

4. **FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION**

4.1 **Main Issues Raised**

Several issues relating to the Proposed Project were raised over the course of the community consultation process, from the initial door-knocking phase through to the PIE and subsequently. Among the most raised issues were:

- The visual impact of the Proposed Wind Farm.
- Shadow flicker
- The impact on local wildlife
- The noise generated by the turbines and construction.
- Payments to near neighbours
- The Community Benefit Fund
- The potential traffic disruption from the construction traffic.
- The proximity of the proposed turbines to homes.
- The impact the Proposed Project would have on local property prices.

Visual impact / Shadow flicker

The visual impact of the proposed turbines was a major concern for residents living closest to the Proposed Wind Farm site. Several residents expressed their concern about the turbines appearing as an “eye sore” from their homes. Several residents also raised concerns about shadow flicker from the spinning turbine blades affecting their homes.

These concerns were closely tied to the concerns over proximity. Residents were reassured that the turbines are positioned beyond the minimum setback distance specified in the draft 2019 Guidelines.

Residents were also assured that shadow flicker experienced at any property would not exceed the limits set out in the currently adopted 2006 Guidelines.



Impact on local wildlife

Some local residents raised concerns about the potential impact of both the construction and operation of the Proposed Project would have on the local wildlife and habitats in the area.

In response, the project team assured those who expressed these concerns that a full EIAR would be included with the planning application upon submission, which would contain reports from the extensive ecological and ornithological surveys carried out in the site over recent years.

Noise concerns

Concerns about turbine noise were closely linked to issues around proximity, particularly among those living nearest to the Proposed Project. Residents were informed that modern turbine technologies are designed to produce as little noise as possible, and that the Proposed Wind Farm would be required by law to abide by any planning conditions set out by the planning authorities regarding the noise from the turbines.

Payments to near neighbours/Community Benefit Fund

At the PIE, some landowners with lands near the Proposed Wind Farm site expressed the view that they should receive compensation for the anticipated disruption caused by the construction and operation of the Proposed Wind Farm.

These landowners were informed that, as their lands are not directly involved in the development, they would not be eligible for direct payments. However, they were encouraged to apply to the Community Benefit Fund, which supports local projects and initiatives. The landowners were also assured them that access to their lands would be maintained at all times, and that a traffic management plan would be implemented to reduce disruption for local road users.

Several community members also queried if they would benefit from reduced electricity costs as a result of living in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm.

Impact on local roads

Residents living along the surrounding local roads raised concerns over the potential increased traffic flow during the construction phase of the Proposed Project and over the potential damage that may be caused to the road surfaces by the volume of heavy machinery accessing the development.

In response, the residents were assured that all efforts would be made to minimise disruption during construction. Key activities, such as turbine blade deliveries, would be scheduled during off-peak hours when traffic is at its lowest.

Due care will also be taken to ensure the roads around the Site are respected. In any potential instance in which a road surface is damaged, it will be restored to the same or better condition as soon as possible.

Proximity to homes

The proximity of the proposed turbines to homes was the most significant concern raised by members of the local community over the course of the public consultation process.

During the PIE, homeowners, farmers, and tenants living or working along surrounding Local and Regional routes voiced strong concerns regarding the closeness of certain turbines to their homes and land.

Residents were informed that one of the key initial criteria in selecting the Proposed Wind Farm site was the separation distance between the wind turbines and residential dwellings. They were reassured that the design of the project complies with the minimum separation distance recommended in the draft 2019 Guidelines, which requires a setback of four times the turbine's tip from sensitive receptors. In this instance, the full ground to blade tip height of the proposed turbines is 180 meters and no turbine will be placed less than 720 meters from a third party sensitive receptor.

Impact on property prices

Some members of the local community voiced concerns that the Proposed Wind Farm would negatively affect local property values. A number of residents also noted that their children had intended to build homes nearby, and that the Proposed Wind Farm would cause them to reconsider those plans.

In response, residents were informed that peer-reviewed research conducted in the EU and mainland Europe has demonstrated that proximity to a wind farm has no material impact on property prices, and that prices are far more sensitive to the wider influences that dictate the rise and fall of properties values nationwide.

Positive feedback

Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by residents on the above topics, the public consultation process also elicited positive feedback from individuals, households and groups in the local area. The positive feedback in relation to the Proposed Project comprised of support for wind energy and the benefits, both environmental and economic, that the Proposed Wind Farm would provide to the local community. There was also enthusiasm among residents regarding the Community Benefit Fund.

A common theme of the consultation was that the local area should see real, tangible benefits from the Proposed Project. Suggestions provided on the uses of the Community Benefit Fund include local community groups and sports clubs, and amenity projects in the surrounding area. Those residents living closest to the Proposed Wind Farm will be in receipt of proximity payments through the CBF while the wider community at large will be able to apply for funds through the Community Benefit Fund to support sustainability projects.

The project team informed the community that this fund would be administered by a committee made up of local people and would ideally be comprised of representatives of a broad cross-section of groups and clubs.

CONCLUSION

Neoen made meaningful engagement with the local community a primary consideration of the Proposed Project. Through face-to-face, written, telephone and online contact, the community consultation process has been effective, open and transparent.

Neoen has engaged and consulted with the local community from an early stage of the pre-planning phase of the Proposed Project. This process of community engagement has proven highly valuable as a means of identifying the key concerns of the local community in relation to the Proposed Project.

The development of the Cooloo Wind Farm will provide a direct and prolonged economic benefit to the communities surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm site through the Community Benefit Fund, and through employment opportunities during the construction process. The developers are committed to maintaining the strong community engagement approach throughout the post-application stage and, if planning permission is granted, will continue to consult with and be available to residents through the construction and operational lifespan of the Proposed Project.



APPENDIX 1

**ISSUED COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTS**

Cooloo Wind Farm
C/O MKO
Tuam Road
Galway
Ireland, H91 VW84

17th April 2023

Ref: Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm

Dear Resident,

In line with Government targets to establish Ireland as a carbon neutral country by 2050, Neoen propose to develop a wind farm in the townlands of Cooloo, Elmhill, Cloonascragh, Leacarrow, and Dangan, near Barnadearg, Co Galway.

The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm will contribute to both Ireland's and the European Union's renewable energy targets. It will also help secure Ireland's energy supply and reduce the country's reliance on imported fossil fuels. The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm project is, in part, a response to the challenges of climate change and ensuring a secure supply of Ireland's future energy needs.

Ecological and Environmental surveys are currently underway. Once concluded, these studies will inform the final design of the project and help determine the location, tip height and number of turbines.

Neoen is a developer of renewable energy projects with a presence in 16 countries, and 5.4GW total capacity of electricity in operation or under construction at the end of 2021. More information on the developer company can be found at www.neoen.com

A planning application is expected to be lodged with Galway County Council in late 2023. Before then, we will be presenting the proposed final design to the local community and hosting a Public Information Event both in-person and online via a Virtual Consultation Room.

The purpose of today's visit is to introduce the project and outline our intention to develop the Cooloo Wind Farm. Enclosed is an information leaflet with further details.

We value your feedback during the design process, and we appreciate your consideration of the information provided. Consultation is ongoing and we continue to seek your views in the following ways:

- Email: clo@cooloowindfarm.com

- Phone: 087-1522137 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
- Use the “Contact” portal on the project website www.cooloowindfarm.com
- By post to Toni Bourke, CLO Cooloo Wind Farm, C/O MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 VW84

Kind regards,

Toni Bourke, Community Liaison Officer, Cooloo Wind Farm



Cooloo Wind Farm

C/O MKO

Tuam Road

Galway

Ireland, H91 VW84

19th April 2023

Ref: Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm

Dear Councillor,

In line with Government targets to establish Ireland as a carbon neutral country by 2050, Neoen propose to develop a wind farm in the townlands of Cooloo, Elmhill, Cloonascragh, Leacarrow, and Dangan, near Barnadearg, Co Galway.

The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm will contribute to both Ireland's and the European Union's renewable energy targets. It will also help secure Ireland's energy supply and reduce the country's reliance on imported fossil fuels. The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm project is, in part, a response to the challenges of climate change and ensuring a secure supply of Ireland's future energy needs.

Ecological and Environmental surveys are currently underway. Once concluded, these studies will inform the final design of the project and help determine the location of the turbines.

Neoen is a developer of renewable energy projects with a presence in 17 countries, and 6.6 GW total capacity of electricity in operation or under construction at the end of 2022. More information on the developer company can be found at www.neoen.com

A planning application is expected to be lodged with An Bord Pleanála in late 2023. Before then, we will be presenting the proposed final design to the local community and hosting a Public Information Event.

The purpose of today's visit is to introduce the project and outline our intention to develop the Cooloo Wind Farm. Enclosed is an information leaflet with further details.

We value your feedback during the design process, and we appreciate your consideration of the information provided. Consultation is ongoing and we continue to seek your views in the following ways:

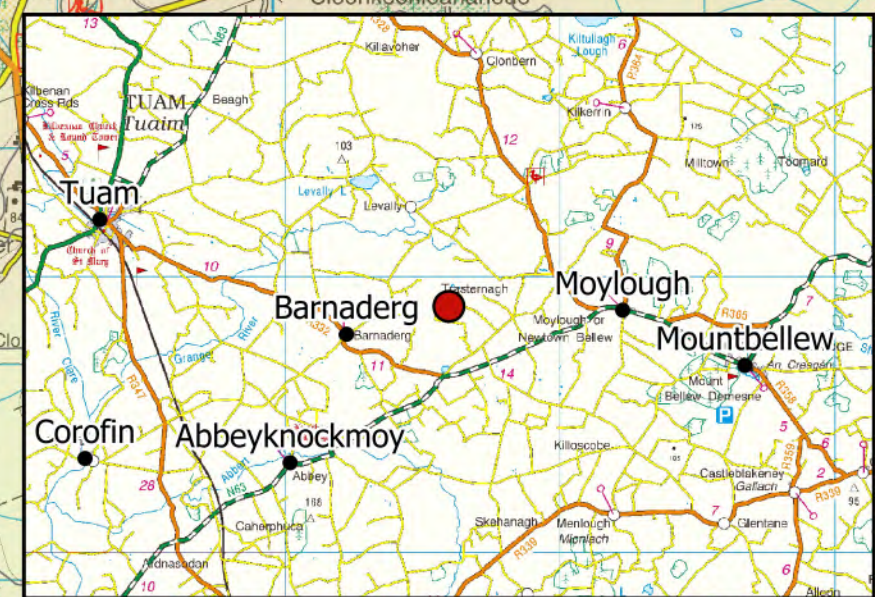
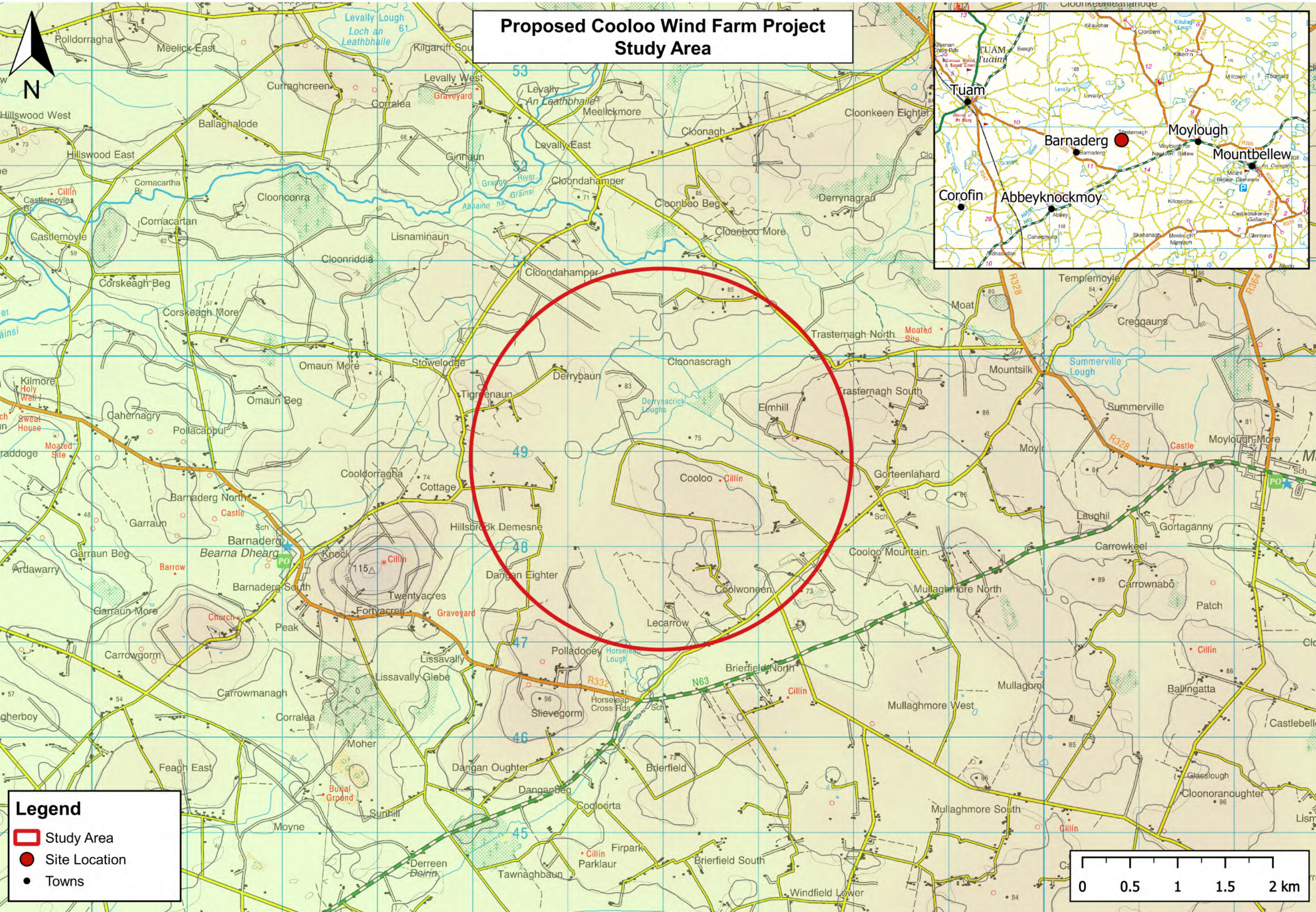


- Email: clo@coolowindfarm.com
- Phone: 087-1522137 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
- Use the “Contact” portal on the project website www.coolowindfarm.com
- By post to Toni Bourke, CLO Cooloo Wind Farm, C/O MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 VW84

Kind regards,

Grace Curran, Business Development Manager, Neoen

Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm Project Study Area





WHY DO WE NEED ONSHORE WIND IN IRELAND?

Wind energy is currently the largest contributor of renewable energy in Ireland, it provides 85% or Ireland’s renewable electricity and supplied 30% of our total electricity demand. In 2021, the government issued their updated Climate Action Plan to tackle climate change. This plan has committed to supplying 80% of our electricity needs from renewable energies by 2030. Renewable energy from wind also ensures Ireland can become self sufficient and helps us achieve energy independence.

NEOEN IN IRELAND

In operation or under construction

Advanced development

Neoen is active in Ireland since 2016.

We own a 53 MW portfolio of 8 operating windfarms.

In 2020 Neoen was awarded a capacity of c.58 MWp in the Republic of Ireland's first government tender for solar farms (RESS 1) and launched the construction of 3 plants.

Neoen energised Ireland's first ground mounted grid-connected solar farm in 2022.

In 2022 we are awarded in RESS 2 tender for 2 new solar projects totaling 80 MWp.

Neoen is developing a growing number of greenfield wind, solar and storage projects at varying stages of development.

NEOEN GLOBALLY

Neoen, founded in 2008, is one of the leading producers in renewable energy worldwide, operating in 17 countries on 4 continents. With a capacity of more than 6.6 GW in operation or under construction, Neoen is committed to contributing to The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill, which aims to ensure Ireland is carbon neutral across all sectors by 2050.

NEOEN

Ferry House,
48-53 Lower Mount Street,
Dublin 2, D02 PT98

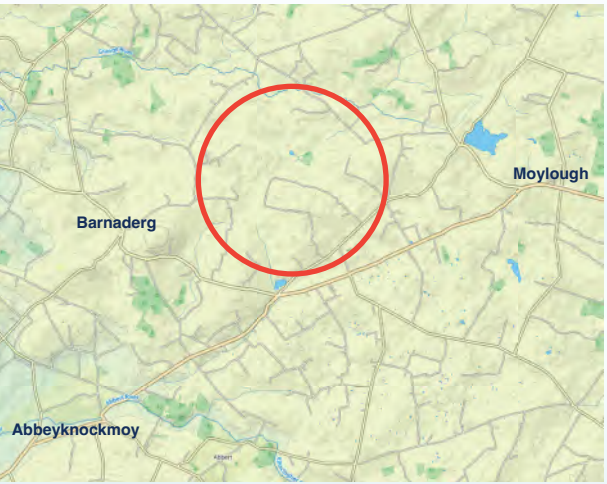
www.noen.com



THE COOLOO WIND FARM PROJECT

Cooloo Wind Farm is a renewable energy development being considered by Neoen in the townlands of Cooloo, Cloonascragh, Dangan, Elmhill, Leacarrow and Polladooey, approximately 12km East of Tuam Co. Galway. It is envisaged that the wind farm project will consist of up 9 turbines, approximately 50 MW, and a battery storage facility. The project will supply clean electricity for Irish homes and businesses and reduce Irelands reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Neoen are undertaking a programme of community engagement, and are interested in your views of the project as local residents, business owners and community groups.



Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm Project Study Area

INDICATIVE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

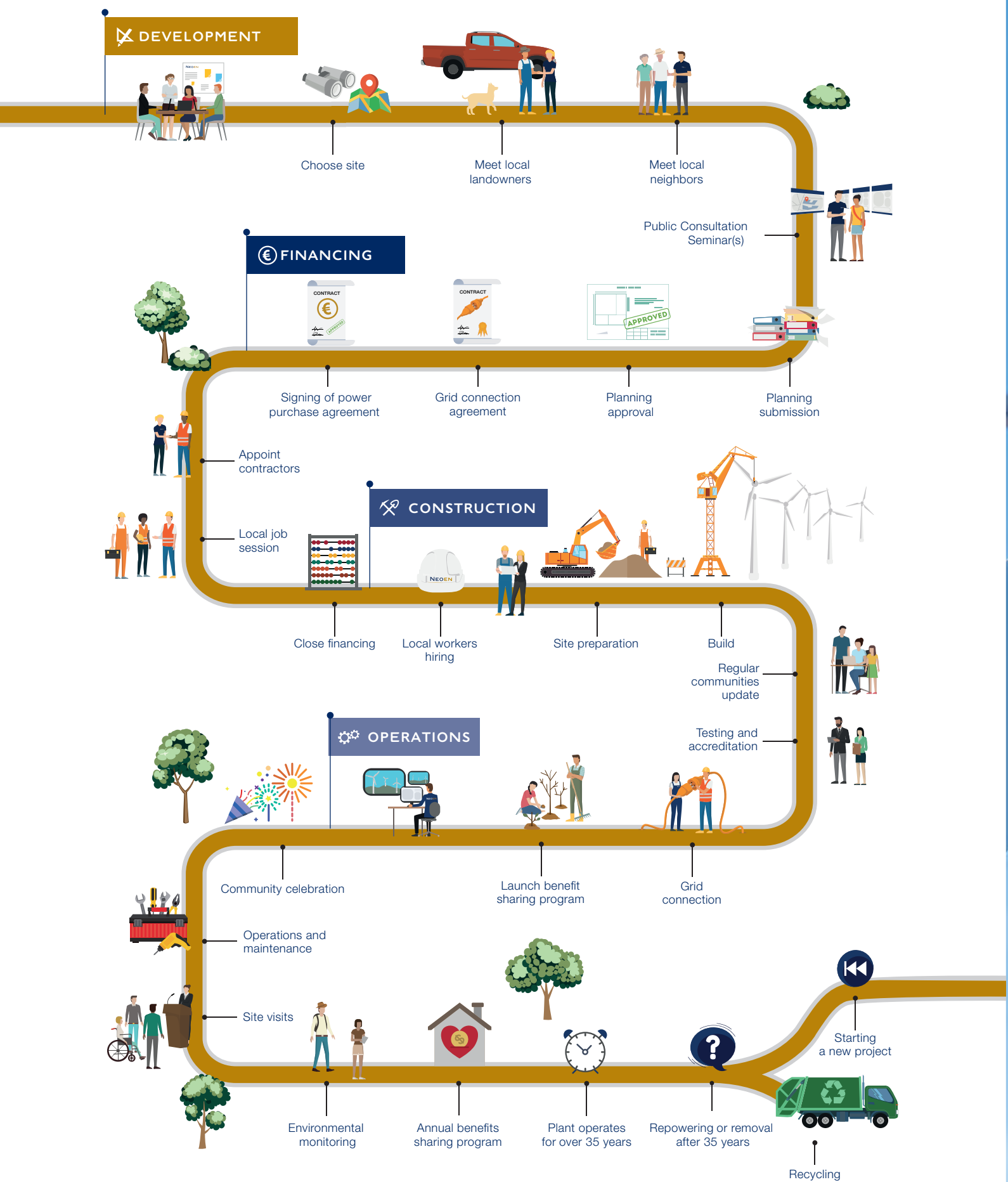


COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Cooloo project has the potential to significantly benefit local communities by establishing a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the local population. All citizens directly affected by the project are invited by the team to participate in the design of the Community Benefit Fund.

- Community Benefit Funds are typically established and managed to benefit the local community in the areas of:
- Recreation
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Tourism

LIFE CYCLE OF A WIND FARM PROJECT



PROJECT TEAM

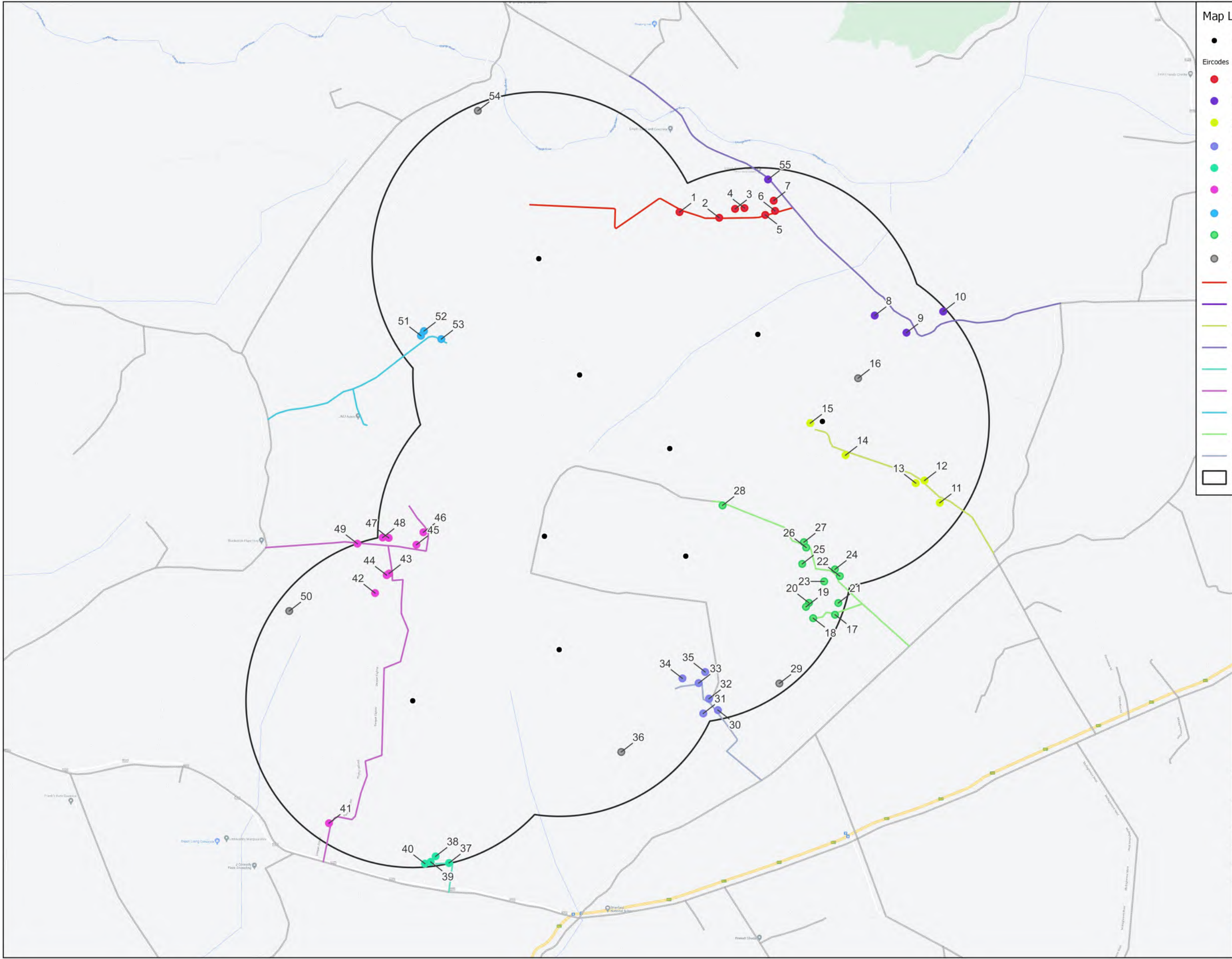
Grace Curran
Business Development Manager
Neoen

Toni Bourke
Community Liaison Officer
Neoen

Please visit the Cooloo Wind Farm project website for more up to date information and answers to frequently asked questions about wind turbines and their development.
www.cooloowindfarm.com

GET IN TOUCH

Email: clo@cooloowindfarm.com
Phone: 087 1522137
www.neoen.com



Map Legend

- Turbine Layout
- Eircodes
 - L22255 - 7 Total, Nums 1,2,3,4,5,6,7
 - L2225 - 4 Total, Nums 55, 8, 9, 10
 - L65081 - 5 Total, Nums 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
 - L6301 - 6 Total, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
 - L62312 - 4 Total, 37, 38, 39, 40
 - L6506 - 9 Total, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49
 - L22262 - 3 Total, Nums 51, 52, 53
 - Unkown - 12 Total, Nums 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
 - Other Roads - 5 Total, Nums 16, 29, 36, 50, 54
- L22255
- L2225
- L65081
- L6301
- L62312
- L6506
- L22262
- Unkown
- Other Roads
- Community Engagement 1km Buffer



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Drawing Title	
Door Knocking	
Project Title	
Coolloo WF - Community Engagement Strategy	
Drawn By	Checked By
CN	TB
Project No.	Drawing No.
190723-h	1
Scale	Date
1:20,000	2023-04-05



MKO
Planning and
Environmental
Consultants

Town Road, Galway
Ireland, H91 W84
+353 (0)91 735611
email: info@mkofireland.ie
Website: www.mkofireland.ie



Feedback Questionnaire – Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm

Please use the prepaid envelope to return completed form.

Alternatively, you can complete this questionnaire on the project website

www.coolloowindfarm.com

Q1: If the proposed project is developed, what types of benefits should the Cooloo Wind Farm provide to the local community?

[illegible]

Q2: Do you have any concerns about this proposed wind farm and if so, what are they?

Q3: Have you any further comments in relation to the proposed project?

Q4: Neoen is committed to keeping the local community informed about the proposed project. Please help us identify any other local groups which you feel should be consulted with.

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Eircode: _____

RETURN ADDRESS: MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, Ireland, H91 VW84

Email: clo@coolowindfarm.com

COOLOO

WIND FARM

Public Exhibition

Neoen is hosting a public exhibition for the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm, which is being proposed for the townlands of Cooloo, Cloonascragh, Dangan, Elmhill, Leacarrow and Polladooey. Open to everyone, the event provides an opportunity to meet the project team, ask any questions and share your feedback.

When: Wednesday, January 31st 2024, 3-8pm

Where: Barnaderg Community Centre, H54 E529

For more information on the project,
please visit the website
www.cooloowindfarm.com

NEOEN

WELCOME TO THE COOLOO WIND FARM

PUBLIC INFORMATION EVENT

The purpose of today's event is to:

- Provide updates on the progress of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm development.
- Give an outline of the wind energy infrastructure that is proposed in the project.
- Explain the technical and environmental studies which have been carried out to date.
- Outline the potential environmental and economic benefits that the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm could provide.
- Enable members of the local community to view the proposals and latest project plans.
- Provide members of the community with the opportunity to put your questions, comments or concerns directly to the development team.

The Proposed Development

The Cooloo Wind Farm is a renewable energy development being proposed by Neoen Renewables Ireland Ltd for the townlands of Cooloo, Cloonascragh, Dangan, Elmhill, Leacarrow and Polladooey, approximately 12km east of Tuam.

It is envisaged that the proposed wind farm development will consist of nine turbines with an output of up to 64.8MW, along with a battery storage facility. The turbines will have a tip height of 180m.

About the Developers

Founded in 2008, Neoen is one of the world's leading independent producers of exclusively renewable energy. With proven expertise in solar power, wind power and storage, the company plays an active role in the energy transition by producing competitive, green, local energy on four continents.

After a six-fold increase in the last six years, its capacity in operation and under construction now stands at 7GW. In Ireland, Neoen operates already eight wind farms and recently delivered three of the first grid connected ground mounted solar plants of the country.

MKO is one of Ireland's largest planning and environmental consultancies. MKO's team of 190+ experienced professionals work across the planning, environmental, ecology and related fields.

MKO have led the environmental assessments throughout all project stages and is preparing the planning permission applications and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the proposed development.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

Site Selection

The site of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm was chosen after extensive environmental and ecological surveying, dating back to initial discussions with landowners in the summer of 2019.

A two-year ornithological survey then commenced in the area. In October 2021, a meteorological mast was erected at the proposed site to measure wind speed and direction.

Statutory Consultation

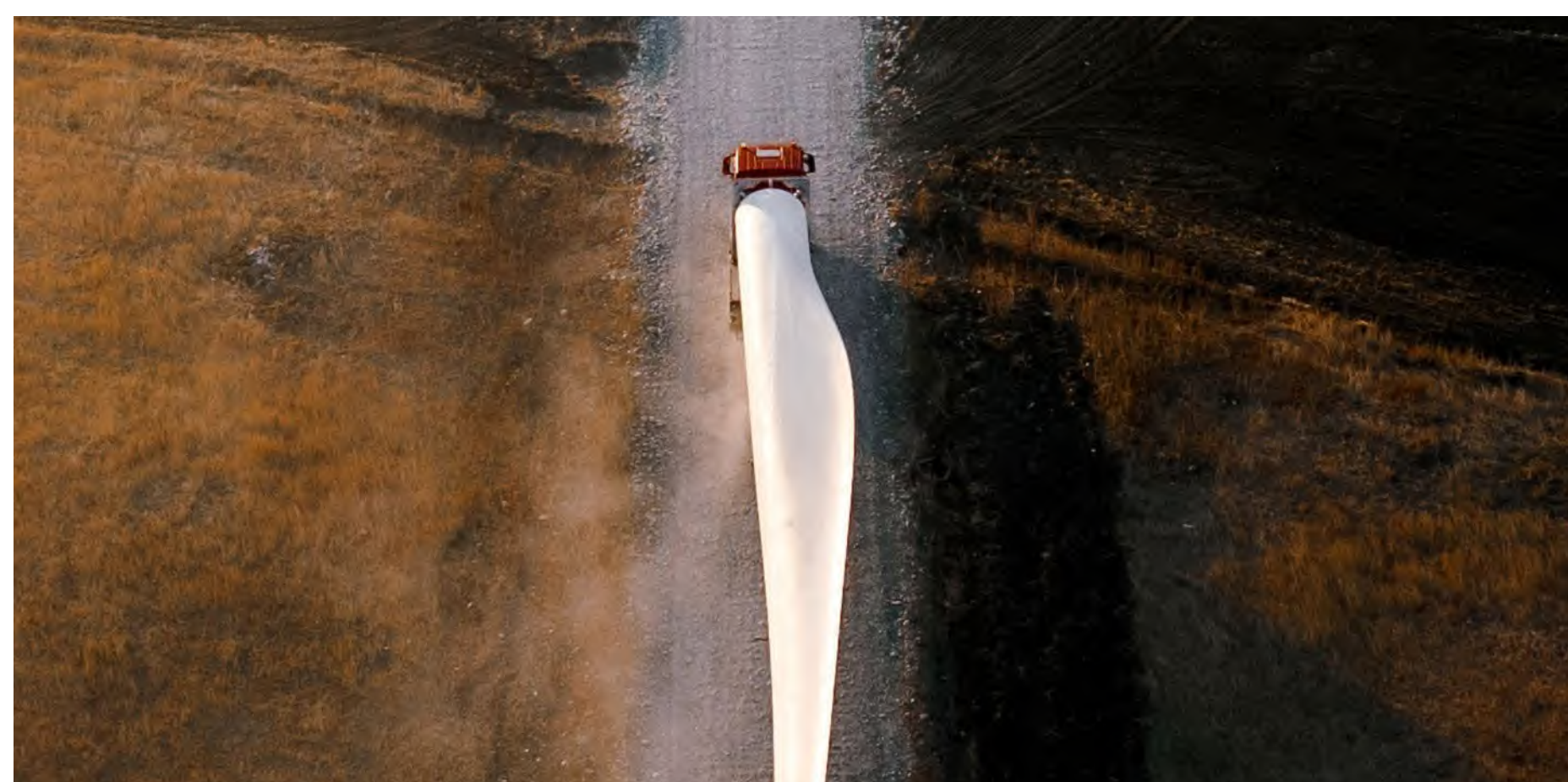
Scoping is the process of identifying the significant issues which should be addressed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). MKO prepared a scoping document, which was circulated to statutory and non- statutory consultees in April 2023 to provide them with an opportunity to comment and to inform the development design and assessment process.

Community Consultation

Initial consultation commenced in April 2023 with a door-knock to houses within 1.5km of the proposed development. This was followed by a mail-out to houses within 2km of the proposed development, which included project packs, maps, brochures and feedback forms.

Project packs were also sent to local elected representatives, sporting organisations, local businesses and community groups.

A project website (cooloowindfarm.com) was launched with up-to-date project information. Feedback received through the ongoing community engagement process has informed and will continue to inform the project plans.



The Planning Application

The planning application for the proposed development requires two separate planning applications:

1- Wind Farm Site

The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm site will comprise of up to nine wind turbines with a total anticipated capacity of up to 64.8MW. Under Section 37A of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, planning applications for a wind farm with total power output that exceeds 50MW must be submitted directly to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) as a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), where appropriate.

A query in this regard was lodged with ABP under case reference number: ABP 316466-23 on April 25th, 2023. It is anticipated that ABP will determine the project to be strategic, in which case an application will be lodged directly to ABP.

2 - Grid Connection

The proposed electrical substation and underground grid connection cabling will connect either to an existing 110kV overhead line in the townland of Cloonagh or to the existing Cloon substation near Tuam. One or both of these grid connection route options will be assessed in the EIAR for the application for the wind farm. The final connection option will be decided upon grant of the planning for the wind farm and will form a separate planning application in the future.

Turbine Delivery Route

The turbines for the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm will be delivered to Galway Port and will be transported via the M17 motorway as far as Junction 19 at Annagh Hill. From there they will be transported via the N63 through Abbeyknockmoy before being taken along the R332 to the site entrance.

SITE CONSTRAINTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Primary Site Constraints

Extensive ecological, ornithological, and environmental surveys carried out at the site of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm over recent years have identified relevant site constraints. A constraint is a feature of an area that may constrain the suitability of the area for a wind farm development. The constraints map for the site has been produced following a desk study of all site constraints.

These include:

- Natura 2000 and designated sites - plus 200-metre buffer
- Third-party dwellings - plus 720-metre buffer (x4 tip height)
- Telecommunication links - plus operator-specific buffer
- Watercourses - plus 50-metre buffer
- Lakes - plus 100-metre buffer
- Archaeological sites or monuments - plus 50-metre buffer

Development Design

Once these constraints had been identified and plotted, a turbine layout was developed to take account of all the constraints mentioned above and their associated buffer zones, and the separation distances required between the turbines.

In addition to the above constraints, the locations of the proposed wind turbines and all other proposed infrastructure locations have been informed by rigorous site investigations and assessments carried out over a two-year period, including:

- Ecological surveys
- Ornithological surveys
- Hydrological and geological site investigations, including site-specific flood modelling
- Archaeological surveys
- Shadow flicker modelling
- Noise modelling
- Landscape and visual assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

The planning application for the proposed development will be accompanied by an EIAR. This will be publicly accessible and will address the following headings:

1. Introduction
2. Background and Policy
3. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives
4. Description of the Proposed Development
5. Population and Human Health
6. Biodiversity
7. Ornithology
8. Land, Soils and Geology
9. Hydrology and Hydrogeology
10. Air and Climate
11. Noise and Vibration
12. Landscape and Visual
13. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
14. Material Assets (includes Traffic & Transportation, Telecommunications, Utilities and Aviation)
15. Interaction of the foregoing
16. Major Accidents and Natural Disasters
17. Schedule of Mitigation

MKO are compiling the EIAR with the input of several other specialist consultants, including:

- Hydro-Environmental Services
- Tobar Archaeological Services
- TNEI Ireland Ltd. (Noise & Vibration)
- Alan Lipscombe Traffic and Transport Consultants



SITE

BIODIVERSITY

In choosing the site of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm, extensive ecological surveys were undertaken by MKO's teams of specialists. These surveys, conducted over a period of more than two years, targeted a variety of plant and animal species and habitats with the goal of determining their distribution and prevalence in the area.

Species and Habitats

Mammals - Several species of bat have been recorded in the study area. These include Myotis spp., Leisler's bat, the common pipistrelle, the soprano pipistrelle, the brown long-eared bat and Nathusius' pipistrelle. Species of hare have also been recorded.

Bird species - A variety of common and widespread bird species typical of farmland habitats have been recorded in the study area. In addition, whooper swans, snipe and kestrel were also recorded.



Habitats

Peatlands – The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm contains large areas of raised bog and cutover bog. Peatlands, including raised bog, are important ecosystems. They support a unique assemblage of plant species, specially adapted to the waterlogged, acidic conditions of the bog such as Sphagnum mosses and bog cotton. They also play an important role in carbon sequestration.

Woodland, Treelines and Hedgerows - Most of the agricultural fields within the wind farm site are bordered by hedgerows and/or treelines, creating a large network of linear woodland, providing important refuge and wildlife corridor habitats.

Native, nectar-rich hedgerow species such as hawthorn, brambles and rose provide pollinator-friendly habitats, as well as berries in the autumn which native bird species depend on. Pockets of woodland in the site also provide shelter and burrowing habitats for birds and small mammals.



BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

National and EU Climate Action Targets

- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (amendment) Act 2021 commits Ireland to reaching a legally binding target of net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and the provision of 80% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, transitioning Ireland to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.
- The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP) identified the need to increase the share of electricity demand generated from renewable sources by up to 80% where achievable and cost effective, without compromising security of electricity supply, identifying a need for 9GW of on-shore wind generation for Ireland to meet its 2030 targets.
- The production of renewable energy from the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm will assist in achieving the government's and EU's stated goals.

The Environmental Benefits

The proposed development will generate up to 64.8MW of renewable, carbon-neutral electricity. It will help secure Ireland's energy supply and reduce the country's reliance on imported fossil fuels. The proposed Cooloo Wind Farm project is, in part, a response to the challenges of climate change and ensuring a secure supply of Ireland's future energy needs.



The Community Benefit Fund

Renewable energy projects which are developed under the current Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) will have a significantly increased community benefit fund associated with them. This contribution is currently set at €2/MWh.

Should the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm be developed under RESS, it would provide a community contribution in the region of €300,000/year for the local community. The value of this fund would be directly linked to the electricity generated by the wind farm. In addition, under the current RESS, the following would be required of the wind farm owners:

- Direct Payments – to those living closest to the wind farm. A minimum of €1,000 payment per annum for houses within 1km of the proposed development.
- Energy Efficiency – Up to 40%/year would be available for the development of energy/sustainability initiatives to benefit people living in the local area.
- Administration costs – a maximum of 10% of this fund to be made available for the administration and governance costs of the fund.
- Support for local groups – The remainder would be available for local groups, clubs and not-for-profit organisations that provide services in the local area. This could include services for the elderly, local community buildings, and the development of sporting facilities such as all-weather playing pitches, etc.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: THE NEXT STEPS

Upon completion of the EIAR and the community engagement process, Neoen intends to submit a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application for planning permission directly to An Bord Pleanála in the coming months.

The application will include:

- Application Forms and Public Notices
- Planning Drawings
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- Natura Impact Statement

Notification of the intention to lodge these applications will be placed in relevant newspapers. Once submitted, all planning application documents and drawings will be available for viewing in the offices of An Bord Pleanála.

The information will also be available to view on website portals.

Neoen will also continue to update all residents closest to the development on the project's progress. The project website will also be updated with links to the relevant application files, to inform the wider community.

Following lodgment of the application, members of the community can make submissions to the relevant authority during the assigned public consultation period. The project team will continue to be available to discuss any individual queries in relation to the application.

Get in touch

We value your feedback during the design process, and we appreciate your consideration of the information provided up to now. Consultation is ongoing and we continue to seek your views in the following ways:



At this exhibition by providing comments to exhibition staff.



Complete a comment card, available at the exhibition today.



Email **clo@coolowindfarm.com**



Phone **087 15 22 137**



Use the 'Contact' portal on the project website **www.coolowindfarm.com**



Post to Toni Bourke, CLO, MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 VW84

- *All of the information on display here today is available to view on the project website.*
- *The full planning applications can also be assessed there once submitted.*

Cooloo Wind Farm Biodiversity Information Leaflet

January 2024



This leaflet has been prepared by Mark Higgins, MKO
Project Communications

If you would like further information, please contact

mhiggins@mkofireland.ie

Local biodiversity



What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is a term given to the variety of life on earth, including all ecosystems and species of plant and animal life.

In choosing the site of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm, extensive ecological surveys were undertaken by MKO's teams of specialists. These surveys, conducted over a period of more than two years, targeted a variety of plant and animal species and habitats with the goal of determining their distribution and prevalence in the area.

This leaflet provides an overview of a variety of habitats and species of interest with potential to occur within the site, along with some notable facts for the reader.

Points of local interest

- **A - Peatlands** – The primary peatland habitats within the Cooloo Wind Farm site are cutover and raised bog habitats. Cutover bog areas have been highly modified, while the uncut, raised bog is a semi-natural habitat. All peatland habitats within the site provide a unique assemblage of flora and fauna, as well as habitats for local species, particularly certain bird species.
- **B - Woodlands** - Small areas of conifer plantation woodland are present within the Cooloo Wind Farm site. Although small in size, these areas of woodland provide refuges for a range of common birds and mammals. Together with treelines and hedgerows they provide habitat connectivity to the wider landscape for a variety of wildlife, including bats.
- **C - Watercourses** - The largest network of a waterbody running through the windfarm site is the Grange river, which is located within the Corrib hydrometric area. This river is hydrologically connected to the Lough Corrib SAC downstream of the windfarm site.
- **D - Grasslands** - The grassland habitats on site comprise mainly of improved agricultural grassland and wet grassland. Although these habitats are often of relatively low biodiversity value, they do provide some supporting habitat for foraging faunal species locally, including mammals such as badger and amphibians such as common frog. Field boundary hedgerows and treelines provide important foraging resources and habitat connectivity for wildlife.

See area map on back page for more details.

Useful sources of information

- **BirdWatch Ireland** - birdwatchireland.ie
- **Bat Conservation Ireland** - batconservationireland.org
- **The Irish Wildlife Trust** - iwt.ie

Species and Habitats

Species

Mammals

Several species of bat have been recorded in the study area. These include *Myotis* spp., Leisler's bat, the common pipistrelle, the soprano pipistrelle, the brown long-eared bat and *Nathusius'* pipistrelle. Species of hare and badger have also been recorded.

Bird species

A variety of bird species have been recorded in the study area. Among the bird species recorded over the course of the surveys were:

- Hen Harrier
- Kingfisher
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon
- Whooper Swan
- Barn Owl
- Curlew
- Kestrel
- Buzzard



Habitats

Peatlands

The Cooloo Wind Farm site contains large areas of raised bog and cutover bog. Peatlands, including raised bog, are important ecosystems. They support a unique assemblage of plant species, specially adapted to the waterlogged, acidic conditions of the bog such as *Sphagnum* mosses and bog cotton. They also play an important role in carbon sequestration.

Woodland, Treelines and Hedgerows

Most of the agricultural fields within the wind farm site are bordered by hedgerows and/or treelines, creating a large network of linear woodland, providing important refuge and wildlife corridor habitats. Native, nectar-rich hedgerow species such as hawthorn (pictured), brambles and rose provide pollinator-friendly habitats, as well as berries in the autumn which native bird species depend on. Pockets of woodland in the site also provide shelter and burrowing habitats for birds and small mammals.

Site Biodiversity

The lands within the Cooloo wind farm are predominantly improved agricultural grassland and peatland habitats. Smaller habitat areas, including wet grassland, scrub, conifer plantations and wet heath, are also present.

Habitats

- Agricultural grassland
- Wet grassland
- Watercourses
- Peatlands
- Woodlands

Species of Interest

A wide variety of animal species have been recorded within the Cooloo Wind Farm site. Among the species of interest recorded are:

- Bats
- Badgers
- Whooper Swan
- Kingfisher (pictured)
- Hen Harrier
- Barn Owl



Cooloo Wind Farm Study Area Map and Associated Points of Local Interest

- A - Peatlands
- B - Woodlands
- C - Watercourses
- D - Grasslands



Questions in relation to Cooloo Wind Farm – 19th February 2024

Proposed Development – Wind Farm

1. What impact will the proposed development have on the valuation of houses especially within the 1km radius?

There is no empirical evidence that vicinity to a wind farm or a wind turbine has any significant effect, positive or negative, on property prices. Property values are much more sensitive to the wider influences which affect prices on a regional and national basis. There has been no specific research carried out on this topic in Ireland as of yet, but a study published in Scotland in October 2016 found that proximity to a wind turbine produced “No evidence of a consistent negative effect on house prices”.

(https://www.climateexchange.org.uk/media/1359/cxc_wind_farms_impact_on_house_prices_final_17_oct_2016.pdf)

2. What are the noise levels to houses within the 1 km radius?

The planning application which will be prepared for the proposed development will be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which will include an assessment of the potential noise impacts from both the construction of the proposed development and its operation post construction.

Baseline noise surveys have been undertaken to provide a background noise reading for the area in the absence of the proposed development. This information is being used to inform the impact assessment of the proposed development. The results of noise modelling will be set out in the EIA Report.

Projects such as that proposed, if granted planning permission are conditioned to a noise threshold. The noise condition that is commonly set out are as follows:

- The greater of 5dB above background noise levels or 45db during daytime hours.
- And 43dB at all other times.

The purpose of the noise limit is to ensure that there is no significant noise impact arising from the operation of the proposed wind farm.

3. The information states that a setback of 750m has been applied. However, the map did not show a house that is lived in inside the 750 m.

Our impact assessment will adopt all necessary set back requirements for inhabited dwellings.

4. What happens to the water levels with all this concrete going into the bog?

The planning application which will be prepared for the proposed development will be the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which will include an assessment of the hydrology and hydrogeology of the area. The site investigations to date have been used to inform project design and optimum construction methodology, particularly with regard to the ground water levels and suitability of the ground conditions for the proposed development.

To date, investigate boreholes have been drilled with monitoring ongoing all of which will be used to model and understand groundwater interactions and all of which will be considered as part of the EIA.

5. Will land adjacent/around the turbines be fenced to protect livestock?

This will be discussed and agreed with each individual landowner whose land is involved. This is not mandatory.

6. Will there be any walkways?

Wind farms that are located on private lands typically do not have public access as the lands are being used by the owners for a range of uses such as agriculture or forestry. The community gain fund that will be generated as part of the project during the operational stage can be directed towards the development of amenity in the wider area on suitable consenting private and/or public lands. The use of the funds for this purpose can be discussed in detail prior to the commissioning of the wind farm.

7. How many homes are within 1km of the proposed wind farm?

39.

8. What impact will the proposed development have on wildlife in the area and in particular on Whooper Swans etc?

Over three years of bird surveys have been undertaken in the immediate area around the site of the proposed development. This survey effort has provided the necessary level of detail required on bird populations and movement in the area. Again, the assessment of this data will form part of the EIA as with other disciplines. Where the project layout is required to adopt any changes or mitigation brought on by the findings of the bird surveys and assessment, this will be adopted within the layout and detailed in the EIA Report.

And how will this impact on farmers' ACRES monies where they have areas designated for this wildlife?

It is up to individual landowners to consider the implications of the development on their own grants. In order for the project to progress it has to be concluded by the consenting authority that it will not have a significant environmental impact on birds.

9. How many other wind farms/solar farms are NEON developing in the area?

Neoen are not developing any other wind or solar farms in the area at present.

Proposed Development – Substation

10. The substation, how many acres is it taking up and how large is it?

The substation does not form part of this application. There will be an application to An Bord Pleanála for planning in the future. The total size will be confirmed in this application after consultation with Eirgrid to confirm the point of the connection. There is a requirement to assess potential for impacts associated with the provision

of the substation and grid connection in the application for the wind farm. Currently a substation with a footprint of c. 2.8ha is being considered for that assessment.

11. What health risks are associated with the batteries?

There are no known health risks associated with properly maintained large scale battery installations. The batteries and associated equipment are manufactured, installed, and monitored according to the highest industry safety guidelines and will also be subject to rigorous safety conditions as set down in any grant of permission.

12. How far should the batteries be located away from Cooloo School?

Neoen generally locate batteries at least 150m away from houses, schools or any occupied buildings.

13. Will additional land be required to connect to the substation?

This is to be determined after consultation with Eirgrid and will depend on the recommended connection point.

Construction Phase and Employment

14. What disruption will be caused to locals during the construction phase?

The delivery of materials such as crushed stone and concrete will be the main bulk of raw materials delivered to the site via the public road network.

The main delivery of concrete will occur for the pouring of foundations which will occur over 9 days. Other concrete pours will occur over the course of the project but will be much smaller in scale.

Crushed stone deliveries will occur over a more prolonged period. Whilst there is the potential for minor disruption during the works, the project will be required to have in place a traffic management plan which will be agreed with the local authority in advance of the works. There will also be a requirement for the provision of a community liaison where specific access requirements need to be agreed for busy periods for farmers e.g. silage cutting etc.

Furthermore, the traffic section of the EIA Report will assess the likely traffic impacts associated with the works. This assessment will also examine the delivery of abnormal loads such as turbine components most of which will be delivered at nighttime due to the scale of the equipment and the vehicles required to haul them.

15. What employment will be available for the local community?

Neoen's policy is to engage local suppliers where possible. We will be able to determine this better when the application is granted and we know we can build and when.

16. How will the turbines get to site – how will they navigate through the bends and bridges from Abbeyknockmoy onwards?

The route is available to view on the project website www.cooloowindfarm.com. An assessment has been run to ensure the suitability of the route and this will form part of the planning application.

Turbine delivery will use the permitted Liss to Abbey Realignment Scheme which has been approved by An Bord Pleanála.

17. How long will construction take?

On average a wind farm will take from 18-24 months to construct.

18. Will local suppliers, quarries be used?

It is our intention to use local quarries where possible.

Public Consultation

19. Please outline how Moylough community groups were consulted or notified of meetings or liaised as numerous groups have stated they have received no engagement to date.

The Public Information Event was advertised in the Tuam Herald on January 24th via both an advertisement and a press release one week out from the event. Also every home within a 2km radius of the turbines received a leaflet through their doors a week in advance of the event, notifying them of the event.

Last April local schools and sporting clubs received project info in a mailout.

20. Is there an option to sign up to a mailing/email list for updates on the project?

All project updates will be publicised via the project website
www.cooloowindfarm.com

21. Please explain why no information sessions were held in Moylough Hall given that the maps of the development indicate that seven of the nine turbines are to be located in Moylough Parish and the development bears the name Cooloo which is in Moylough Parish?

The Public Information Event was held in the hall in Barnaderg because that was the closest suitable venue to the site of the development. All communities were invited to attend via the newspaper advertisement in the Tuam Herald and the invite that was delivered door to door.

Planning Application

22. When do you intend to submit an application?

It is hoped that the application for planning permission will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála before the end of Q2 2024.

23. How will the local community be informed that an application has been submitted?

The notice of the submission of the application will be published in a relevant newspaper. Site notices will also be erected around the perimeter of the site to alert the local community. There will also be a notification on the project website www.cooloowindfarm.com, where all relevant documentation will also be published at this time.

It is our intention to do one more leaflet drop to the local community approx. six weeks out from submission to inform the community.

Planning Application Cont...

24. When and to whom will an application for the grid connection be made?

The application for the grid connection will also be made to An Bord Pleanála. We cannot know for sure when this application will be made as it will depend on the response to the application for the wind turbines and may be impacted by any conditions imposed on that grant, and also on consultation with Eirgrid.

25. Given the poor broadband service in the area, will a copy of the planning application be made locally available for people to review?

We can arrange for a copy of the application to be printed on hard copy and made available. We would need guidance on where the most appropriate location would be for the hard copy version to be displayed and how it will be accessed.

26. Why is an application not going to Galway County Council?

This project is categorised as a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) because its installed capacity will be over 50MW. Projects categorised as SID are defined in legislation as being nationally significant and therefore the applications are required to be sent directly to An Bord Pleanála instead of to the local authority, which is Galway County Council in this case. We continue to engage with Galway County Council on this application because they are a consultee on the project.

Community Fund

Given that the maps of the development indicate that seven of the nine turbines are to be located in Moylough Parish and the development bears the name Cooloo which is in Moylough Parish, any Community Funding for Community groups must be directed to those groups in the parish local area as is required under rules of these type of developments. In this case this would be The Moylough area.

The Fund Committee will seek applications for funding and will make decisions about where the funding is to be allocated based on the terms of reference set out by the committee and in line with government policy.

It would be good practice for the new Fund Committee to determine a funding strategy or community action plan for the Fund. This means identifying the best ways to maximise the impact of the Fund for the local community and to devise strategic plans towards that end. A specific objective here is to identify substantive areas of funding priority that are likely to have an enduring positive impact on the community. The strategic plans should in particular focus on the UN SDGs.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5f12f-community-projects-and-benefit-funds-ress/#:~:text=Community%20Benefit%20Fund%20Good%20Practice,CBF%20Good%20Practice%20Principles%20Handbook.>

27. Will priority for funding be given to Moylough?

The Fund Committee will seek applications for funding for projects from local groups. No one area should be given priority over any other. Groups within a 10km radius of the windfarm will be entitled to apply for funding provided their project fulfils the criteria. This is separate to near neighbour payments which is an agreed amount, not less than €1,000 p.a. which will be paid to households within 1km of the proposed development.

28. Who will Administrate the Fund?

The Fund Committee will be made up of not less than 5 members to include the developer and an independent administrator, and not more than 14 people. This committee will be mostly made up of local volunteers who will ensure the terms of reference of the fund are adhered to. Committee members should represent a cross section of the community.

The committee should have a balanced spread of members between different areas and also between different sorts of groups, i.e. community councils, sports clubs, Tidy Towns, etc.

29. How can the local community nominate/put forward representatives for the Fund Committee?

The fund, and therefore the committee to administer the fund, only comes into being once the wind farm is built and operational. At that stage, the independent administrator will be appointed and they will seek nominations for the committee.

30. Regardless of the route to market, will the developer commit to providing a community benefit fund to the area for a minimum of 15 years in line with RESS (Regardless of if it is in RESS or not)?

This is an option Neoen are exploring and will be confirmed prior to the application being lodged with An Bord Pleanála.

31. Will this commitment be stated in the planning application?

As above.

32. Regardless of the route to market, will the developer commit to providing a near neighbour fund to homes within 1km of a turbine for a minimum of 15 years in line with RESS (Regardless of if it is in RESS or not)?

Neoen are exploring this option and this will be confirmed as part of the planning application.

33. Will this commitment be stated in the planning application?

As above.

34. In the information material, the installed capacity is in excess of 64MW. However, the community Fund is only valued at circa 300k. Based on these figures, it would appear that a capacity factor significantly below the national average has been used to calculate the proposed output. Could you please advise of the

- a. expected export capacity of the wind farm?**
- b. Expected capacity factor for the wind farm?**

The application states that the capacity will be **up to** 64 MW.

The c. €300k figure was provided as a minimum (based on the current estimated layout and capacity), not a maximum. The actual fund will be influenced by the installed turbines and the wind regime for each individual year during operation.

35. Is the proposed 300k community fund – inclusive of the 10% that can be deducted towards administration of the Fund?

Yes, the administration fees would be drawn from the fund. It should be noted that 10 per cent is the limit that can be spent on admin, and the actual percentage of the fund spent on admin could be much less. Also, the €300k community fund is indicative as detailed above.

36. How many wind farms does NEOEN own and operate in Ireland?

Neoen currently has eight operational wind farms in Ireland.

37. How many of these have community funds attached to them?

The provision of a Community Benefit Fund is a prerequisite for any wind farm operating under the RESS guidelines. Neoen took ownership of the eight windfarms in a purchase agreement completed in 2019 – the wind farms were pre-existent and were not originally developed by Neoen. These wind farms were commissioned between 1998 and 2012, before the introduction of the RESS auction system. There is/was no requirement for Community Benefit Fund, but Neoen have been responding positively to several solicitations for funding support with for example donations made towards the construction of a school sport facility. Several requests are currently being assessed.

Neoen also just commissioned 3 solar farms in Ireland, which were awarded in the framework of RESS 1.

Tailormade community benefits are being implemented in consultation with SEAI. Neoen already performed scoping studies aiming to identify opportunities, in consultation with local communities, for the strategic and impactful investment of funds resulting from the operation for Neoen's assets. That engagement aims to:

- Consult with local communities on areas of greatest need
- Identify and articulate opportunities for community benefit fund investment
- Highlight specific/unique characteristics of the region(s) that should be taken into consideration in the development of fund criteria and grant assessment
- Identify non-profit/community development organisations within each region that may benefit from participating in the funding scheme

For those 3 projects (58 MWp), it will be c.€100k annually.

38. Of those that have community funds, was it provided voluntary from NEOEN or as a result of a condition of planning?

As presented above, there was no requirement in the planning.

39. Will the Fund prioritise projects within 10km of the proposed development?

The RESS guidelines state that projects within 10km of the development are to be prioritised. As presented above Neoen will provide more details in our planning application with regards to our community benefit fund strategy with or without

RESS, but this is indeed our intention to prioritise projects in the close proximity of the wind farm.

Cooloo Wind Farm
C/O MKO
Tuam Road
Galway
Ireland, H91 VW84

September 2025

Ref: Proposed Cooloo Wind Farm

Dear Resident,

In line with Government targets to establish Ireland as a carbon neutral country by 2050, Neoen propose to develop a renewable energy development in the townlands of Cloondahamper (Blake), Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eighter, Gorteenlahard, Lissavally and Slievegorm in Co. Galway.

The purpose of this information pack is to provide updated information on the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm (Proposed Project). The main characteristics of the Proposed Project are set out in the attached layout and location plan and are summarised below:

- 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;
- 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 for the provision of construction access;
- vi. 2 no. new site entrances either side of the L6301 Local Road in the townland of Cooloo for the provision of operational access;
- vii. 4 no. new access and egress points to facilitate the crossing of the L6056 Local Road in the townland of Dangan Eighter and L6301 Local Road in the townland of Cooloo and Lecarrow;
- viii. Upgrade of existing site tracks/roads and provision of new site access roads, junctions and hard-standing areas;
- ix. A new temporary access road from N63 national road and to R332 Regional Road in the townland of Slievegorm to facilitate the delivery of turbine components and other abnormal sized loads;
- x. Demolition of an existing derelict house and adjacent outbuilding in the townland of Cooloo;
- xi. Peat and Spoil Management Areas;
- xii. Tree felling and hedgerow removal;
- xiii. Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan measures;
- xiv. Site Drainage;

- xv. Operational Stage site signage; and
- xvi. All ancillary apparatus and site development works above and below ground, including soft and hard landscaping.

All items above have been assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) to be included with the planning application to be lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) in the coming weeks. The EIAR also includes the assessment of an onsite 110kV substation, battery energy storage system and associated works, and underground 110kV cabling to connect to the national grid at Cloon 110kV substation. It is intended to submit a separate planning application for these elements at a later date.

The final design of the Proposed Project has been informed by several years of ecological and environmental surveys across the Site, and will be outlined in the accompanying EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Neoen is a developer of renewable energy projects with a presence across fourteen countries with 8.9GW total capacity of electricity in operation or under construction at the end of 2024. Neoen operates eight wind farms and three solar farms in the Republic of Ireland, with a combined capacity of 112 MW in operation, and a portfolio of 1.7 GW MW in development. More information on the developer company can be found at www.neoen.com

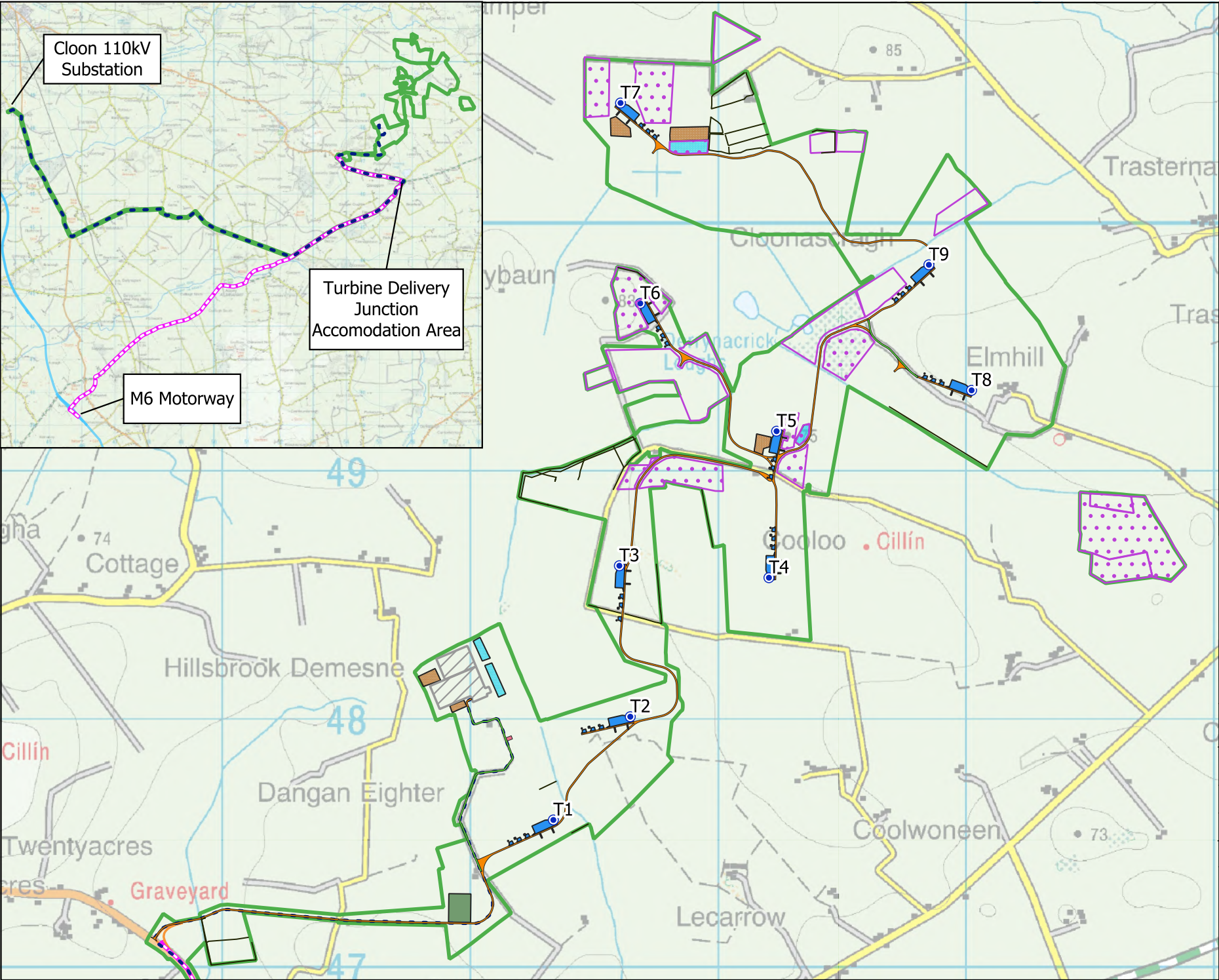
Once lodged, members of the public can make a submission to ACP within 6 weeks of the date of notice for the application. Details on how to make a submission can be found on the ACP website here: [https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/observation-on-a-sid-application-guide/observation-\(sid\)-making-an-observation](https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/observation-on-a-sid-application-guide/observation-(sid)-making-an-observation)

We value your feedback and appreciate your consideration of the information provided. Consultation is ongoing and we continue to seek your views in the following ways:

- Email: clo@coolowindfarm.com
- Use the “Contact” portal on the project website www.coolowindfarm.com
- By post to Community Liaison Officer, Cooloo Wind Farm, C/O MKO, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 VW84

Kind regards,

Community Liaison Officer, Cooloo Wind Farm



Map Legend

- EIAR Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Layout
- Proposed Turbine Hardstands
- Proposed New Roads
- Proposed Upgrades to Existing Roads
- Proposed Temporary Construction Compound
- Proposed Met Mast Location
- Proposed Turbine Delivery Accommodation Works
- Proposed Turbine Delivery Route
- Onsite 110kV Substation & Battery Energy Storage System
- Proposed Grid Connection
- Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Areas
- Proposed Linear Biodiversity Enhancement Measures
- Proposed Peat and Spoil Areas
 - Peat
 - Spoil



Drawing Title	
Proposed Project	
Project Title	
Cooloo Wind Farm, Co. Galway	
Drawn By	Checked By
BT	EM
Project No.	Drawing No.
190723	Figure 1
Scale	Date
1:20,000	01.09.2025

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