4 PLANNING AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter sets out the planning policy and legislative context relevant to the Project by providing an overview of the main international, national, and regional legislation and policy of relevance, as well as a detailed review of the planning policy framework within which the application will be assessed. This section also provides a brief overview of the most up-to-date statistics on Irish renewable energy production, climate emissions, and the benefits the Project can bring to supporting Ireland's 2030 and 2050 renewable energy targets.

The planning policy assessment shows that the Project aligns with European, National and Local Plan Policies. In particular, the Project will help to meet the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP2025 and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the "Climate Act"). Carrigeen Renewable Energy Development can make an important contribution to Ireland's renewable energy targets. The Project will have a generating capacity of c.62.7 megawatt (MW) maximum export capacity (MEC) and will be of economic and social importance to both the region and the state.

The urgency to combat climate change and meet energy demands is evident in reviewed policies, emphasizing the vital role of renewable energy in transitioning to a climate neutral economy and society. By investing in renewable energy, Ireland can promote sustainable economic development using its own, secure and clean energy.

In summary the Project would:

- Contribute to the 45% overall renewable energy target for the EU introduced by the REPowerEU Plan in light of the war in Ukraine.
- Compliance with the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III).
- Contribute to assisting Ireland to increase from 40.4% electricity produced by renewable sources in 2023 to 80% by 2030 to meet the national target.
- Contribute towards the National Development Plan 2021-2030's National Strategic Outcomes.
- Contributes towards climate change mitigation as specified in the National Planning Framework's National Policy Objective 69.
- Contribute toward renewable energy use and generation as specified in the National Planning Framework's National Policy Objective 70.

- Contributes towards climate change mitigation as specified in the National Planning Framework's National Policy Objective 71.
- Contribute c.62.7MW MEC of renewable wind energy to the national CAP25 target of 9GW by 2030 helping to reduce the current c.4GW shortfall.
- Comply with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the North and West region's goal of producing renewable energy to tackle climate change, meet predicted growth in demand and provide energy security.
- Contribute c.62.7MW MEC of renewable wind energy to the Roscommon County potential of 262MW.
- Contribute to rural economic development in line with the Roscommon County Development Plans and of the RSES.

4.2 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This chapter has been prepared by Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited (JOD), in particular by Kathlyn Feeney, Ciara Gilligan and reviewed by Breena Coyle.

Kathlyn Feeney is an Environmental Scientist, who holds a Bachelor (Hons) Degree in Environmental Science from the Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. She forms part of the Environmental team responsible for preparing the EIAR Chapters. Kathlyn has experience writing EIARs, Feasibility Studies and Shadow Flicker analysis.

Ciara Gilligan is a Senior Environmental Consultant and holds a Bachelor (Hons.) Degree in Earth and Ocean Sciences from University of Galway. She has worked in environmental consultancy for over 9 years and has prepared various Environmental Reports and EIARs. This includes the preparation of material assets chapters for other wind farms.

Breena Coyle, Senior Town Planner in JOD, has a Masters in Environment Planning from Queens University and has over 13 years' experience in Environmental Planning throughout Ireland and the UK. She has a clear understanding of the legislative framework and has experience in the development of wind farms from the pre-planning process through to construction.

For detailed information on all contributors, including their qualifications and experience, please refer to **Appendix 1.1: Author Qualifications**.

4.3 IRISH PLANNING LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant Irish legislative framework and policy contexts for the Project are detailed in **Table 4.1.**

Table 4.1: Irish Planning Legislation and Policy Context

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (PDA 2000)	The Planning and Development Act sets out the statutory basis for the carrying out of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/30/enacted/en/html (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)	The Planning and Development Regulations implement PDA 2000 by prescribing the details of the planning code.	Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). S.I. No. 600 of 2001. Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/si/600/made/en/print (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Habitats and Birds Directives	The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC set out the requirements for the protection of habitats and species and in the case of the latter, bird species, of European and national importance. For the purposes of planning, these directives have been transposed into Irish legislation under the PDA 2000, the Planning Regulations 2001 and the European Communities	Habitats Directive. Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj/eng (Accessed: 13th November 2025).

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	(Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended	
Wildlife Act 1976, as amended	The requirements for the designation and protection of habitats and species in a natural heritage area (NHA) are set out in the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended.	Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended). Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1976/act/39/enacted/en/print.html (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
EIA Directive	The relevant sections of the EIA Directive are transposed in Ireland through the PDA 2000 (Part X) and the Planning Regulations 2001 (in particular, Part 10, Schedule 5 and Schedule 6).	European Union (2011). Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/92/oj/eng (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
National Energy Security Framework	Ireland has one of the highest rates of importing fuel in Europe with imported dependency increasing to 78% in 2023 according to the SEAI[1]. Energy demand in Ireland has been growing and is expected to continue to increase by 37% to 2031[2]. The high rate of imported fossil	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2022). National Energy Security Framework. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/221399/86cb99f5-58e3-

[1] Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) (2024). Energy In Ireland. Available at: https://www.seai.ie/sites/default/files/publications/energy-in-ireland-2024.pdf [Accessed 13th June 2025]
[2] EirGrid. (2022). EirGrid's Generation Capacity Statement Predicts Challenging Outlook for Ireland. Available at:https://www.eirgridgroup.com/newsroom/eirgrids-generation-capac/#:~:text=The%20GCS%2C%20in%20its%20median,relatively%20consistent%20across%20the%20decade. [Accessed 30th April 2025].

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	fuel dependency and the increasing demand for electricity make it vital to introduce more domestic renewable energy generation like the Project in County Roscommon. The National Energy Security Framework (DECC, 2022) sets out how Ireland is seeking to phase out dependency on gas, oil and coal imports in order to address the urgent need to secure a long-term, resilient energy supply.	4821-bc4c-e1bb1fa706fb.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) (the Climate Act)	The Climate Act provides for the establishment of a national framework with the aim of achieving a climate-resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050 (referred to in the Climate Act as the "national climate objective"). The Climate Action Act 2015 was commenced in the days before the historic COP21 agreement in Paris where consensus was reached by 200 countries on the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Act supports Ireland's transition to Net Zero and a target of achieving a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. It has established a legally binding framework containing clear targets and commitments which are set in law to embed the necessary structures and processes on a statutory basis to achieve our national, EU and	Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended). Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/46/enacted/en/html (Accessed: 13th November 2025).

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.	
Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP2025)	The Plan was approved by Government on 15th April 2025. Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon the previous plan (Climate Action Plan 2024) by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings, for example, a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Irelands emissions by 2030 and to reach net zero no later than 2050. It also outlines the intention of the government to meet up to 80% of electricity demand from renewable power by 2030.	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2025). Climate Action Plan 2025. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/climate-action-plan-2025/ (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
The National Planning Framework	The National Planning Framework (NPF) (provided for in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018, as amended) is intended to guide development and investment through a shared set of national objectives and principles. It is then left to the three regional planning bodies and the 31 city and county councils to take a lead in refining these into more detailed plans. On 8th April 2025, the Government approved the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF) which is subject to the approval of both Houses of the Oireachtas.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2025). National Planning Framework. First Revision. Available at: https://cdn.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/National-Planning-Framework-First-Revision-April-2025-1.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
The National Development Plan 2021-2030	The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the	Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	National Planning Framework, through a total investment of approximately €116 billion. This represents a very substantial commitment of resources and is expected to move Ireland close to the top of the international league table for per capita public investment.	Service Reform and Digitalisation (2021). National Development Plan 2021–2030. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/national-development-plan-2021-2030.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Regional Planning	The Local Government Reform Act 2014, as amended provided for three new regional assemblies: the Northern and Western, Eastern and Midland and Regions. Members of the Regional Assemblies consist of the local authorities within that region. The RSES 2019-2031 for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social development for the Northern and Western Region.	Northern and Western Regional Assembly (2019). Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031. Available at: https://www.emra.ie/rses-download/EMRA-RSES.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
The Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	Under Section 9 of the PDA 2000, each planning authority is obliged to make a Development Plan for the whole of its functional area. The Development Plan is a statutory land-use plan generally consisting of a written statement and associated maps. The Development Plan is the statutory land use plan which	Roscommon County Council (2022). Roscommon County Development Plan 2022–2028. Available at: https://www.rosdevplan.ie/roscommon-county-development-plan-2022-

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	sets out a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development for the area. The County Roscommon Development Plan 2022-2028 was adopted on the 8th of March 2022.	2028/ (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
The Wind Energy Development Guidelines, DoHLG 2006 (WEDGs 2006)	The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2006) offer advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. The guidelines are also intended to provide a consistency of approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development and the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2006). Wind Energy Development Guidelines. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/wind-energy-development-guidelines-2006.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2019) (DWEDGs 2019)	The Applicant will comply with aspects of the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 (DWEDGs 2019) (meaning also compliance with the WEDGs 2006) in relation to shadow flicker, community engagement and visual amenity setback distances (4x tip height). However, as the current version WEDGs 2006 remain valid until the revised final version of the DWEDGs 2019 are published by the government, the WEDGs 2006 have been complied with in some areas of assessment, such as in **Chapter 13: Noise**.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2019). Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/draft-revised-wind-energy-development-guidelines-december-2019-385c92c2-16f9-4511-80bf.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	The DWEDGs 2019 set out how wind energy is to be delivered in accordance with best practice and in particular, in partnership with people living in areas local to Projects. The Draft guidelines, provide a roadmap as to how Ireland's 2030 climate commitments can be met and ultimately move the country towards a position of net zero emissions by 2050. The key aspects for the new draft proposed wind energy guidelines include the following: • A visual amenity setback of 4 times the turbine height between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, subject to a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres • the elimination of shadow flicker • The application of a more stringent noise limit, consistent with World Health Organisation standards • The introduction of new obligations in relation to community engagement with local communities along with the provision of community benefit measures.	
The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025	Ireland signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC) which came into effect on 1 March 2004. The Convention has been ratified by thirty-eight countries. It obliges Ireland to implement policy changes and objectives concerning the management, protection	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2015). National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015–2025. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/national-

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	and planning of the landscape. The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the ELC and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing it while positively managing its change. It is a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions.	landscape-strategy-for-ireland-2015-2025-9ce09c1d-594f-48df-ae6d-f5171f39d6d4.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	Water quality and quantity in our rivers, lakes, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters is assessed under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The Water Framework Directive was signed into law in October 2000. It requires EU member States to achieve water quality of at least *Good Status* in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters, by 2027 at the latest. Water quality has to be protected – no declines should be allowed occur – and restored where necessary to reach these environmental objectives.	Water Framework Directive. Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060 (Accessed: 13th November 2025).
National Biodiversity Plan 2023 - 2030	Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. The 4th NBAP strives for a "whole of government, whole of society" approach to the governance and conservation of	National Parks and Wildlife Service (2023). National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030. Available online at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/files/4th_National_Biodiversity_Action_Plan.pdf (Accessed: 13th November 2025).

Legislation / Policy	Context	Reference
	biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to "act for nature". This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues: • Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity • Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs • Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People • Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity • Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives	

4.4 INTERNATIONAL POLICY

This section of the EIAR documents the international policy perspectives with regards to climate change and renewable energy. Ireland is party to both the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, which together provide an international legal framework for addressing climate change.

4.4.1 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)[3] implemented by the United Nations in May 1992, determined a long-term objective to lessen greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, with the purpose of preventing anthropogenic interference with the climatic system. Subsequently, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997. National governments who signed up to the Kyoto Protocol are committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. The UNFCCC recognises that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The convention enjoys near universal membership, with 197 countries listed as being Parties of the Convention[4].

The Paris Agreement (2016)

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. It seeks to accelerate and intensify the actions and investment needed for a sustainable low carbon future. Its central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Agreement also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement commits the EU as a whole to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels. This figure was revised upwards under Article 4 of Regulation 2021/1119 ('European Climate Law") to a 55% reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions (emissions after the deduction of removals) by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

The United Nation's (UN) 26th global climate summit (COP 26) was held in 2021 in Glasgow, where nations committed to a range of decisions in a collective effort to limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees. The conference focussed on driving action across:

- Mitigation - reducing emissions
- Adaptation - helping those already impacted by climate change

[3] The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992). Available online at: http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf [Accessed 13th June 2025]
[4]United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2015). Parties to the Convention and Observer States https://unfccc.int/process/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties-convention-and-observer-states [Accessed 13th June 2025]

- Finance - enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals
- Collaboration - working together to deliver even greater action

The 27th Global climate summit; The COP27 UN Climate Change Conference, was held in 2022 in Egypt. Agreement was reached on financing loss and damage from the impacts of climate change – an agreement which was negotiated in part by Ireland's Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan.
At COP28 in Dubai (Nov. 2023), although the wording of the agreement didn't signify an imminent "transitioning away from fossil fuels", the agreement signals the "beginning of the end" of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just and equitable transition. This agreement highlights the importance of alternative, renewable energy generation projects to facilitate this transition.

COP 29 in Baku (Nov. 2024) focused on enhancing ambition and enabling action in the fight against climate change, with a key focus on climate finance. The conference concluded with an agreement to triple finance to developing countries, from USD 100 billion to USD 300 billion annually by 2035.

COP30 was held from November 10 to 22, 2025, in Belém, Brazil. Adaptation to climate change was a top priority this year in Belém. Countries built on the new global climate finance goal agreed at COP29 in Baku (the New Collective Quantified Goal or NCQG), which aims to scale up support for developing countries. Its aim is to mobilise at least USD 300 billion per year by 2035 in finance from public sources, as part of a total of USD 1.3 trillion per year from all sources, public and private. At COP30, the EU renewed its commitment to the COP28 pledges to transition away from fossil fuels, triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency by 2030, as agreed in Dubai.

Out of 189 Parties that have ratified the Paris Agreement, 90% mentioned renewables and roughly 70% included quantifiable energy targets in their initial Nationally Determined Contributions. Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs, are national climate action plans by each country under the Paris Agreement. A country's NDC outlines how it plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help meet the global goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5C and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement requires that NDCs are updated every five years with increasingly higher ambition, taking into consideration each country's capacity.

However, a 2021 report by the International Energy Agency (IEA)[5] cautions that renewables growth will still need to double to reach the Paris Agreement goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an intergovernmental organisation focusing on sustainable energy, published a report[6] on the Nationally Determined Contributions relating to renewable energy, which also note that even with the renewable energy pledges in the 2021 Paris agreement, the 1.5°C goal will still be exceeded before the end of the century.

Europe's planned emission reductions in line with the Paris Agreement are set out in part under the Effort Sharing Regulation (2023/857). Under this regulation, Ireland is obliged to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 42% in relation to 2005 levels.

4.4.2 Project Compliance with International Climate Policy

Ireland is one of the 186 countries signed up to the Paris Agreement, and subsequent agreements. Under the terms, Ireland is required to reduce GHG emissions by at least 40% by 2030 when compared with levels in 1990. The Project can contribute to Ireland meeting these targets by displacing reliance on fossil fuels by producing electricity from renewable wind energy.

4.4.3 EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by EU Directive 2014/52/EU)

European Union Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the 'EIA Directive'), was transposed into Irish planning legislation by the PDA 2000 (as amended) and the Planning Regulations 2001 (as amended). The objective of the Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for EIA, prior to development consent being given, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Planning Authorities and the Commission have lengthy experience in assessing the effects of projects on the environment as this is an integral part of considering whether the proposal is in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment)

[5] International Energy Agency (2021). Renewables 2021 Analysis and forecast to 2026. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/5ae32253-7409-4f9a-a91d-1493ffb9777a/Renewables2021-Analysisandforecastto2026.pdf [Accessed 13th November 2025].

[6] International Renewable Energy Agency (2023). NDCs and renewable energy targets in 2023: Tripling renewable power by 2030. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2024/Jan/IRENA_NDCs_renewable_energy_targets_2023.pdf[Accessed 13th November 2025].

Regulations 2018 transpose the requirements of the EIA Directive (as amended) into existing planning consent procedures.

The EIA Directive defined the EIA process as a process consisting of:

(a) the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) by the applicant/developer

(b) the carrying out of consultations

(c) the examination by the competent authority of the EIAR, any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the applicant/developer and relevant information received through consultations with the public, prescribed bodies and any affected Member States

(d) the reasoned conclusion of the competent authority on the significant impacts of the project on the environment and

(e) the integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any development consent decision.

4.5 EUROPEAN LEGISLATION & POLICY CONTEXT

The European Union's (EU) energy policies are set out and powered by three main objectives:

- To ensure energy providers operate in a competitive environment, ensuring affordable prices for homes and businesses.
- To secure energy supplies and to ensure reliable energy delivery whenever and wherever it is needed; and
- To have sustainable energy consumption, through lowering dependence on fossil fuels and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

The EU aims to be climate neutral by 2050. To do this, it will carry out a series of initiatives that will protect the environment and boost the green economy[7].

4.5.1 Clean Industrial Deal 2025

The deal is an umbrella strategy setting out concrete actions to turn decarbonisation into a driver of growth for European industries. This includes lowering energy prices, creating quality jobs and the right conditions for companies to thrive.

The deal presents measures to boost every stage of production, with a focus on:

[7]European Commission. 2050 long-term strategy. Available at: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy_en [Accessed 13th June 2025].

- energy-intensive industries such as steel, metals, and chemicals, that urgently need support to decarbonise, switch to clean energy, and tackle high costs, unfair global competition, and complex regulations
- the clean-tech sector which is at the heart of future competitiveness and necessary for industrial transformation, circularity, and decarbonisation.

The main elements of the deal are:

- Affordable energy
- Boosting demand for clean products
- Financing the clean transition
- Circularity and access to material
- Acting on global scale
- Skills and quality jobs

4.5.2 European Wind Power Action Plan

The European Commission published the European Wind Power Action Plan in October 2023. The European Union target of at least 42.5% renewables by 2030 will require installed wind capacity to more than double, from 204 GW in 2022 to over 500 GW in 2030. The Plan outlines a series of actions for the European Union, Member States and the industry that should take to achieve this objective and address current operating challenges. The Plan is divided into the following six pillars.

1. Acceleration of deployment through increased predictability and faster permitting

Actions under this pillar include accelerating permitting processes through digitalisation and training and enhancing cooperation between European Union wind energy forums. This pillar also promotes increased visibility of wind project pipelines, and the adoption of an action plan to facilitate the build-out of electricity grids.

2. Improved auction design

This pillar promotes the use of well-designed, objective, transparent, non-discriminatory pre-qualification and non-price award criteria in the auctions for the support of wind energy projects. The European Commission will propose a set of auction criteria covering concepts such as cyber security, sustainability, environmental protection and ability to deliver.

3. Access to finance

The Plan lays out several actions designed to facilitate access to European financing and encourage investment in the wind industry. In particular, the European Investment Bank will play a key role in providing funding, de-risking tools and counter-guarantees.

4. Creating a fair and competitive international environment

Actions under this pillar include the facilitation of access by European companies to foreign markets, increased protection of the internal market against trade distortions, and enhancement of standardisation in the wind energy sector.

5. Skills

Under this pillar, the European Commission will support large-scale skills partnerships that enhance skills development for the wind sector. It will also facilitate the launch of European net-zero industry skills academies as part of Member State reskilling and upskilling initiatives.

6. Industry engagement and Member State commitments

The final pillar calls on industry and Member States to take a more active role in matters such as hedging against inflation and price volatility of main manufacturing inputs, such as raw materials, and developing further long-term partnerships between wind manufacturers and operators.

4.5.3 Renewable Energy Directive

The EU passed the first Renewable Energy Directive (REDI) 2009/28/EC, revised in 2018 and 2023, to make the EU a global leader in renewable energy and ensure that the target of the final energy consumption for the current RED III is achieved.

In 2023, the European Union (EU) adopted an amendment of the Renewable Energy Directive, which is referred to as "RED III". RED III obliges Member States to collectively ensure the share of renewable energy in the European Union's gross final energy consumption is at least 42.5% by 2030, with an additional 2.5% indicative top-up to allow the target of 45% to be achieved.

RED III also places the presumption of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for renewable energy projects on a permanent footing. Article 16f states that Member States must ensure that in the permit-granting procedure, the planning, construction and operation of renewable energy plants, their connection to the grid, the grid itself and storage assets are assumed to be IROPI.

Furthermore, Article 16b (1) provides that the permit-granting procedure for onshore renewable energy projects outside renewables acceleration areas must not exceed two years.

Ireland was one of 26 Member States that failed to fully transpose the provisions of RED III by the deadline of 21 May 2025. The provisions relating to permitting procedures were due to be implemented by 1 July 2024.The provisions relating to permitting procedures have now been implemented through the *European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025.*

4.5.4 The European Green Deal 2019

The European Green Deal introduced in 2019 reset the European Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. It focuses on three key principles for the clean energy transition, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance the quality of life of our citizens:

(1) Ensuring a secure and affordable EU energy supply.

(2) Developing a fully integrated, interconnected and digitalised EU energy market.

(3) Prioritising energy efficiency, improving the energy performance of our buildings and developing a power sector based largely on renewable sources.

The European Green Deal is a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. The EU aims to be climate neutral in 2050. Reaching this target will require action in all sector economy, including:

- Investing in environmentally friendly technologies
- Supporting industry to innovate
- Rolling out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport
- Decarbonising the energy sector
- Ensuring buildings are more energy efficient
- Working with international partners to improve global environmental standards
- Sustainable finance – all of which are strongly interlinked.

4.5.5 REPowerEU

In May 2022, the European Commission presented the REPowerEU Plan[8], in response to the global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It puts forwards a set of actions to:

- Save energy;
- Diversify supplies;
- Quickly substitute fossil fuels by accelerating Europe's clean energy transition;
- Smartly combine investments and reforms.

[8] European Commission. (2022). REPowerEU Plan. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:fc930f14-d7ae-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF [Accessed 13th June 2025].

It states:

"*Lengthy administrative procedures are one of the key barriers for investments in renewables and their related infrastructure. These barriers include the complexity of the applicable rules for site selection and administrative authorisations for projects, the complexity and duration of the assessment of the environmental impacts of the projects, grid connection issues, constraints on adapting technology specifications during the permit-granting procedure or staffing issues of the permit-granting authorities or grid operators. In order to accelerate the pace of deployment of renewable energy projects it is necessary to adopt rules which would simplify and shorten permit-granting processes."*

In 2023, the EU reached 24.5%[9] share of its gross final energy consumption from renewable sources, up from 23.08% in 2022. This still leaves a long way to go to reach the increased target of 42.5%, with the aim to increase it to 45%, by 2030. In accordance with the REPowerEU Communication, in May 2022, the European Commission published a recommendation[10] on speeding up permit-granting procedures for renewable energy projects, accompanied by guidance to help the Member States speed up permitting for renewable energy plants.

The recommendation was created in order to help Member States exploit all possibilities for acceleration that exist within the legislative framework. It proposed measures to streamline procedures at national level, address ambiguities in the application of EU legislation and set out good practices in Member States. It recommended participatory approaches that involve local and regional authorities and providing authorities with the necessary resources so as to facilitate the timely realisation of locally adapted investments.

Recommendations include:

"*Member States should ensure that the planning, construction and operation of plants for the production of energy from renewable sources, their connection to the electricity, gas and heat grid and the related grid itself and storage assets* ***qualify for the most favourable procedure available in their planning and permit-granting procedures*** *and are presumed as being in the overriding public interest and in the interest of public safety, in view of the legislative proposal amending and strengthening the provisions of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 related to administrative procedures and without prejudice to the Union law."*

[9] European Commission. (2023). Renewable energy statistics. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics#Share_of_renewable_energy_more_than_doubled_between_2004_and_2020 [Accessed 13th June5].

[10] European Union (2022). Communication from the Commission: C(2022)3219. Available at:: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2022)3219&from=EN [Accessed 13th June 2025].

"Member States should establish clearly defined, accelerated and as short as possible deadlines for all the steps required for the granting of permits to build and operate renewable energy projects, specifying the instances where such deadlines may be extended and under which circumstances. Member States should establish binding maximum deadlines for all relevant stages of the environmental impact assessment procedure."

4.5.6 Project Compliance with European Climate Legislation

The Project is compliant with EU policy and legislation as it contributes towards the goal of decarbonising the energy sector in the EU and increasing the supply of renewable energy sources. Ireland missed its 2020 renewable energy share (RES) target as part of RED I, achieving 13.5 % instead of the target 16 %, meaning that Ireland was obligated to acquire statistical transfers of 3.3 TWh of renewable energy from other Member States to compensate for this shortfall. The latest figures show Ireland's progress towards the overall RES targets is slow, with 2021 shares at 12.5%, 2022 shares at 13.1% and 2023 shares at 15.3%. Ireland's overall RES target has now increased to 43.0 % in 2030 as part of RED III, this shows Ireland is currently at a shortfall of 27.7%. The Project will have an installed capacity of c.62.7MW MEC of renewable electricity which would contribute towards the RED III targets for 2030 and help to prevent further requirements to acquire statistical transfers from other Member States.

4.6 NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY

This section sets out the key planning and other related policies from a national, regional and local perspective. **Figure 4.1** provides an overview of National Planning Policy Context in Ireland.

Figure 4.1: Hierarchy of National Planning Policy Context.

The National Planning Framework is assessed in **Section 4.6.1.1.2** The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is assessed in **Section 4.6.1.2**. The Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) is assessed in **Section 4.6.1.3**. The Project is not located in a Local Area plan.

4.6.1 National Policy

4.6.1.1 Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the Irish government's long-term strategy for the social, economic, and cultural development of the country, combining the National Planning Framework (NPF) (see **Section 4.6.1.2**) and the National Development Plan (NDP) (see **Section 4.6.1.3**). Its goal is to create a better, fairer, and more sustainable Ireland by investing in infrastructure, public services, and cultural amenities to accommodate a projected one million increase in the population by 2040. This involves promoting balanced regional growth, fostering compact urban development, and improving environmental sustainability for all citizens.

4.6.1.2 National Planning Framework (NPF)

Ireland's National Planning Framework (NPF) is the 20-year National Spatial Strategy, which provides a high-level, strategic vision for the sustainable growth and development of the country's urban and rural areas to the year 2040. Alongside the National Development

Plan (NDP), it forms Project Ireland 2040, the overarching framework for the nation's social, economic, and cultural development, aiming to manage population growth and ensure balanced, compact, and sustainable development.

Section 1.5 of the NPF sets out that "*sustainability is at the heart of long-term planning and the National Planning Framework seeks to ensure that the decisions we make today, meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."*

The NPF with the NDP sets the context for each of Ireland's three regional assemblies to develop their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) taking account of and co-ordinating Local Authority County and City Development Plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. The NPF is based on a set of values that will ensure Ireland's "long term economic, environmental and social progress for all".

On the 8th of April 2025, the Government approved the revised National Planning Framework – First Revision April 2025 (NPF 2025) which, subject to the approval of both Houses of the Oireachtas, firmly sets the direction for Ireland's growth and development to 2040. It sets a new spatial policy for the country with a view to addressing critical priorities, in particular housing, infrastructure and climate.
The NPF 2025 sets a number of shared goals for Ireland which the Project will contribute to achieving, including:

- Strengthened rural economies and communities
- A strong economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills
- Transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society

Implementing the NPF is focused on policies, actions and investment to deliver 10 National Strategic Outcomes. National Strategic Outcome 8 (NSO 8) relates to Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society. NSO 8 includes:

- *"Deliver 80% of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030 with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and National policy objectives out to 2030 and beyond. It is expected that this increase in renewable deployment will lead to a greater diversity of renewable technologies in the mix.*
- *Reinforce the distribution and transmission network to facilitate planned growth and distribution of a more renewables focused source of energy across the major demand centres."*

Chapter 9 (Climate Transition and Our Environment) of NPF 2025 states that:

"*The Government has committed to achieving targets underpinned by the adoption of a series of carbon budgets and national Climate Action Plans over the period to 2050, informed by UN and EU policy. These actions are also underpinned by other key national policies including the National Development Plan, National Adaption Framework and by Sectoral Adaptation Plans.*

In addition to legally binding targets agreed at EU level, it is a national objective for Ireland to transition to be a competitive zero carbon, economy no later than 2050.

The NPF 2025 includes numerous National Policy Objectives (NPOs), the following of which are relevant to the Project:

National Policy Objective 69

"Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions as expressed in the most recently adopted carbon budgets."

National Policy Objective 70

"Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050."

National Policy Objective 71

"Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development."

National Policy Objective 74

Each Regional Assembly must plan, through their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, for the delivery of the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations indicated for onshore wind and solar reflected in Table 9.1 below, and identify allocations for each of the local authorities, based on the best available scientific evidence and in accordance with legislative requirements, in order to meet the overall national target.

Table 9.1 | Regional Renewable Electricity Capacity Allocations

Region	Energised capacity 2023 (MW)	Additional Renewable Power Capacity Allocations (MW)	Total % of National Share in 2030	Energised Capacity 2023 (MW)	Additional Renewable Power Capacity Allocations (MW)	Total % of National Share in 2030
	Onshore Wind			Solar PV		
Eastern and Midlands	284	1,966	25%	306	3,294	45%
Northern and Western	1,761	1,389	35%	0.3	959	12%
Southern	2,622	978	40%	138	3,302	43%
Total	**4,667**	**4,333**		**445**	**7,555**	

Plate 4.2: Regional Renewable Electricity Capacity Allocations

National Policy Objective 75

Local Authorities shall plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, through their City and County Development Plans.

In order to facilitate the accelerated deployment of renewable electricity infrastructure and to achieve the national targets outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2025, the NPF 2025 establishes regional renewable energy capacity allocations (see NPO 74 above). These allocations are to be embedded within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and the corresponding Regional Renewable Energy Strategies, and subsequently disaggregated into county-level targets to inform the preparation of city and county development plans. The additional renewable power capacity allocation for onshore wind for the Northern and Western Region is 1,389 MW.

4.6.1.3 National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP sets out the framework and broad direction for investment priorities and provides indicative Exchequer allocations to support the delivery of projects to further the ten National Strategic Outcomes ("NSOs") identified in the National Planning Framework:

1. Compact Growth
2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
4. Sustainable Mobility

5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
6. High-Quality International Connectivity
7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
8. Transition to a Climate-Neutral and Climate Resilient Society
9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources
10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

The NDP 2021-2030 provides for unprecedented investment in climate action, earmarking specific investment for low-carbon, resilient electricity systems; energy infrastructure and energy efficient housing. The NDP commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030, with the collective spend by State-owned enterprises expected to be in excess of €16 billion in energy related projects between 2021 and 2030. The core Strategic Investment Priorities related to energy are listed in **Table 4.2** below:

Table 4.2: Energy Related Strategic Investment Priorities

National Strategic Outcome	Strategic Investment Priorities
NSO 6: High Quality International Connectivity	• **Offshore Renewable Energy Infrastructure** (The Department of Transport has successfully negotiated with the European Commission to make funding for Offshore Renewable Energy infrastructure at ports eligible under the Connecting Europe Facility programme in the next 2021-2023 funding stream. There will be three calls for applications in this period. The Department of Transport is engaging with ports on the Trans European Network for Transport (Ten-T) to assist where appropriate in applying for this funding.)
NSO 8: Transition to a Climate-Neutral and Climate-Resilient Society	• **Renewable energy** (Regular Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)) auctions will deliver competitive levels of onshore wind and solar electricity generation which indicatively could be up to 2.5 GW of grid-scale solar and up to 8 GW of onshore wind by 2030. The RESS auctions will also support the delivery of up to 5

National Strategic Outcome	Strategic Investment Priorities
	GW of additional offshore renewable electricity generation by 2030.) • **Energy efficiency** (€5 billion in additional carbon tax receipts over the period of the NDP have been allocated to increase capital investment levels in energy efficiency and implement the National Retrofit Plan which is to be published later this year) • **State owned enterprise investment in the National Smart Energy Metering Programme, and the national electricity system** (including transmission cables and substations, to link renewable electricity generation to electricity consumers and to accommodate higher levels of renewables on the electricity system and reinforcement of the natural gas network by system operators EirGrid, ESB Networks and Gas Networks Ireland) • **State owned enterprise investment and commercial sector investment in security of supply** (The Government has pledged to support enhanced electricity interconnection, eg through the Celtic Interconnector to France and further interconnection to the UK; and to facilitate delivery of circa 2 GW of new conventional (mainly gas-fired) electricity power plants to support a predominantly wind/solar powered electricity system. The collective spend by State-owned enterprises is expected to be in excess of €16 billion in energy related projects between 2021 and 2030.)

4.6.2 Climate Emergency

On 29th November 2019 the European Parliament declared a climate emergency ahead of the UN COP 25 in Madrid in December 2019. In May 2019, the Oireachtas declared a "climate emergency" in an amendment to the report 'Climate Action: A cross-party

consensus for action' which followed the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly on Climate Action. This was followed by the publication of the Cross-Departmental Climate Action Plan 2019 on 17th June 2019, revised in 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

4.6.3 The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the Climate Act)

At a national level, the Climate Act commits Ireland to reach a legally binding target of net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and a cut of 51% by 2030 (compared to 2018 levels). It establishes a framework with clear, legally binding targets and commitments, and ensures the necessary structures and processes are embedded on a statutory basis to achieve Ireland's national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.

When exercising its decision-making powers under the PDA 2000 planning authorities and the Commission are obliged under section 15 of the Climate Act to:

"*in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with—*
(a) the most recent approved climate action plan,
(b) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,
(c) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,
(d) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and
(e) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State."

The National Climate Policies and Objectives listed in section 15, with which the Commission must comply, all support the development of wind energy projects and associated grid connections in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

The Supreme Court gave judgment in Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v the Commission[11] on 4th February 2026. It has clarified how climate obligations must be taken into account by planning authorities when making planning decisions. The Court confirmed that planning authorities have a legal obligation to ensure that any decision to grant or refuse planning permission is consistent with the climate objectives set out under section 15(1) of the

[11] https://www2.courts.ie/view/judgments/dc8d9a6e-345e-4ce5-ab15-314fd87b5ef3/6a4cdf55-2c78-4548-b2cb-bd0f4a84e0a2/2026_IESC_5_O'Donnell%20CJ.pdf/pdf

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The Court emphasised that departure from climate objectives is permissible only where there are genuine practical difficulties that make full alignment impracticable. A departure cannot be justified by convenience alone.

The Project, if granted, would clearly contribute to climate targets.

There are no mandatory and non-flexible legal requirements that prevent the Commission from reaching an outcome, in relation to the Project, that favours policy goals, i.e. granting permission. The Project is supported by local, regional and national policy and will be constructed and operated in accordance with national guidance and best practice. It has also been demonstrated, in the EIAR and NIS, that the Project will not give rise to any significant effect on the environment or have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites. With these matters considered, it is respectfully submitted that the Commission is obliged to exercise their evaluative judgement to reach an outcome favouring policy goals, in accordance with their obligation under section 15 of the Climate Act and grant permission.
The Climate Act also includes the following key elements:

- It places on a statutory basis a 'national climate objective', which commits Ireland to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.
- It embeds the process of carbon budgeting into law. Governments are required to adopt a series of economy-wide five-year carbon budgets, including sectoral targets for each relevant sector, on a rolling 15-year basis, starting in 2021.
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan, updated annually (see section 4.6.4).
- A National Long Term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared every five years.

A recent report from the EPA Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections[12] found that Ireland is not on track to meet the 51 per cent emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018), indicating that further measures are needed.

4.6.4 The Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025[13] (CAP2025) was published in April 2025 and is the latest assessment and measurement of what has been achieved over the past year, building on

[12] EPA 2023. https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/ghg/ [Accessed 13/06/2025]
[13] Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. (2025). Climate Action Plan 2025. https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications/publications/climate-action-plan-2025/ [Accessed: 13/06/2025]

actions taken in 2024. It sets out what needs to be done in 2025, so Ireland is prepared to take on the challenges of our second carbon budget period 2026-2030.

CAP 2025 notes Irelands progress to date:

- In 2023 emissions reduced by nearly 7% against 2022 levels
- Compared with the same period in 2023, emissions in the first half of 2024 reduced by 3.5%
- Emissions from the electricity sector in the first half of 2024 were down over 17%
- Irish wind farms generated nearly 40% of Ireland's total electricity demand in the first half of 2024
- Over the past year, emissions in agriculture have reduced by over 4%
- In the built environment, emissions have decreased by 21% since 2018
- In transport, emissions increased by 0.3% in 2023

CAP 2025 re-affirms the previous commitment to increasing the share of renewable electricity to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030. Overall, the share of renewable electricity generation in Ireland increased from 38.6% to 40.7% from 2022 to 2023. The figure for 2024 will likely be between 40% and the interim, end of year target of 50% set out in CAP 2025.

The targets[14] are:

- onshore wind, 6GWs by 2025 and 9 GWs by 2030
- offshore wind, at least 5GWs by 2030
- solar, up to 5GW by 2025 and 8GW by 2030

These targets are unchanged for the previous two years. CAP 2025 states under section 11.2 Actions and Updates:

"A renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland's plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness. This requires the accelerated and increased deployment of new renewable electricity generation capacity and related infrastructure."

[14] See page 87 of https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/c491032e/DECC_Climate_Action_Plan_2025_Main_Report_-_Final_Web.pdf

4.6.5 National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)[15] is a ten-year integrated document mandated by the European Union to each of its member states in order for the EU to meet its overall greenhouse gases emissions targets.

The plan establishes key measures to address the five dimensions of the EU Energy Union;

1) Decarbonisation: GHG emissions and removals and Renewable Energy
2) Energy efficiency
3) Energy security
4) Internal energy market
5) Research, innovation and competitiveness

Key, relevant renewable energy objectives include:

- Reduce fossil fuel use from 64% of final consumption in 2021 to 45% by 2025 and further by 2030.
- Accelerate delivery of onshore wind, offshore wind and solar to reach 80% of electricity generated from renewable sources to by 2030 underpinned by the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).
- Support efforts to increase indigenous renewable sources in the energy mix, including wind, solar and bioenergy.
- Facilitate infrastructure projects, including private sector commercial projects, which enhance Ireland's security of supply and are in keeping with Ireland's overall climate and energy objectives.
- Increase onshore wind capacity to 9 GW
- Streamline consenting and connection arrangements.
- Phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation

According to a report published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in June 2023, Ireland will achieve a reduction of only 29% in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, far short of a legally binding target of 51%. Almost all sectors are on a trajectory to exceed their national ceilings – including agriculture, industry, electricity and transport. The EPA report warns that the 2030 targets can only be reached by "implementing policies that deliver emission reductions across all sectors of the economy in the short term".[16]

[15] Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. (2024). Ireland's integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/irelands-integrated-national-energy-and-climate-plan-2021-2030.pdf [Accessed 16th June 2025]

[16] Environmental Protection Agency. (2023) Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections. Available at: https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/EPA-GHG-Projections-2022-2040_Finalv2.pdf [Accessed 13th November 2025].

4.6.6 National Energy Security Framework

In April 2022, the Government of Ireland issued the National Energy Security Framework[17] in response to the European Commission's REPowerEU action statement. It provides a single overarching and initial response to address Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. It sets out how Ireland is seeking to phase out dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal imports as soon as possible, emphasising throughout the urgency of the need to secure Irelands energy supply.

It is focussed on three areas of work:

- Reducing demand for fossil fuels, which would seek to reduce overall demand for oil, natural gas and coal in Ireland.
- Replacing fossil fuels with renewables, which would seek to reduce the use of gas, oil and coal in Ireland by replacing it with renewable energy sources such as wind energy, solar energy or bioenergy.
- Diversifying fossil fuel supplies, which would seek to replace any Russian supplies of gas, oil and coal (direct or indirect) with supplies from other sources.

The framework highlights the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on energy security, consumer price wise in the short term and how and where energy is sourced to ensure long term system resilience. It notes that:
"*The war has highlighted key dependencies in our energy system which can no longer be relied on and has led to affordability issues for many consumers and businesses*".

The framework builds on the idea of energy security as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price and is a response to the challenges of ensuring the ongoing and long-term security of affordable energy supply.

Ireland has one of the highest rates of importing fuel in Europe with imported dependency at 78% in 2023, according to the latest report published by SEAI[18]. Energy demand in Ireland has been growing and is expected to continue to increase by 37% to 2031[19]. Increases to the cost of carbon, supply issues and potential political insecurity increases fossil fuel price volatility. The high rate of imported fossil fuel dependency and the increasing

[17] Government of Ireland. (2022) National Energy Security Framework. Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/221399/86cb99f5-58e3-4821-bc4c-e1bb1fa706fb.pdf [Accessed 13th November 2025].

[18]. SEAI (2024). Energy In Ireland. Available at: https://www.seai.ie/sites/default/files/publications/energy-in-ireland-2024.pdf [Accessed 13th June 202513th November 2025]

[19] EirGrid. (2022). Ireland Capacity Outlook 2022-2031. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://cms.eirgrid.ie/sites/default/files/publications/EirGrid_SONI_Ireland_Capacity_Outlook_2022-2031.pdf. [Accessed 13th November 2025].

demand for electricity make it vital to introduce more domestic renewable energy generation plants, such as the Project which could provide reliable, secure and affordable energy supplies in Ireland.

4.6.7 Energy Security in Ireland to 2030

Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050. This report is being published as part of an Energy Security Package, containing a range of supplementary analyses, consultations, and reviews, which have informed the recommendations and actions related to energy security.

Informed by the Government's energy security policy objectives - to ensure energy is affordable, sustainable, and secure - the review considered the risks to oil, natural gas, and electricity. The report sets out that Ireland's future energy will be secure by moving from an oil and gas-based energy system to an electricity-led system, maximising our renewable energy potential, flexibility and being integrated into Europe's energy systems. Meeting our climate, renewable, and energy efficiency targets through actions and measures set out in the annually updated Climate Action Plan will deliver this secure energy future.

As we transition, the Energy Security Package states that we must ensure energy security is prioritised, monitored, and reviewed regularly, and includes a range of measures to implement this approach in the short and medium term by prioritising:

- Reduced and Responsive Demand
- A Renewables-Led System
- More Resilient Systems
- Robust Risk Governance

Under each of these four areas of actions, the report sets out a range of mitigation measures, including the need for additional capacity of indigenous renewable energy, but also energy imports, energy storage, fuel diversification, demand side response, and renewable gases. The governance structures supporting the energy system, including oversight and accountability reforms, were also examined.[20]

[20] Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2023). Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 Energy Security Package. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5c499-energy-security-in-ireland-to-2030/ [Accessed 13th November 2025].

4.6.8 Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment: Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) provides support to renewable electricity projects in Ireland. With a primary focus on cost effectiveness, the RESS delivers a broader range of policy objectives, including:

- enabling communities to participate in renewable energy projects
- increasing renewable technology diversity
- delivering an ambitious renewable electricity policy to 2030
- increasing energy security, energy sustainability and ensuring the cost effectiveness of energy policy

It has been designed to promote investment in renewable energy generation to support the growth of the green economy, create sustainable work opportunities, and ultimately benefit the consumer as renewables become more cost effective. The Programme for Government commits to hold RESS auctions at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. This will allow Ireland to take advantage of falling technology costs and avoid 'locking in' higher costs for consumers. If consented the Project will also provide a community fund calculated in accordance with the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) Terms and Conditions at €2 per MWh of electricity produced by the project. This is to be made available to the local community for the duration of the RESS (15 years).

The delivery of the fourth onshore RESS auction in 2024, RESS 4, was seen as a pivotal component of meeting Ireland's ambitious targets of 80% renewable electricity (RES-E) by 2030.

2,071 GWh of renewable generation was provisionally successful in that year's auction, which was is a significant improvement from the previous year's RESS 3 auction result, which delivered less than half of the minimum 2,000 GWh target.

EirGrid has now published the provisional results of the RESS 5 auction.
Statistics to note arising from the provisional results, include:

1. A total of 33 projects applied to participate in the RESS 5 qualification process. Of these applications, 23 projects qualified and ten projects have been provisionally unsuccessful in the auction.
2. The average strike price for the provisionally successful applicants across all projects was €98.81/MWh (up from €96.85/MWh in RESS 4). The average strike price for solar

projects was €100.63/MWh (down from €104.76/MWh in RESS 4) and for wind projects was €96.56/MWh (up from €90.47/MWh in RESS 4).

3. Of the qualifying projects, 23 bids have been provisionally designated as successful (a combined total capacity of 1079.22MW), consisting of 18 solar projects (with a total capacity of 860.38MW) and 5 onshore wind projects (with a total capacity of 218.84MW).

RESS 5 included modifications in the Community Benefit Funds under RESS, which includes potential changes in the Terms and Conditions for RESS 5 include:

- Near Neighbour Payments for Onshore Wind: fixed amount and distances, eligibility and cap on overall spending,
- Relationship with Local Authorities mandated Funds,
- Role and selection of the Fund Committee,
- Simplified structure for smaller CBFs,
- Administration: limit on cost and requirements for the role
- Transparency

The Programme for Government commits to continue holding RESS auctions at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. This will allow Ireland to take advantage of falling technology costs and avoid 'locking in' higher costs for consumers. It is understood that RESS 6 will follow similar timelines to those of RESS 5.

4.6.9 Project Compliance with National Climate Policy

The Project will generate renewable energy, reducing Ireland's carbon footprint by displacing fossil fuels and contributing to national climate policy mitigation objectives. The Project meets the objectives of Project Ireland 2040 as it will contribute to the economic, environmental, and social objectives of the NPF, in particular National Policy Objectives 69 & 70. CAP 2025 re-affirms the previous commitment to increasing the share of renewable electricity to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030. The latest figures show that renewable electricity (RES-E) accounted for 40.4% of Ireland's total electricity generation in 2023, leaving a 39.6% gap to reach the 2030 target set under the Climate Action Plan 2025. In support of the CAP 2025 objectives, the Project will contribute to the de-carbonisation of the Irish electricity network by producing an estimated 203.2Ghrs of renewable electricity per annum, contributing to the Government's 80% renewable electricity target by 2030. This will help to mitigate climate change by reducing the emissions related to energy production and will help to decarbonise multiple sectors.

4.6.10 Regional Policy

4.6.10.1 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA)

The RSES for the NWRA was adopted in December 2019. The objective of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term planning and economic framework which shall be consistent with the NPF and the economic policies or objectives of the Government.

The RSES provides a development framework of the region that supports the implementation of the NPF and the relevant economic policies and objectives of the government. It provides a 12-year strategy for the period 2020 – 2032 to achieve the objectives and vision of the regional assembly.

Among the Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) are RPO 4.17, 4.18 and 4.19 which state the following in relation to renewable energy:

RPO 4.17: *To position the region to avail of the emerging global market in renewable energy by:*

- Stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems
- Supporting research and innovation
- Encouraging skills development and transferability
- Raising awareness and public understanding of renewable energy and encourage market opportunities for the renewable energy industry to promote the development and growth of renewable energy businesses
- Encourage the development of the transmission and distribution grids to facilitate the development of renewable energy projects and the effective utilisation of the energy generated from renewable sources having regard to the future potential of the region over the lifetime of the Strategy and beyond.

RPO 4.18: *Support the development of secure, reliable and safe supplies of renewable energy, to maximise their value, maintain the inward investment, support indigenous industry and create jobs.*

RPO 4.19: *Support the appropriate development of offshore wind energy production through the adequate provision of land-based infrastructure and services, in line with*

national policy and in a manner that is compatible with environmental, ecological and landscape considerations.

The RSES recognises that the northwest region has a rich natural energy resource, declaring that the region is open to renewables energy ideas, and recognises the required transition from fossil fuels to the use of renewables. The strategy further notes that this can contribute to new employment, community sustainability and attract additional people to the region.

The RSES has been informed by an Environmental Report that has been prepared in accordance with the SEA Directive and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations S.I. No. 436/2004 (as amended), accompanied by a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report. Section 8.3 of the document outlines how the electrical grid network in the region must develop to accommodate diverse renewable energy resources[21].

4.6.10.2 Project Compliance with Regional Policy

The RSES recognises and supports many opportunities for onshore wind as a major source of renewable energy. It states that opportunities for both commercial and community wind energy projects should be harnessed, having regard to the requirements of WEDGs 2006. Wind Energy, with current and future developments technology, has an important role in delivering and clean electricity for Ireland. As a form of sustainable energy with an output potential of c. 62.7 MW of installed capacity at the Wind Farm Site, the Project will contribute significantly to renewable energy targets and the strategy supported in the RSES for the NWRA.

The Project is fully aligned with regional climate and renewable energy policy objectives, as it not only facilitates the integration of renewable energy into the electricity transmission grid but also safeguards strategic energy corridors from encroachment by other developments that could comprise the delivery of energy networks. By adhering to regional policy objectives, the Project ensures sustainable and timely delivery of renewable energy while supporting the region's long-term energy needs at local, regional and national scales.

[21] Northern and Western Regional Assembly (2020). Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032. Available at: https://www.nwra.ie/rses/ [Accessed 13th November 2025].

The construction of the Project will also positively contribute to the regional economy bringing investment and jobs that will help to support and retain confidence in the key regional industries of construction and renewable energy.

4.6.11 Local Policy

4.6.11.1 The Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) 2022-2028

The RCDP was formally adopted on the 8th of March 2022. The RCDP sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of Roscommon County Council over a 6-year period. The RCDP builds on the previous plan, seeking to develop County Roscommon as a place to be part of and proud of and as a dynamic, resilient, connected and internationally competitive location for innovation and investment.

The RCDP states that renewable energy targets for County Roscommon follow the national Climate Action Plan by supporting Irelands goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The current installed capacity of County Roscommon stands at 112MW[22]. The RCDP projects a potential for 262MW of installed capacity can be accommodated within County Roscommon. The Project, with an estimated maximum installed capacity of c.62.7MW, would increase Roscommon's installed capacity to c.215.7MW, and would contribute greatly to the RCDP goals, the national Climate Action Plan and Irelands future.

The key CDP policies considered to be relevant to the Project are listed in **Table 4.3**. The listed policies from the RCDP are given for ease of reference and are thought those most relevant to this type of development. Individual technical assessments included with the EIAR will also refer to RCDP policies where relevant.

[22] Roscommon County Council (2022). Renewable Energy Strategy 2022-2028 https://www.rosdevplan.ie/rccdevpdfs/final/RCC-Dev-Plan-Renewable-Energy-Strategy.pdf [Accessed 13th June 2025].

Table 4.3 Key Policies from the RCDP 2022 – 2028 relevant to the Project.

Objective/ Policy	Contribution of the Project
CAEE 8.3: *Support developments and actions that assist in achieving the national targets for energy from renewable energy, from renewable resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production.*	The Project will assist in achieving national renewable electricity targets by producing an estimated 203.2GWh of renewable electricity per annum[23], contributing to the Government's 80% renewable electricity target by 2030. Producing renewable energy, the Project contributes to the displacement of fossil fuels, which pollute the air, this improves air quality, which is closely linked to good health and well-being. **Chapter 18: Air Quality** and **Chapter 19: Climate** assessed the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the Project on air and climate. The Project will assist in reducing carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions (51,600 tonnes of CO_2 emissions per annum, or 1,806,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions will be displaced over the proposed 35 year lifetime of the wind farm[24]) that would otherwise arise if the same energy that the Project will generate were otherwise to be generated by conventional fossil fuel plants.
CAEE 8.4: *Encourage and facilitate the various forms of renewable energy development detailed in the Renewable Energy Strategy that accompanies this Plan (as well as any other new forms of renewable energy which may be developed during the lifetime of this Plan), subject to satisfying the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.*	The Project is a renewable energy development in the form of wind energy, ***Wind Energy*** *– Onshore commercial wind farms and individual turbines, micro renewable scale turbines*, as detailed in the Roscommon Renewable Energy Strategy that accompanies the RCDP.

[23] Calculated using the EirGrid capacity factor which shows 37% for the Project. Installed Capacity (62.7MW) x Hours per year (8,760) x Capacity Factor Annual Energy (0.37 GWh) = 203,223.24 MWh/yr (Estimated annual generation: ~203.2 GWh per annum).
[24] EirGird (2025). Enduring Connection Policy 2.4. Solar and Wind Constraints Report: Assumptions and Methodology. Available at: https://cms.eirgrid.ie/sites/default/files/publications/ECP-2.4-Solar-and-Wind-Constraints-Report-Assumptions-and-Methodology-v1.1.pdf

Objective/ Policy	Contribution of the Project
CAEE 8.5: *Facilitate wind energy developments primarily in areas designated in the Renewable Energy Strategy as "Most Favoured" and secondarily in areas designated as "Less Favoured" in the Renewable Energy Strategy, subject to normal planning criteria and having regard to the Wind Energy Guidelines (DECLG, 2006) and any update to the Guidelines that may issue during the lifetime of this Plan. This will include consideration of carbon benefit analysis, as appropriate.*	The Wind Farm Site is located within an area designated as "Less Favoured" within the Renewable Energy Strategy.
CAEE 8.7: *Ensure that proposals for renewable energy developments are considered in the context of relevant EU and national legislation, including in respect of environmental protection. No renewable energy developments will be considered in designated Natura 2000 sites or their surrounding buffer areas.*	The Project will comply with relevant EU and national legislation, as outlined in **Section 4.5** and **Section 4.6** above. Effects on the Environment are assessed throughout the EIAR. **Chapter 11: Hydrology and Hydrogeology** assess water quality. The findings demonstrate the environment can accommodate the Project without giving rise to significant impacts to hydrology or hydrogeology, including water quality. Biodiversity is fully assessed in **Chapter 6: Biodiversity, Chapter 7: Bat Ecology** and **Chapter 8: Ornithology**. A Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEMP) has been developed to offset the loss of habitats from the Project. The implementation of the actions set out in the BEMP will be of particular biodiversity value as it will benefit habitats and all wildlife, including small mammal species, birds and invertebrates over the medium to long term.

Objective/ Policy	Contribution of the Project
	The findings demonstrate that the environment can accommodate the Project without giving rise to significant biodiversity impacts with mitigation measures proposed. **Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** of this EIAR concluded that the Project would not give rise to any significant landscape or visual amenity effects (including residential amenity). The EIAR L&V chapter also considered effects upon "views and prospects" included in the RCDP 2022-2028. The findings demonstrate that the landscape can accommodate the Project without giving rise to significant effects. In **Chapter 5: Population and Human Health** the socio-economic impacts of the development are assessed. The Project has been assessed as having the potential to result in effects of a slight positive, long-term impact overall. There is **no** Wind Farm Site infrastructure located within a designated Natura 2000 site.
CAEE 8.12: *Facilitate renewable energy proposals that bring about a direct socio-economic benefit to the local community.*	The Project represents a major investment in the county and in renewable energy. It will provide an improved renewable electricity supply in the county. This could attract new enterprise, bringing jobs and economic growth. As a minimum, the Applicant is committing that for each megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity produced by the wind farm, the Project will contribute €1 into a community fund for the entire operational life of the Proposed Project. This would equate to an estimated annual fund of €203,000 (using the same formula as above), which across the 35-year operational lifespan would result in funding in the order of €7.1 million to the local community which is a substantial contribution. The number and size of grant

Objective/ Policy	Contribution of the Project
	allocations will be decided by a Community Fund liaison committee with various groups and projects benefiting to varying degrees depending on their funding requirement. Should the Project benefit from the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) then the Project would comply with the community funding requirements required under the RESS agreement. The increased renewable electricity supply will also help to meet increased demand to facilitate further economic growth.

4.6.11.2 Roscommon Renewable Energy Strategy (RES)

The RES is included in Volume 1 of the RCDP plan. The primary aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the county continues to address climate change through facilitating appropriately located renewable energy developments and through supporting energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy.

The RCDP RES includes strategic aims relevant to the Project including;

RES AIM 1: *Provide a framework for renewable energy development within the county through the adoption and implementation of this Strategy.*

RES AIM 2: *Assist in achieving the national targets for energy from renewable energy, from renewable resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production*

RES AIM 3: Encourage and facilitate the various forms of renewable energy development explored in this Strategy, provided they are in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Wind energy developments will be permitted in areas designated as "Most Favoured" primarily, subject to normal planning practices.

RES AIM 4: Encourage energy efficient designs and integration of renewable energy components into new and existing developments.

RES AIM 5: Ensure that renewable energy developments do not undermine the preservation and conservation of the natural and built environment and that an appropriate balance is achieved between development and preservation of the natural environment.

RES AIM 6: Comply with relevant EU and National legislation regarding renewable energy development and environmental protection. No renewable energy developments will be considered on Natura 2000 sites or their surrounding buffer areas.

RES AIM 7: Encourage and facilitate the provision of strategic infrastructure in appropriate areas of the county, in order to facilitate the provision and potential exportation of renewable energy.

RES AIM 8: Work in collaboration with EirGrid and other service providers and statutory bodies to facilitate a modern electricity network within the county, in line with recognised best practice. The Council will require comprehensive studies to be undertaken for all technical and environmental considerations, to inform the assessment of proposed transmission routes.

RES AIM 9: Encourage and facilitate research and development proposals for renewable energies in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

RES AIM 10: Support the development of facilities within the county dedicated to the exploration and advancement of renewable energy technologies. Such facilities could assist in expanding public awareness of the sustainable benefits of renewable energy, provide training, research and development facilities for renewable energy

RES AIM 11: Facilitate renewable energy proposals that bring about a direct socio-economic benefit to the local community.

RES AIM 12: Promote the continued growth of the Sustainable Energy Community network by collaborating with SEAI and local communities to increase the number of SEC's in Roscommon to at least 50 by 2030.

The RES identifies sites of strategic regional and national importance that have the potential to accommodate wind energy development. It designates areas as being either a) Most Favoured, b) Less Favoured or c) Not Favoured, for wind energy development. Each designated area is defined, as detailed below:

Most Favoured: Wind farm development will be considered favourably, subject to compliance with all necessary siting and design standards.

Less Favoured: Wind farm development will be considered, but the sensitivities revealed in these areas would render exploitation more problematic and therefore these areas are less favoured for wind energy development.

Not Favoured: Wind farm development will not be considered favourably in these areas.

The Wind Farm Site is located in an area designated *'Less Favoured'* to wind farm development, as shown on **Figure 4.2**.

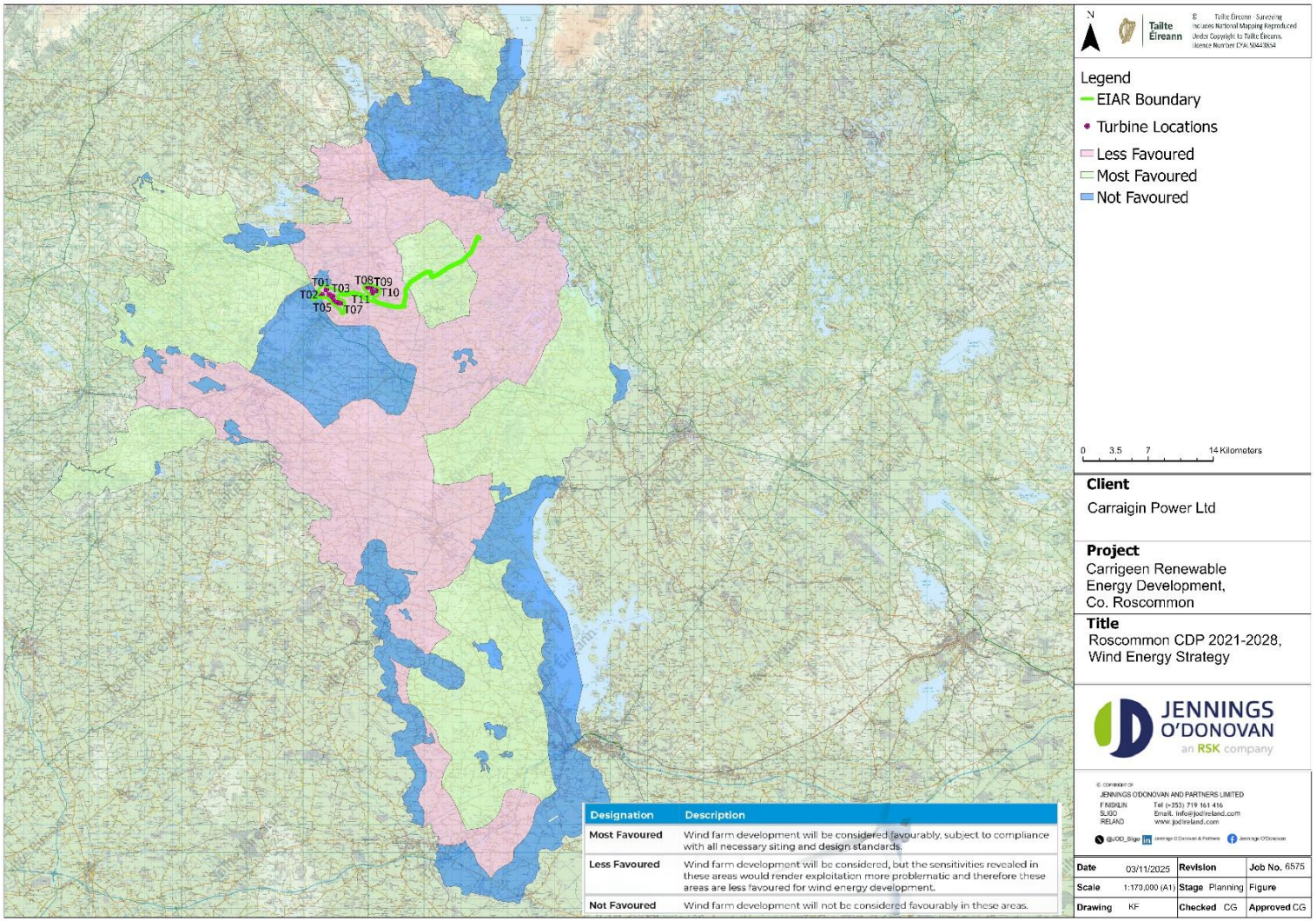

Figure 4.2: Roscommon CDP Designates Areas for Wind Farm Development.

4.6.11.3 The Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Roscommon County Local Authority Climate Action Plan[25] (LACAP) was prepared under the Climate Action and Low-carbon development (Amendment) Act 2021 in support of the National Climate objective; "*transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy*". The LACAP commits to pursuing locally based actions to adapt to a changing climate and reduce emissions towards making Roscommon County a more sustainable place to live, work and visit. The plan was adopted in January 2024 and is a statutory document which will remain in force for five years.

One of the strategic goals of the LACAP is:
'Establish RCC leadership role in the transition to a sustainable, low carbon society, by mainstreaming climate considerations into all aspects of operation, awareness with elected members, staff, customers and the wider community, and influencing behaviours to promote sustainable work and lifestyle choices'

The LACAP also identifies a strategic goal to:
'Establish RCC as a national leader in addressing emissions reduction targets set for RCC assets over the lifetime of this plan, protect infrastructural investment in RCC from the effects of Climate Change, sustainably manage resources in line with CDP land use policy and policy on compact urban growth and develop a thriving Circular Economy in County Roscommon'

The LACAP seeks to identify the current situation at a county level in terms of climate risks, potential future impacts and how the council can address these (Adaptation). The LACAP also identifies a carbon emissions baseline which will be used monitor progress in reducing the root causes of climate change (Mitigation) and bring the county in line with nationally identified targets.

4.6.11.4 Project Compliance with Local Policy

As outlined in **Section 4.6.11.1.1** and **Section 4.6.11.1.2** the Project is compliant with local policy within the RCDP and the RES. The Project, with an estimated maximum installed capacity of c.62.7MW, would contribute to Roscommon's potential installed capacity of 262MW and would contribute greatly to the RCDP goals of meeting national renewable energy targets.

[25] Roscommon County Council (2024) 'County Roscommon Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029'. Available at: (Accessed on 6th November 2025).

The Project helps to harness the wind energy of the county, enabling the exploitation of this natural resource for competitive advantage, facilitating economic development, improving the security of the energy supply and helping to stabilise and reduce energy prices. The Project will create local employment opportunities throughout the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. These opportunities include local contractors being employed, local suppliers being sourced when possible, and the use of hotels and other services.

The Project will help County Roscommon to achieve the goals outlined in the RCDP, RES and in National targets. The current installed capacity of County Roscommon stands at 112MW according to Wind Energy Ireland. The Project could potentially contribute a further c.62.7MW of renewable capacity, which would bring Roscommon's total installed renewable capacity to c.174.7MW, a significant step towards it's 2030 goal of 262MW of installed capacity. The Project provides an opportunity to harness the excellent wind resources of County Roscommon; it has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR and has been found to be in a suitable location. It has been designed to safeguard the environment, including residential amenity. The RES identifies site suitability throughout the county for wind energy development. It designates areas as being either a) Most Favourable, b) Less Favourable, or c) Not Favourable for wind energy development, as shown on **Figure 4.2**. The Project is located in an area designated *'Less Favourable''* to wind farm development. As noted above in **Section 4.6.11.1.2**, 'Less Favoured' areas are defined as areas where: **'***Wind farm development will be considered, but the sensitivities revealed in these areas would render exploitation more problematic and therefore these areas are less favoured for wind energy development.'*

By producing renewable energy which will displace greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels, the Project assists in achieving the outcomes of the Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

4.7 OTHER CORE PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS

4.7.1 The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDGs), Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DoHLG, 2006)

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2006) advise that a reasonable balance must be achieved between meeting Government Policy on renewable energy and the proper planning and sustainable development of an area, and it provides advice in relation to the information that should be submitted with planning applications. The effects on residential amenity, the environment, nature conservation, birds and the landscape

should be addressed. It states that particular landscapes of very high sensitivity may not be appropriate for wind energy development.

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 remain valid until the revised, Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 are finalised and published by the government.

4.7.2 The Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2019)

The key aspects for the draft proposed new wind energy guidelines include the following:

- a visual amenity setback of 4 times the turbine height between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, subject to a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres.
- the elimination of shadow flicker.
- the application of a more stringent noise limit, consistent with World Health Organisation standards.
- the introduction of new obligations in relation to community engagement with local communities along with the provision of community benefit measures.

The Project has been designed in accordance with the current Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and has regard to the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019 in relation to:

- Noise impacts (assessed in **Chapter 13: Noise**) are in line with the guidance.
- To eliminate shadow flicker at nearby dwellings, assessment and mitigation measures have also been included in the project, in line with the draft guidelines, full details of this can be found in **Chapter 5: Population and Human Health**.
- Engagement with local communities has taken place throughout the design and planning phases of the Project. Full details can be found in **Chapter 1: Introduction** and in the Community Report in **Appendix 1.2**.

4.7.3 National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland sets out a roadmap. The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to:

- *Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into our approach to sustainable development.*
- *Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape.*
- *Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together*

with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of our landscape.

- *Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible.*

Landscape and Visual impacts are assessed in **Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity**.

4.8 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

4.8.1 The National Interest and Strategic Importance

The Project will make a valuable contribution to climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas reductions as part of the International (**Section 4.4**), European (**Section 4.5**), and National (**Section 4.6**) efforts to combat climate change.

Ireland is facing significant challenges in efforts to meet renewable energy and emissions targets and is falling behind in the longer-term movement away from fossil fuels. Ireland has one of the highest rates of importing fuel in Europe with energy import dependency increasing to 78% in 2023. Energy demand in Ireland has been growing and is expected to continue to increase, especially electricity demand which is expected to increase by 45% between 2023 and 2034[26]. Increases to the cost of carbon, supply issues, and potential political insecurity increases fossil fuel price volatility. Geopolitical instability has led to energy prices in Ireland increasing significantly. According to the SEAI The average residential electricity prices increased 29% from 2023 to 2024. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)[27] report on Energy Poverty published in 2022, has also warned that as many as 43% of households could now be in energy poverty.

The high rate of imported fossil fuel dependency, the increasing demand for electricity and current energy price volatility makes it vital to introduce more domestic renewable energy generation plants, such as the Project, to provide reliable, secure and affordable energy supplies in Ireland. The Project could improve Irish energy security and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels in line with the Clean Industrial Deal (**Section 4.5.1**), National Energy Security Framework (**Section 4.6.6**) and the REPowerEU Plan (**Section 4.5.5**).

[26]EirGrid. (2022). EirGrid's Generation Capacity Statement Predicts Challenging Outlook for Ireland https://www.eirgrid.ie/news/new-eirgrid-analysis-examines-balance-between-electricity-demand-and-supply-ireland-over-10 [Accessed 20th March 2026]
[27] ESRI. (2022). Energy poverty at highest recorded rate https://www.esri.ie/news/energy-poverty-at-highest-recorded-rate Accessed [Accessed 20th March 2025]

The construction of the Project will also positively contribute to the regional economy bringing investment and jobs that will help to support and retain confidence in the key regional industries of construction and renewable energy.

4.8.2 The Economic Importance of Development

The Project would represent a strategically significant investment in the locality of County Roscommon and the wider Northern and Western region. The Project will provide a multi-million euro benefit to both the Irish and local economies and the opportunity to reinforce the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing the stability and diversity to the rural economy that can stimulate further industry investment to take place. This will have a positive economic impact with several Irish firms commissioned to work on the design, environmental assessment and planning aspects of the Project. Local suppliers will be used wherever possible during the construction phase and in the operational stage, Irish businesses will benefit from the provision of a reliable, local renewable energy source.

4.8.3 Renewable Energy Policy

The Project meets the objectives of Project Ireland 2040 as it will contribute to the economic, environmental, and social objectives of the NPF, in particular National Policy Objectives 69 & 70.

It is critical that a progressive approach is taken to development of renewable energy projects in order to deliver the CAP 2025 objective of meeting an 80% share of electricity generated by renewables by 2030. The Project would contribute an additional c.62.7MW MEC of renewable electricity to the CAP 2025 target of 9GW of onshore renewable electricity generation by 2030 helping to reduce the current 4GW shortfall. It also contributes to assisting Ireland to increase from 40.4% electricity produced by renewable sources in 2024 to 80% by 2030 to meet the CAP2025 target.

As a form of sustainable energy, with an output potential of c.62.7MW MEC of installed capacity at the Project, which will contribute significantly to renewable energy targets and the strategy set out in the RSES for the Northern and Western Region.

The RCDP 2022-2028 follows the national Climate Action Plan by supporting Irelands goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The current installed capacity of County Roscommon stands

at 112MW[28]. The Project could potentially contribute a further c.62.7MW of renewable capacity, which would bring Roscommon's total installed renewable capacity to c.174.7MW, a significant step towards it's 2030 goal of 262MW of installed capacity.

4.8.4 The Project as Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[29]. There are three pillars to sustainable development which are economic, social and environmental. The Project is an excellent example of sustainable development, enshrined in the National Planning Framework. The Project meets each of the three pillars of sustainable development as outlined in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: How the Project Interacts with the three pillars of sustainable development.

Pillar Type	Project Interaction
Economic Role	The Project would represent a strategically significant investment in the locality. The Project provides the opportunity to reinforce and grow the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing the stability and diversity to the rural economy that can stimulate further development by attracting new business to the region due to the improved supply of electricity. The Project will have a positive economic impact with several Irish firms commissioned to work on the design, environmental assessment and planning.
Social Role	The influence of the Project to the de-carbonisation of the Irish electricity network will contribute positively to issues of strategic social importance. It will assist in mitigating climate change and improve air quality while enhancing energy security, including helping to stabilise and reduce energy costs. The Project will also create jobs, economic development and rural diversification.

[28] Roscommon County Council (2022). Renewable Energy Strategy 2022-2028. Available online at: https://www.rosdevplan.ie/rccdevpdfs/final/RCC-Dev-Plan-Renewable-Energy-Strategy.pdf [Accessed 13th June 2025],

[29] Our Common Purpose: Bruntland Report, 1987

Pillar Type	Project Interaction
Environmental Role	Overall, the EIAR sets out that the environmental impacts arising from the Project can be satisfactorily mitigated. The findings demonstrate that the environment can accommodate the Project without giving rise to significant environmental effects in line with the RCDP objectives as well as regional, national and international policy. The NIS concludes on the best available scientific evidence that it can be demonstrated objectively that no elements of the Project will result in a significant adverse effect on the integrity or on the Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives. The Project has the potential to prevent approximately between 51,600 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum, or 1,806,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions will be displaced over the proposed 35 year lifetime of the Project. This would help to mitigate climate change and the impacts to ecosystem globally.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

The Project positively contributes to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

By producing renewable energy, the Project contributes to the displacement of fossil fuels, which pollute the air, this improves air quality, which is closely linked to good health and well-being. See **Chapters 18 & 19: Air Quality and Climate** for details.

The Project would produce a renewable energy source locally; this improves Ireland's energy security and helps to stabilize and reduce energy costs for households and businesses.

The Project is a renewable energy enterprise, representing a multi-million-euro investment into the Northern and Western Region. This could attract new enterprise to the county, bringing jobs and economic growth. This is examined in more detail in **Chapter 5: Population and Human Health.**

The Project by producing renewable energy contributes to decarbonising industry sectors through electrification. The Substation and Grid Connection will become assets of the national grid under the management of EirGrid and assist in improving energy infrastructure in the region.

The renewable energy that the Project will generate will help support Ireland's low carbon transition and reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gases. The Project could provide power for to up to 48,000 homes with renewable energy.

By generating renewable energy and displacing fossil fuels the Project helps to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases and mitigate climate change, supporting Ireland's transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

4.9 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this Chapter, renewable energy has been identified as being required to play an essential role in mitigating climate change by transitioning to a low carbon economy and society. By investing in renewable energy, Ireland can promote sustainable economic development using its own, secure and clean energy.

All planning applications have to be determined on their individual merits with due consideration given to the overall planning balance of a scheme. The pressing need to address climate change and the overriding public interest being given to renewable energy projects, further supports additional renewable energy projects, such as the Project.

The Project in County Roscommon will provide an estimated 62.7MW MEC of renewable, domestically produced wind energy. This additional renewable power generated will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, improve regional/national energy security and help Ireland achieve our renewable electricity targets.

The Project contributes to supplying the national demand for renewable energy, which in the context of the ongoing climate emergency and increasing demand is an urgent Irish national priority.

While renewable energy in Ireland has come a long way, there is still a shortfall in where the nation needs to be to achieve increasing targets. Ireland missed its 2020 RES target as part of RED I, achieving 13.5 % instead of the target 16 %. Ireland's overall RES target has now increased to 43.0 % in 2030 as part of RED III. There is a clear national mandate to accommodate significant onshore wind within the next decade with the CAP2025 setting a 9 GW target for installed wind energy capacity by 2030. In Dec 2024 this was 4.8 GW[30], leaving a shortfall of 4.2 GW to be achieved in the next 5 years.

Further, the National Planning Framework emphasises a move to a low-carbon economy, reducing Ireland's carbon footprint and integrating climate action into the planning system. The RSES for the Northern and Western Region supports opportunities for onshore wind as a major source of renewable energy with an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland. The RCDP reinforces the national and regional energy policies. The Wind Farm Site falls in an area classed as *'Less Favourable'* to wind farm development in the Renewable Energy Strategy for Co. Roscommon. 'Less Favoured' areas are defined as

[30] Wind Energy Ireland (2024) 'Wind Stats' Available at: https://windenergyireland.com/about-wind/the-basics/facts-stats (Accessed on: 6th November 2025).

areas where: **'***Wind farm development will be considered, but the sensitivities revealed in these areas would render exploitation more problematic and therefore these areas are less favoured for wind energy development.'*

The Project meets the definition of Sustainable Development as defined by the National Planning Framework in terms of the three sustainability pillars: Economy, Environment and Social. It also contributes to the UN sustainability goals; 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13 Climate Action.

The development process adopted by the Applicant has represented a best practice approach to a renewable energy scheme design, minimising the potential effects on the receiving environment through multiple design iterations and modifications, and ensuring compliance with the suite of planning policies and objectives of the RCDP. The layout of the Project presented in the planning application and EIAR represents the optimum fit, considering the technical and environmental parameters of this project as discussed within this EIAR.

Likely significant effects have been considered within this EIAR and through the process of assessment, embedded mitigation, and additional proposed mitigation outlined in the EIAR, NIS, Construction Environment Management Plan and Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan it has been shown that the Project can be constructed, operated and decommissioned without likely significant effects on the environment arising.

This chapter outlines how the Project is compliant with International, European and National policy on energy security, emissions reductions and renewable energy production. It has reviewed policy for the Northern and Western region and local County Roscommon policies and finds the Project complies with key renewable energy and environmental policy objectives.

The Project is aligned to all the relevant planning policies identified throughout this chapter, and it will contribute to achieving renewable energy and reduction in emissions targets locally, regionally and nationally.