

Chapter 10 Air Quality

Slieveacurry Renewable
Energy Development, Co.
Clare

Environmental Impact Assessment
Report (EIAR)



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10. AIR QUALITY

10.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies, describes and assesses the potential significant direct and indirect effects on air quality arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Project. The full description of the Proposed Project is detailed in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project. Alternative designs initially proposed for the Proposed Project and their potential for effects on air quality are considered in Chapter 3: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives.

For the purposes of this EIAR, the various project components are described and assessed using the following references: 'Proposed Project', 'Site', 'Proposed Grid Connection Site', 'Proposed Wind Farm Site', 'Proposed Turbines', and 'Proposed Enhancement Site'. Please see Section 1.1.2 of this EIAR for further details. A detailed description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 4 of this EIAR.

The assessment has been carried out according to best practice and guidelines relating to air quality.

10.1.1 Background

The Site is located approx. 7km south of Ennistimon, Co. Clare and 8km west of Inagh, Co. Clare. The town of Miltown Malbay is located approx. 5.8km east of the nearest proposed turbine (T07) It is proposed to access the Proposed Wind Farm Site via an existing access track off the local road to the northwest of the site. The Proposed Wind Farm Site is served by a number of existing local, forestry and agricultural roads and tracks.

Current land-use on the Site comprises coniferous forestry, agriculture, turf cutting, existing renewable energy infrastructure and public road corridor. Land-use in the wider landscape comprises a mix of agriculture, low density housing, renewable energy and commercial forestry.

Due to the non-industrial nature of the Proposed Project, and the general character of the surrounding environment, baseline air quality sampling was deemed to be unnecessary for this EIAR. It is expected that the air quality in the existing environment is good, since there are no major sources of air pollution (e.g. heavy industry) in the vicinity of the Site.

The production of energy from wind turbines has no direct air emissions as is expected from fossil fuel-based power stations. Harnessing more energy by means of renewable sources will reduce dependency on fossil fuels, thereby resulting in a reduction in harmful emissions that can be damaging to human health and the environment. Some temporary or short-term indirect emissions associated with the construction of the Proposed Project will include vehicular and dust emissions.

10.1.2 Statement of Authority

This section of the EIAR has been prepared by Brandon Taylor with input from Muireann Van Nieuwenhove and reviewed by Órla Murphy and Sean Creedon, all of MKO.

Brandon Taylor is a Project Environmental Scientist with over three years of private consultancy experience. Brandon holds a BSc (Hons) in Geography from McGill University, and a MSc (Hons) in Coastal & Marine Environments from the University of Galway. Brandon's key skills include scientific research and report writing, particularly in the context of local communities and their interactions with environmental stressors, and geospatial analysis and the application of GIS and remote sensing tools across the fields of renewable energy development, coastal zone management, and education and scientific communication. Since joining MKO, Brandon has been involved in the design and

environmental impact assessment (EIA) of multiple large-scale onshore wind energy developments across Ireland, contributing to and managing the production of EIA reports.

Muireann Van Nieuwenhove is a Graduate Environmental Scientist with MKO. Muireann holds a BA in Geography and French and an MA in Environment, Society and Development from the University of Galway. Muireann has excellent report writing and research skills. She received an award for her Master's thesis and for placing top of her class. She is experienced in qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Muireann's key strengths and areas of expertise include peatland management, report writing and Geographical Information Systems. Within MKO Muireann works as part of a large multi-disciplinary team to produce EIA Reports on the Environmental Renewables team. Muireann has been involved in a number of project since starting in MKO.

Órla Murphy is a Senior Environmental Scientist with McCarthy O'Sullivan Ltd. with nearly 10 years of experience in private consultancy. Órla holds BSc (Hons) in Geography from Queens University Belfast & a MSc in Environmental Protection and Management from the University of Edinburgh. Prior to taking up her position with McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan in January 2018, Órla worked as an Environmental Project Assistant with ITP Energised in Scotland. Órla's key strengths and areas of expertise are in Environmental Protection and Management, EIA, Project Management, Renewable Energy and Peatland Management, where she has carried out research projects and site work relating to restoration and management of peatland sites in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. On joining MKO Órla has been involved on a range of renewable energy infrastructure projects. In her role as a project manager, Órla works with and co-ordinates large multidisciplinary teams including members from MKO's Environmental, Planning, Ecological and Ornithological departments as well as sub-contractors from various fields in the preparation and production of EIARs. Within MKO, Órla plays a role in the management of and sharing of knowledge with junior members of staff and works as part of a large multi-disciplinary team to produce EIA Reports. This report has also been reviewed by Sean Creedon (B.Sc., M.Sc.). Sean has 23 years' experience in planning and environmental impact elements within all stages of wind farm project delivery.

10.1.3 Relevant Guidance

The air quality section of this EIAR is carried out in accordance with the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU and having regard, where relevant, to guidance listed below:

- *Air Quality Assessment of Proposed National Roads – Standard PE-ENV-01107' (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, December 2022)¹.*
- *Air Quality Assessment of Specified Infrastructure Projects – Overarching Technical Document PE-ENV-01106 (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, December 2025)²*
- *Air Quality Assessment of Proposed National Roads – Standard PE-ENV-01107' (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, December 2025).³*
- *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – June 2022 (EPA, 2022).⁴*
- *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EC, 2017).⁵*
- *Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects (EPA, 2021).⁶*

¹ *Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). (2022). Air Quality Assessment of Proposed National Roads – Standard (PE-ENV-01107). December 2022. <<https://cdn.tii.ie/publications/PE-ENV-01107-01.pdf>>*

² <https://cdn.tii.ie/publications/PE-ENV-01106-02.pdf>

³ <https://cdn.tii.ie/publications/PE-ENV-01107-02.pdf>

⁴ https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/assessment/EIAR_Guidelines_2022_Web.pdf

⁵ https://albertslund.dk/media/4wvitrnqv/eu_2017_environmental-impact-assessment-of-projects-guidance-on-the-preparation-of-the-environmental-impact-assessment-repo.pdf

⁶ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/CDWasteGuidelines.pdf>

- *Guidance of the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024).*⁷
- *Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes (TII, 2011).*
- *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Roads Schemes (TII, 2009).*⁸
- *Clean Air Strategy for Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2023).*⁹
- *UK Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Part IV of the Environment Act 1995: Local Air Quality Management, LAQM.TG (16) (DEFRA 2018).*
- *UK Highways Agency (UKHA) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) – LA 105 Air Quality (UKHA, 2019).*
- *World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines for Particulate Matter, Ozone, Nitrogen Dioxide and Sulphur Dioxide Global Update 2021 (WHO 2021).*¹⁰

10.1.4 Relevant Legislation

In 1996, the Air Quality Framework Directive (on ambient air quality assessment and management) (96/62/EC) was published. This Directive was transposed into Irish law by the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 (Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management) Regulations 1999 (S.I. No. 33 of 1999). The Directive was followed by four Daughter Directives, which set out limit values for specific pollutants:

- The first Daughter Directive (1999/30/EC) addresses sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead.
- The second Daughter Directive (2000/69/EC) addresses carbon monoxide and benzene.
- The first two Daughter Directives were transposed into Irish law by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (SI No. 271 of 2002).
- The third Daughter Directive, Council Directive (2002/3/EC) relating to ozone was published in 2002 and was transposed into Irish law by the Ozone in Ambient Air Regulations 2004 (SI No. 53 of 2004).
- The fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC), published in 2004, relates to polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), arsenic, nickel, cadmium and mercury in ambient air and was transposed into Irish law by the Arsenic, Cadmium, Mercury, Nickel and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Ambient Air Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 58 of 2009) (amended by SI 659/2016 - Air Quality Standards (Amendment) and Arsenic, Cadmium, Mercury, Nickel and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Ambient Air (Amendment) Regulations 2016.)

The Air Quality Framework Directive and the first three Daughter Directives were replaced by the Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (Directive 2008/50/EC) on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe) (as amended by Directive EU 2015/1480) which encompasses the following elements:

- The merging of most of the existing legislation into a single Directive (except for the Fourth Daughter Directive) with no change to existing air quality objectives.
- New air quality objectives for PM_{2.5} (fine particles) including the limit value and exposure concentration reduction target.
- The possibility to discount natural sources of pollution when assessing compliance against limit values.

⁷ <https://iaqm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Construction-Dust-Guidance-Jan-2024.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.tii.ie/media/kzldoawo/guidelines-for-assessment-of-ecological-impacts-of-national-road-schemes.pdf>

⁹ <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/clean-air-strategy.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/551b515e-2a32-4e1a-a58c-cdaecd395b19/content>

- The possibility for time extensions of three years (for particulate matter PM₁₀) or up to five years (nitrogen dioxide, benzene) for complying with limit values, based on conditions and the assessment by the European Commission.

Table 10-1 below sets out the limit values of the CAFE Directive, as derived from the Air Quality Framework Daughter Directives. Limit values are presented in micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and parts per billion (ppb). The notation PM₁₀ is used to describe particulate matter or particles of ten micrometres or less in aerodynamic diameter. PM_{2.5} represents particles measuring less than 2.5 micrometres in aerodynamic diameter.

The CAFE Directive was transposed into Irish legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) as amended by the Air Quality Standards (Amendments) and Arsenic, Cadmium, Mercury, Nickel and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Ambient Air Regulations, 2016 (S.I. 659 2016). The 2011 Regulations superseded the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 271 of 2002), the Ozone in Ambient Air Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 53 of 2004) and the Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management Regulations 1999 (S.I. No. 33 of 1999). The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) was revoked on 31st December 2022 and has been replaced by the Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 739/2022).

On the 26th of October 2022 the EU Commission announced a proposed review of Air Quality Standards.¹¹ The proposed revision will set interim 2030 EU air quality standards, seeking to align more closely with WHO recommendations, while putting the EU on a trajectory to achieve zero pollution for air at the latest by 2050, in synergy with climate-neutrality efforts. The first review is proposed to take place by the end of 2028, with the objective of ensuring full alignment with WHO recommendations.

The Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulation (2022) made the provisions necessary for the implementation of Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (as amended), establishes the limit values and alert thresholds for concentrations of certain pollutants in ambient air, provides for the assessment of concentrations of certain pollutants in ambient air, provides for the maintenance of ambient air quality, and ensures that adequate information on concentrations of pollutants are made available to the public.

On 10th December 2024, Directive (EU) 2024/2881 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe came into force. This directive recasts Directive 2008/50/EC (the CAFE Directive) and the fourth Daughter Directive (Directive 2004/107/EC relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air) and incorporates them into a single directive. This recast directive sets out limit values, target values, average exposure reduction obligations, average exposure concentration objectives, critical levels, alert thresholds, information thresholds and long-term objectives. It sets out air quality provisions with the aim of achieving the objectives of the European Commission's Zero Pollution Action Plan, so that air pollution within the EU is progressively reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems at the latest by 2050. At the time of writing Directive (EU) 2024/2881 has not yet been transposed into Irish law.

10.1.5 Air Quality Standards

The Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 739/2022) remains aligned to the CAFÉ Directive and diverts to the CAFÉ Directive for the Limit values outlined in Table 10-1, the Assessment Thresholds in Table 10-2, the Ozone limits and Assessment Thresholds in Table 10-3 and Table 10-4 respectively.

¹¹ European Commission, Revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directives. <https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality/revision-ambient-air-quality-directives_en>

Table 10-1 Limit Values of the CAFÉ Directive 2008/50/EC (Source: <https://airquality.ie/information/air-quality-standards>)

Pollutant	Limit Value Objective	Averaging Period	Limit Value (ug/m ³)	Limit Value (ppb)	Basis of Application of Limit Value	Attainment Date
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Protection of human health	1 hour	350	132	Not to be exceeded more than 24 times in a calendar year	1 st Jan 2005
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Protection of human health	24 hours	125	47	Not to be exceeded more than 3 times in a calendar year	1 st Jan 2005
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Protection of vegetation	Calendar year	20	7.5	Annual mean	19 th Jul 2001
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Protection of vegetation	1st Oct to 31st Mar	20	7.5	Winter mean	19 th Jul 2001
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Protection of human health	Calendar year	40	21	Annual mean	1st Jan 2010
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Protection of human health	1 hour	200	105	Not to be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year	1 st Jan 2010
Nitrogen monoxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Protection of ecosystems	Calendar year	30	16	Annual mean	19 th Jul 2001
Particulate matter 10 (PM ₁₀)	Protection of human health	24 hours	50	-	Not to be exceeded more than 35 times in a calendar year	1 st Jan 2005
Particulate matter 10 (PM ₁₀)	Protection of human health	Calendar year	40	-	Annual mean	1 st Jan 2005
Particulate matter 2.5 (PM _{2.5}) Stage 1	Protection of human health	Calendar year	25	-	Annual mean	1 st Jan 2015

Particulate matter 2.5 (PM _{2.5}) Stage 2	Protection of human health	Calendar year	20	-	Annual mean	1 st Jan 2020
Lead	Protection of human health	Calendar year	0.5	-	Annual mean	1 st Jan 2005
Carbon Monoxide	Protection of human health	8 hours	10,000	8620	Not to be exceeded	1 st Jan 2005
Benzene	Protection of human health	Calendar year	5	1.5	Annual mean	1 st Jan 2010

Table 10-2 Assessment Thresholds from CAFE Directive 2008/50/EC

Pollutant	Limit Value Objective	Averaging Period	Limit Value (µg/m ³)	Basis of Application of Limit Value
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Upper assessment threshold for the protection of Human Health	24 hours	75	Not to be exceeded more than 3 times in a calendar year
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Lower assessment threshold for the protection of human health	24 hours	50	Not to be exceeded more than 3 times in a calendar year
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Upper assessment threshold for the protection of human health	1 hour	140	Not to be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Lower assessment threshold for the protection of human health	1 hour	100	Not to be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year
Particulate matter 10 (PM ₁₀)	Upper assessment threshold	24 hours	35	Not to be exceeded more than 35 times in a calendar year
Particulate matter 10 (PM ₁₀)	Lower assessment threshold	24 hours	25	Not to be exceeded more than 35 times in a calendar year
Lead (Pb)	Upper assessment threshold	Calendar Year	0.35	-

Pollutant	Limit Value Objective	Averaging Period	Limit Value ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	Basis of Application of Limit Value
Lead (Pb)	Lower assessment threshold	Calendar Year	0.25	-
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Upper assessment threshold	8 hours	7000	-
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Lower assessment threshold	8 hours	5000	-
Benzene (C ₆ H ₆)	Upper assessment threshold	Calendar Year	3.5	-
Benzene (C ₆ H ₆)	Lower assessment threshold	Calendar Year	2	-

Ozone is set out differently in the CAFE Directive in that it sets target values and long-term objectives for ozone rather than limit values. Table 10-3 presents the target values and long-term target value for ozone and Table 10-4 details the threshold values for Ozone.

Table 10-3 Target values for Ozone defined in Directive 2008/50/EC

Objective	Parameter	Target Value for 2010	Long-term Objective
Protection of human health	Maximum daily 8-hour mean	120 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ not to be exceeded more than 25 days per calendar year averaged over 3 years	120 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Protection of vegetation	AOT40* calculated from 1-hour values from May to July	18,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3\cdot\text{h}$ averaged over 5 years	6,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3\cdot\text{h}$

* AOT40 is a measure of the overall exposure of plants to ozone. It is the sum of the excess hourly concentrations greater than 80 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and is expressed as $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ hours.

Table 10-4 Threshold for Ozone Defined in Directive 2008/50/EC (source: <https://airquality.ie/information/air-quality-standards-and-directive-2008/50/EC>)

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Threshold
Information Threshold	1-hour average	180 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
Alert Threshold	1-hour average	240 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

10.1.5.1 Air Quality and Health

In September 2025, the EPA published 'Air Quality in Ireland 2024'¹² which reports that although Ireland met the current EU legal air quality limits in 2024, Ireland is falling behind on the targets set in Ireland's

¹² Air Quality in Ireland Report 2024. Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/air/EPA-Air-Quality-in-Ireland-Report-2024-I..>

Clean Air Strategy (discussed below) for 2026. The Air Quality in Ireland Report 2024 also reports that monitoring results were higher than the more stringent health-based World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines for a number of pollutants including: particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and ozone (O₃). PM and NO₂ are the most significant pollutants in Ireland. The main sources of these pollutants are the burning of solid fuel in our towns and villages and traffic in our cities. People's health and the health of our environment is impacted by these pollutants.

The EEA Report, *Air Quality in Europe 2023*, highlights the negative effects of air pollution on human health across the EU. The report concluded that in 2021, exposure to air pollution in the EU-27 member countries led to:

- 253,000 deaths were attributable to exposure to PM_{2.5} concentrations above the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline level of 5 µg/m³.
- 52,000 deaths were attributable to exposure to NO₂ concentrations above the WHO's guideline level of 10 µg/m³.
- 22,000 deaths were attributable to short-term exposure to O₃ concentrations above 70 µg/m³.

These figures are further informed by the EEA publication of '*Ireland – Air Pollution Country Fact Sheet 2024*' on the 10th December 2024¹³. This states that 530 Irish deaths were attributable to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), 100 Irish deaths were attributable to nitrogen oxides (NO₂) and 240 Irish deaths were attributable to Ozone (O₃).

More recently a few key messages are outlined in the '*Air Quality Status Report 2025*' published on the 9th April 2025 on the EEA website¹⁴. These are:

- EU air quality standards are still not fully met across Europe, despite ongoing overall improvements.
- Since 2011, all countries have reduced exposure of their urban population to fine PM_{2.5} particles, the most harmful pollutant from a health perspective. Nevertheless, the vast majority (94%) of the EU urban population remains exposed to PM_{2.5} concentrations above the WHO guideline level, highlighting the need for additional measures to reduce the associated health risks.

Many locations already have air quality concentrations below the new EU 2030 standards. But in order to meet these new standards everywhere, and based on current progress, additional measures to improve air quality, especially in cities, are likely to be needed.

A 2024 EPA report '*Ireland's State of the Environment Report*'¹⁵ states that the pollutants of most concern are Fine Particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Ammonia (NH₃). The EPA 2024 report goes on to state that:

“The planned transition to more renewable energy sources, and away from combustion-sourced heating systems to electrification, is a shift that could see greenhouse gas emissions from industry significantly decrease.

As a consequence of meeting these growing demands primarily with oil, natural gas, coal and peat, our energy system is highly dependent on fossil fuels. Ireland has made some progress in transforming the electricity system through the deployment of wind farms, with renewable

¹³ European Environment Agency (EEA), *Air Quality Report 2023*, Available at: https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-he/products/etc-he-products/etc-he-reports/etc-he-report-2024-5-status-report-of-air-quality-in-europe-for-year-2023-using-validated-and-up-to-date-data/@download/file/2024-5_report_status_eionet_mix_2023_final%20for%20publication%2030-05-2024.pdf

¹⁴ European Environment Agency (EEA), *Air quality status report 2025*, Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/air-quality-status-report-2025>

¹⁵ Environmental Protection Agency (2024). *Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024*. <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring-assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report/>

energy currently providing more than 40% of electricity used. However, electricity represents only one-fifth of Ireland’s energy use, and our transport and heating systems remain heavily reliant on fossil fuel systems, with lock-ins that need to be addressed.

While Ireland’s renewable energy share has increased from 10.7% in 2018 (reported in the last State of the Environment Report) to 13.1% in 2022, this is the lowest level in the EU (well below the EU average of 23.0%), and Ireland is not on track to meet the EU-wide binding target of 42.5% renewable energy share by 2030. Reaching the target of 80% renewable electricity by 2030, while ensuring a stable energy supply, will require new capacity, a more flexible grid and increased interconnectivity (EC, 2024)

Established technologies, such as wind energy, solar photovoltaics and bioenergy, will be key in meeting short-term emission reduction targets (i.e. 2030), whereas significant growth in offshore wind infrastructure is expected to be the key essential element of future energy systems.”

The EPA also published a report in May 2025 providing details of emissions of air pollutants in Ireland in the period 1990 to 2023 and projected emissions of these pollutants for 2030¹⁶. The key findings of the report with respect to assessment of targets are:

- Ireland is compliant with current and future emission reduction commitments for ammonia (NH₃), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5})
- Ammonia emissions are projected to be in compliance out to 2030
- An adjustment to NMVOC emissions is required in order to meet the required emission reduction commitment made in 2023.

The Proposed Project therefore represents an opportunity to further harness Ireland’s significant renewable energy resources, with valuable benefits to air quality and in turn to human health. The consumption of fossil fuels for energy results in the release of particulates, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide to the air. The use of wind energy, by providing an alternative to electricity derived from coal, oil or gas-fired power stations, results in emission savings of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂), thereby resulting in cleaner air and associated positive health effects.

Whilst there is the potential of such emissions to be generated from the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project, mitigation measures will be implemented at this Site to reduce the impact from dust and vehicle emissions, which are discussed in Section 10.3 below.

10.1.5.1.1 Clean Air Strategy Ireland 2023

Ireland’s *Clean Air Strategy 2023*¹⁷ sets out the detail of seven strategic frameworks that will be used to ensure that air quality continues to improve (Figure 10-1). The aims of these key strategic frameworks are:

- To set the appropriate targets and limits to ensure continuous improvements in air quality across the country and to deliver health benefits for all.
- To ensure the integration of clean air considerations into policy development across Government.
- To increase the evidence base that will help Ireland to continue to evolve it’s understanding of the sources of pollution and their impacts on health, in order to address them more effectively.

¹⁶ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2025). Ireland’s Air Pollutant Emissions 1990–2030.

<<https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/EPA-Air-Pollutant-Final-Report.pdf>>

¹⁷ Rialtas na hÉireann Clean Air Strategy April 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/927e0-clean-air-strategy/#:~:text=The%20Clean%20Air%20Strategy%20provides,delivering%20on%20wider%20national%20objectives.>

- To enhance regulation required to deliver improvements across all pollutants.
- To improve the effectiveness of our enforcement systems.
- To promote and increase awareness of the importance of clean air, and the links between cleaner air and better health.
- To develop the additional targeted/specific policy measures as required to deal with national or local air quality issues.

Since the publication of the *Clean Air Strategy 2023*, the *Clean Air Strategy for Ireland Second Progress Report 2025*¹⁸ was released. This report detailed the significant progress that has been made on the actions in the strategy since its publication in April 2023. The key takeaways that have been implemented since the publication of the strategy include the operational use of the Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels), please note, while it is too early to say the exact impact that these regulations have had on air quality, initial indications from the EPA are that there have been significant air quality improvements made in areas prone to burning solid fuels. The *Clean Air Strategy 2023* saw a push for the submission of Ireland’s second National Air Pollution Control Programme, which was completed in May 2024, and the development of new public awareness campaigns. The *Clean Air Strategy 2023* has furthermore increased the frequency and financial supports given to local authorities to conduct sulphur testing¹⁹.



Figure 10-1 Seven Strategic Frameworks for Air Quality, with associated chapters in brackets. Reproduced as Figure 1 from *Clean Air Strategy 2023*

Chapter 11 of the *Clean Air Strategy* discusses Air Quality Policy Development. The chapter discusses energy policy and acknowledges how the State’s accelerated transition to renewable electricity will be critical to successfully meeting the ambitious renewable energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets outlined in the *European Green Deal* and *Ireland’s Climate Action Plan 2025*, as well as to protecting against security of supply risks and removal of fossil fuels from power generation. Wind (offshore and onshore) and solar energy will be the leading cost-effective technologies to achieve our energy and emissions targets, as well as displacing emissions in other sectors, including household heating and vehicle transport. In the *Clean Air Strategy*, *Climate Action Plan 2023* is referenced, while

¹⁸ *Clean Air Strategy For Ireland Progress Report 2025*, Available at: https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/2025_06_17_CAS_Progress_Report.pdf

¹⁹ *Clean Air Strategy For Ireland First Progress Report 2024*. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/clean-air-strategy-for-ireland-first-progress-report.pdf>

Climate Action Plan 2025 is currently the latest revision. The targets of the *Climate Action Plan 2025* and the European Green Deal are to deliver net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

The Proposed Project supports Ireland's *Clean Air Strategy* generating clean wind energy and facilitating the connection of this clean energy to the national grid, thus helping to cut air pollution, improve public health, and meet national air and climate goals.

10.1.6 Methodology

The assessment of the development footprint of the Proposed Project, within this EIAR Chapter, is based on the maximum potential footprint for all of the infrastructural elements. This precautionary approach is taken as the assessment of the maximum development footprint will, in the absence of mitigation measures, give rise to the greatest potential for significant effects. Should the development footprint be less than the maximum, the potential for significant effects will also be reduced.

10.1.6.1 Air Quality Zones

The air quality zone for the Site was selected, followed by a review of EPA collated baseline air quality data namely Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Particulate Matter (PM₁₀), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Ozone (O₃) for the selected air quality zone to determine the representative levels of such emissions for the Proposed Project.

The EPA has designated four Air Quality Zones for Ireland:

- Zone A: Dublin City and Environs
- Zone B: Cork City and Environs
- Zone C: 16 urban areas within population greater than 15,000
- Zone D: Remainder of the country

These zones were defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as described in the CAFE Directive. The Proposed Project lies within Zone D, which represents rural areas located away from large population centres.

10.1.6.2 Air Quality Data Review

The EPA publishes Air Monitoring Station Reports for monitoring locations in all four Air Quality Zones. The most recent report on air quality in Ireland, '*Air Quality in Ireland 2024*' was published by the EPA in 2025²⁰. The EPA reports provide SO₂, PM₁₀, NO₂ and O₃ concentrations for areas in Zone D. The '*Air Quality in Ireland 2023*' report published by the EPA in 2024²¹ provides concentrations for Zone D CO concentrations. These are detailed in the Baseline Air Quality section.

10.1.6.3 Dust

The Institute of Air Quality Management in the UK (IAQM) guidance document '*Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction*'²² (2024) (hereafter referred to as 'IAQM 2024 Guidance') was followed in the dust impact assessment. The guidance document outlines an assessment method for predicting the impact of dust emissions from construction activities based on the scale and

²⁰ Environmental Protection Agency: *Air Quality in Ireland 2024*. Available at : <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/air/EPA-Air-Quality-in-Ireland-Report-2024-INTERACTIVE.pdf>

²¹ EPA; *Air Quality in Ireland in 2023*. Available at <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/air/air-quality-in-ireland-2023.php>

²² IAQM (2024) *Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction*. Available at: <https://iaqm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Construction-Dust-Guidance-Jan-2024.pdf>

nature of the works and the sensitivity of the area to dust impacts. This methodology has been used to predict the likely risk of dust as a result of the construction phase works operational phase activities and decommissioning phase. The use of UK guidance is considered best practice in the absence of applicable Irish guidance. The major dust generating activities are divided into four types within the IAQM 2024 Guidance to reflect their different potential impacts. These are:

- Demolition (There are no demolition works required for any phase of the Proposed Project);
- Earthworks;
- Construction;
- Trackout²³

The magnitude of dust generating activities is divided into ‘Large’, ‘Medium’ or ‘Small’ scale depending on the nature of the activities involved. IAQM 2024 Guidance provides example definitions for the scale of the activities, and these are applied for this development as outlined in Table 10-5 below.

Table 10-5 Description of magnitude for nature of activities

	Large	Medium	Small
Demolition	Total building volume >75,000 m ³ , potentially dusty construction material (e.g. concrete), on-site crushing and screening, demolition activities >12 m above ground level	Total building volume 12,000 m ³ – 75,000 m ³ , potentially dusty construction material, demolition activities 6-12m above ground level	Total building volume <12,000 m ³ , construction material with low potential for dust release (e.g. metal cladding or timber), demolition activities <6 m above ground, demolition during wetter months
Earthworks	Large: Total site area >110,000 m ² , potentially dusty soil type (e.g. clay, which will be prone to suspension when dry due to small particle size), >10 heavy earth moving vehicles active at any one time, formation of bunds >6m in height	Total site area 18,000 m ² – 110,000 m ² , moderately dusty soil type (e.g. silt), 5-10 heavy earth moving vehicles active at any one time, formation of bunds 3m - 6m in height	Total site area <18,000 m ² , soil type with large grain size (e.g. sand), <5 heavy earth moving vehicles active at any one time, formation of bunds <3 m in height
Construction	Total building volume >75,000 m ³ , on site concrete batching, sandblasting	Total building volume 12,000 m ³ – 75,000 m ³ , potentially dusty construction material (e.g. concrete), on site concrete batching	Total building volume <12,000 m ³ , construction material with low potential for dust release (e.g. metal cladding or timber)

²³ The transport of dust and dirt from the construction / demolition site onto the public road network, where it may be deposited and then re-suspended by vehicles using the network. This arises when Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and/or Heavy Duty Vehicles (HDVs) leave the construction / demolition site with dusty materials, which may then spill onto the road, and/or when HGVs/HDVs transfer dust and dirt onto the road having travelled over muddy ground on site.

	Large	Medium	Small
Trackout	>50 Heavy Duty Vehicle (HDV) (>3.5t) outward movements in any one day, potentially dusty surface material (e.g. high clay content), unpaved road length >100 m	20-50 HDV (>3.5t) outward movements in any one day, moderately dusty surface material (e.g. high clay content), unpaved road length 50 m – 100 m	<20 HDV (>3.5t) outward movements in any one day, surface material with low potential for dust release, unpaved road length <50 m
Note: A vehicle movement is a one-way journey. i.e. from A to B and excludes the return journey. HDV movements during a construction project vary over its lifetime, and the number of movements is the maximum not the average			

The earthwork requirements as outlined in Appendix 4-2, Peat and Spoil Management Plan, of this EIAR results in the classification of the Proposed Project as ‘Large’ for Earthworks and Construction activities. The number of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements per day, as outlined in Section 15.1.4.2.1 in Chapter 15 Material Assets of this EIAR, results in the classification of the Proposed Project as ‘Large’ for Trackout activities.

The magnitude of each activity is combined with the overall sensitivity of the area to determine the risk of dust impacts from site activities.

10.1.6.3.1 Defining the Sensitivity of the Area

For the purposes of this assessment, high sensitivity receptors are residential properties and dust sensitive ecological habitats. Commercial properties and places of work are regarded as medium sensitivity while low sensitivity receptors are places where people are present for short periods or do not expect a high level of amenity²⁴.

The IAQM 2024 Guidance has outlined three types of effects to be considered:

- Sensitivities of People to Dust Soiling Effects
- Sensitivities of People to the Health Effects of PM₁₀
- Sensitivities of Receptors to Ecological Effects

Sensitivities of People to Dust Soiling Effects

Dust soiling effects can occur for a distance of 250m from works areas, but the majority of deposition occurs within the first 50m (IAQM, 2024). Table 10-6 below identifies the sensitivity of an area to dust soiling effects on people and their properties, relative to different receptor sensitivities.

Table 10-6 Sensitivity of the Area to Dust Soiling Effects on People and Property. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
		<20	<50	<100	<250

²⁴ Please see Section 7.3 (pg. 18) of the 2024 IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (<https://iaqm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Construction-Dust-Guidance-Jan-2024.pdf>) for full definitions of high, medium, and sensitive receptors for each of the three types of effects being considered

High	>100	High	High	Medium	Low
	10-100	High	Medium	Low	Low
	1-10	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Medium	>1	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Low	>1	Low	Low	Low	Low

Sensitivities of People to the Health Effects of PM₁₀

When assessing sensitivity of people to the health effects of PM₁₀, the IAQM 2024 Guidance recommends the use of sensitivities bands based on whether or not the receptor is likely to be exposed to elevated concentrations of PM₁₀ over a 24-hour period. Table 10-7 below identifies the sensitivity of an area to human health effects of PM₁₀, relative to different receptor sensitivities. As indicated in Section 10.1.6.1 above, the Proposed Project is situated in Zone D. According to the 2024 EPA baseline air quality data²⁵; the average PM₁₀ for Zone D is 11.5µg/m³. Therefore, the only annual PM₁₀ concentration categorised in the IAQM 2024 Guidance relevant to the Proposed Project is the minimum concentration of <24µg/m³.

Table 10-7 Sensitivity of the Area to Human Health Impacts. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Annual Mean PM ₁₀ concentration	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
			<20	<50	<100	<250
High	>32 µg/m ³	>100	High	High	High	Medium
		10-100	High	High	Medium	Low
		1-10	High	Medium	Low	Low
	28-32 µg/m ³	>100	High	High	Medium	Low
		10-100	High	Medium	Low	Low
		1-10	High	Medium	Low	Low
	24-28 µg/m ³	>100	High	Medium	Low	Low
		10-100	High	Medium	Low	Low
		1-10	Medium	Low	Low	Low
	<24 µg/m ³	>100	Medium	Low	Low	Low
		10-100	Low	Low	Low	Low
		1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low
Medium	>32 µg/m ³	>10	High	Medium	Low	Low

²⁵ <https://www.epa.ie/resources/charts-data/air/air-quality-pm10.php>

Receptor Sensitivity	Annual Mean PM ₁₀ concentration	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)				
			<20	<50	<100	<250	
	28-32 µg/m ³	1-10	Medium	Low	Low	Low	
		>10	Medium	Low	Low	Low	
	24-28 µg/m ³	1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
		>10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
	<24 µg/m ³	1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
		>10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
		1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
		>10	Low	Low	Low	Low	
	Low	-	≥1	Low	Low	Low	Low

Sensitivities of Receptors to Ecological Effects

Dust deposition due to demolition, earthworks, construction and trackout has the potential to physically and chemically affect sensitive habitats and plant communities. Table 10-8 below identifies the sensitivity of an area to ecological impacts.

Table 10-8 Sensitivity of the Area to Ecological Impacts. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Distance from source (m)	
	<20	<50
High	High	Medium
Medium	Medium	Low
Low	Low	Low

- There are 8 no. ecological receptor and habitats within the Site which as described by the IAQM 2024 Guidance which may be sensitive to dust. This ecologically sensitive habitat and its sensitivity designation is listed below:
 - Upland Blanket Bog – High sensitivity
 - Cutover Bog -High sensitivity
 - Wet Heath,- High sensitivity.
 - Eroding blanket bog -medium sensitivity
 - Exposed siliceous rock -low sensitivity
 - Tall herb-swamps -medium sensitivity
 - Aquatic receptors–Medium sensitivity.
 - Marsh Fritillary and Devil’s-bit Scabious Habitat– High Sensitivity.
- There are 6 no. natural watercourse crossings within the Proposed Wind Farm Site (5 no. new and 1 no. existing) and 15 within the Proposed Grid Connection Site 33kV underground cabling, of which 4 no. are EPA mapped watercourses.

The above identified sensitive ecological receptors have been assessed within Chapter 6 Biodiversity, Chapter 9 Hydrology and Hydrogeology, and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS). These receptors sensitivity to dust are assessed below in Section 10.3.3.2.

10.1.6.3.2 Defining the Risk of Impacts

The dust emission magnitude is combined with the sensitivity of the area to determine the risk of impacts with no mitigation applied. The matrix in Table 10-9 provides a method of assigning the level of risk for each activity.

Table 10-9 Risk of Dust Impacts – Earthworks, Construction, and Trackout (IAQM, 2024)

Sensitivity of Area	Dust Emission Magnitude		
	Large	Medium	Small
High	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Medium	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Low	Low Risk	Low Risk	Negligible

EPA classification terminology as presented in Table 1-2 of Chapter 1 of this EIAR (and in Table 10-10 below) have been correlated with the equivalent risk rating from Table 10-9 above.

Table 10-10 Correlation of Impact Classification Terminology (EPA, 2022) to Risk Rating

EPA Term	EPA Description	Risk Rating
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences	Negligible
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities	Low
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends	Medium
Significant	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment	High

The risk of dust impacts for the Earthworks, Construction and Trackout activities from the Proposed Project is set out in Section 10.3 below.

10.2 Baseline Air Quality

The air quality in the vicinity of the Site is typical of that of the rural areas of Ireland (i.e Zone D). Prevailing South Westerly winds carry clean, unpolluted air from the Atlantic Ocean onto the Irish mainland. The EPA publishes Air Monitoring Station Reports for monitoring locations in all four Air Quality Zones. The most recent report on air quality in Ireland, ‘Air Quality in Ireland 2024’ was published by the EPA in 2025. The EPA reports provide SO₂, PM₁₀, NO₂ and O₃ concentrations for areas in Zone D. These are detailed in the following tables.

10.2.1.1 Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

The Sulphur dioxide data from Cork Harbour, Kilkitt, Askeaton and Edenderry in 2024 is presented in Table 10-11.

Table 10-11 Sulphur Dioxide Data for Zone D Sites in 2024

Parameter	Measurement (ug/m ³)
Annual Mean	2.8
Hourly max (Average)	36.2
Hourly > 350 ug/m ³	0
Daily max (Average)	14.7
Daily Max > 125	0

During the monitoring period there were no exceedances of the daily limit values for the protection of human health. As can be observed from Table 10-11, the average maximum hourly value recorded during the assessment period was 36.2 ug/m³. In addition, there were no exceedances of the annual mean limit for the protection of ecosystems. It is expected, based on professional judgement that SO₂ values at the Site are similar or lower than those recorded for the Zone D sites above.

10.2.1.2 Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

Sources of particulate matter include vehicle exhaust emissions, dust from soil and road surfaces, construction works and industrial emissions. The *Air Quality in Ireland 2024* report²⁶ provides annual mean PM₁₀ concentration for nineteen Zone D towns, Askeaton, Birr, Carnsore, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar, Cavan, Claremorris, Cobh Carrignafof, Cork Mallow, Edenderry, Enniscorthy, Galway Ballinasloe, Killarney, Kilkitt, Longford, Macroom, Malin Head, Roscommon Town and Tipperary Town. Particulate matter (PM₁₀) data for 2024 is presented in Table 10-12.

Table 10-12 Average Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) Data for Zone D Sites in 2024

Parameter	Measurement (ug/m ³)
Annual Mean	11.5
% Data Capture (Average)	94%
Values > 50 ug/m ³	Max 7 (Longford)

²⁶ EPA (2025). *Air Quality in Ireland 2024*.

Parameter	Measurement (ug/m3)
Daily Max (Average)	49.5

The daily limit of 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the protection of human health was exceeded on a total of 16 days across all monitoring locations, which is lesser than the PM_{10} daily limit for the protection of human health of a max 35 days $>50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ applicable from 2005. The greatest number of exceedances occurred at Longford where the PM_{10} daily limit was exceeded on 7 no. occasions. In the EPA 2025 report, it notes that there were breaches in the levels of particulate matter (PM), which in Ireland, mainly comes from the burning of solid fuel, such as coal, peat, and wood to heat homes. It is expected based on professional judgement that PM_{10} values at the Proposed Project is similar or lower than those recorded for the Zone D sites above.

10.2.1.3 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)

Nitrogen dioxide data for Birr, Castlebar, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cork Mallow, Edenderry, Emo Court and Kilkitt in 2024 is presented in Table 10-13.

Table 10-13 Average Nitrogen Dioxide Data for Zone D Sites in 2024

Parameter	Measurement
Annual Mean (Average)	8.3
NO_2 Values >200	0
Values > 140 (UAT)	0
Values >100 (LAT)	1
Hourly Max. (Average)	68.6

The annual NO_2 value was below the annual mean limit value for the protection of human health of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The lower assessment threshold of 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ was exceeded 1 no. times during the monitoring period in Edenderry and the upper assessment threshold of 140 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ was not exceeded once during the monitoring period. Edenderry did not exceed the 18 hours limit during the monitoring period. The average hourly max. NO_2 value of 68.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ measured during the monitoring period was below the hourly max threshold of 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. It is expected based on professional judgement that NO_2 values at the Site is similar or lower than those recorded for the Zone D sites above.

10.2.1.4 Carbon Monoxide (CO)

The 'Air Quality in Ireland 2023'²⁷ Report provides rolling 8-hour carbon monoxide concentrations for Birr, a Zone D site. Carbon Monoxide data for 2023 is presented in Table 10-14.

Table 10-14 Carbon Monoxide Data for Birr – Zone D Site in 2023.

Parameter	Measurement
Annual Mean	0.6 mg/m^3
Median	0.6 mg/m^3

²⁷ EPA (2024) Air Quality in Ireland 2023

% Data Capture	99.8%
Values > 10	0
Max	2.2 mg/m ³

The average concentration of carbon monoxide was 0.6 mg/m³. The carbon monoxide limit value for the protection of human health is 10,000 µg/m³ (or 10 mg/m³). On no occasions were values in excess of the 10 mg limit value set out in Directive 2008/50/EC. It is expected based on professional judgement that the CO value at the Site is similar or lower than those recorded for the Zone D site above.

10.2.1.5 Ozone (O₃)

The ‘Air Quality in Ireland 2024’ report provides rolling 8-hour ozone concentrations for eight Zone D sites, Emo Court, Kilkitt, Carnsore Point, Mace Head, Castlebar, Valentia, Cork Mallow and Malin Head. Ozone (O₃) data for 2024 is presented in Table 10-15.

Table 10-15 Average Ozone Data for Zone D Sites in 2024.

Parameter	Measurement
Annual Mean	58.9µg/m ³
Median	59.9 µg/m ³
% Data Capture	84.1%
No. of days > 120 µg/m ³	0 days

As can be observed from Table 10-15 there were no exceedances of the maximum daily eight-hour mean limit of 120 µg/m³. The CAFE Directive stipulates that this limit should not be exceeded on more than 25 days per calendar year averaged over 3 years. It would be expected on professional judgement that O₃ values at the Site would be similar or lower than those recorded for the Zone D sites below.

10.2.1.6 Dust

There are no statutory limits for dust deposition in Ireland. However, EPA guidance suggests that a deposition of 10 mg/m²/hour can generally be considered as posing a soiling nuisance. This equates to 240 mg/m²/day. The EPA recommends a maximum daily deposition level of 350 mg/m²/day when measured according to the TA Luft Standard 2002. This limit value can also be implemented with regard to dust impacts from construction activities associated with the Proposed Project.

The extent of dust generation at any site depends on the type of activity undertaken, the location, the nature of the dust, i.e., soil, sand, etc., and the weather. In addition, dust dispersion is influenced by external factors such as wind speed and direction and/or periods of dry weather. Construction dust has the potential to be generated from on-site activities such as excavation and backfilling. Construction traffic movements also have the potential to generate dust as they travel along the haul route.

The potential dust-related effects on local air quality and the relevant associated mitigation measures are during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project are presented in Sections 10.3 below.

10.3 Likely and Significant Impacts and Associated Mitigation Measures

10.3.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Project were not to proceed, the Site would continue to function as it does at present, with no changes to the current land-use and air quality. This impact is considered to be neutral in the context of the EIAR. If the Proposed Project were not to proceed, the opportunity to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂) to the atmosphere would be lost due to the continued dependence on electricity derived from coal, oil and gas-fired power stations, rather than renewable energy sources, such as the Proposed Project. This will result in an indirect negative impact on air quality nationally, regionally and locally.

Furthermore, the opportunity to capture an even greater part of County Clare's valuable renewable energy resource would be lost, as would the opportunity to further contribute to meeting Government and EU targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, as this application includes a Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (Appendix 6-4) to be implemented during the development's operation, the opportunity to enhance the site for biodiversity, at a local scale, would also be lost.

10.3.2 Construction Phase

10.3.2.1 Exhaust Emissions: Construction of Proposed Project Infrastructure

10.3.2.1.1 Pre-Mitigation Impact

Exhaust emissions associated with vehicles and plant such as NO₂, Benzene and PM₁₀ will arise as a result of construction activities.

The construction of turbines and associated foundations and hardstanding areas, meteorological mast, access roads, temporary construction compounds, temporary works areas, underground cable connection, proposed extension to existing Slieveacurry 110kV substation, site drainage, tree felling, peat and spoil management, and all ancillary works and apparatus, will require the operation of construction vehicles and plant. This potential effect will not be significant and will be restricted to the duration of the construction phase and localised to works areas. Therefore, this constitutes a short-term, slight, negative effect in terms of air quality. Mitigation measures in relation to exhaust emissions are presented below.

10.3.2.1.2 Mitigation Measures

- Proposed Project Construction staff will be trained how to inspect and maintain construction vehicles and plant to ensure good operational order while onsite, thereby minimising any emissions that arise. The Site Supervisor/Construction Manager will produce and follow a site inspection and machinery checklist which will be followed and updated as required.
- All plant and materials vehicles shall be stored in dedicated areas (onsite). Machinery will be switched off when not in use.

- Turbines and construction materials will be transported to the site on specified routes only, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. Please see Chapter 15 Material Assets for details.
- All plant and materials vehicles will be stored in dedicated areas (onsite).
- Areas of excavation will be kept to a minimum, and stockpiling of excavated material will be minimised by coordinating excavation, placement of material in peat and spoil management areas.
- The expected waste volumes generated onsite are unlikely to be large enough to warrant source segregation at the Site. Therefore, all wastes streams generated onsite will be deposited into a single waste skip which will be covered. This waste material will be transferred to a licensed /permitted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal.
- The MRF facility will be local to the Site to reduce the emissions associated with vehicle movements.
- Aggregate materials for the construction of the Proposed Project will be sourced from local quarries.
- A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be in place throughout the construction phase (see Appendix 4-5).

10.3.2.1.3 **Residual Effect**

With the implementation of the above measures for the construction phase, residual effects on air quality from exhaust emissions associated with construction activities and machinery are considered to be a short-term, imperceptible, negative effect.

10.3.2.1.4 **Significance of Effects**

The effects on air quality from exhaust emissions arising from the construction of Proposed Project infrastructure during the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.2.2 **Exhaust Emissions: Transportation to and from the Site**

10.3.2.2.1 **Pre-Mitigation Impact**

The transport of turbine components, supporting infrastructure materials, construction and staff vehicles, small volume of aggregate material, and waste removal vehicles to/from the Proposed Project which will occur on specified routes only, (refer to Section 4.6 of Chapter 4 of this ELAR). The departure of empty vehicles and/or minor waste volumes (please see accompanying CEMP Appendix 4-5) from the Site and daily staff movements, will give rise to exhaust emissions associated with the transport vehicles. This constitutes a short-term, slight, negative effect in terms of air quality, which is not significant. Mitigation measures in relation to exhaust emissions are presented below.

10.3.2.2.2 **Mitigation Measures**

- Measures listed in section 10.3.2.1 above pertaining to exhaust emissions will be implemented for the transportation of vehicles to and from the Site.
- Aggregate materials for the construction of Site access tracks and all associated infrastructure will all be locally sourced where possible, which will further reduce potential emissions.
- Turbines and construction materials will be transported to the Site on specified haul routes only.
- The expected waste volumes generated onsite are unlikely to be large enough to warrant source segregation at the Site. Therefore, all wastes streams generated onsite

will be deposited into a single waste skip which will be covered. Waste material will be transferred to a licensed /permitted MRF by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal.

- The MRF facility will be local to the Site to reduce the emissions associated with vehicle movements.
- A CEMP will be in place throughout the construction phase (see Appendix 4-5).

10.3.2.2.3 **Residual Effect**

Following implementation of the above mitigation measures, residual effects from exhaust emissions arising from transportation activities will have a short-term, imperceptible, negative effect on air quality.

10.3.2.2.4 **Significance of Effects**

The effects on air quality from exhaust emissions arising from transportation activities during the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.2.3 **Dust Emissions: Construction of Proposed Project Infrastructure**

10.3.2.3.1 **Pre-Mitigation Impact**

The construction of turbines and associated foundations and hard-standing areas, meteorological mast, access roads, temporary construction compound, underground cable connection, site drainage, tree felling, and all ancillary works and apparatus will give rise to dust emissions. In order to accommodate the delivery of turbine components, accommodation works will be required at the proposed new site entrance along the L2118 local road. Works associated with the accommodation works will give rise to localised dust emissions.

The construction materials for the Proposed Project will be locally sourced from the onsite borrow pit and the extraction of material from this location will give rise to localised dust emissions.

The removal of the topsoil followed by its transportation and deposition at the peat and spoil management areas during the construction phase will give rise to dust emissions.

The IAQM 2024 Guidance, as discussed in Section 10.1.6.3 above, is used to assess the potential risk to high sensitivity receptors from dust deposition. Dust deposition impacts can occur for a distance of 250m from works areas, but the majority of deposition occurs within the first 50m (IAQM, 2024). The high sensitivity receptors were identified using a constraints mapping process, and detailed and updated planning searches which informed the project sensitive receptor dataset.

The number of high sensitivity receptors within 250m from the Proposed Project works areas and their likely risk of dust impacts during the construction works, as highlighted in the IAQM 2024 Guidance discussed above are detailed below and presented in Figure 10-16 below.

- There are 3 no. high sensitivity receptors located within 20m from the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project; (all of which are involved landowners)
- There is 4 no. high sensitivity receptors located within 50m of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project ; (all of which are involved landowners)
- There are 6 no. high sensitivity receptors located within 100m of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project (5 no. of which are involved landowners);

- There are 18 no. high sensitivity receptors located within 250m of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project (12 no. of which are involved landowners).

Table 10-16 below identifies the sensitivity of the area surrounding the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project (to dust soiling effects on People and Property, as described in Section 10.1.6.3 above. As there are 3 no. sensitive receptors within 20m of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project, the overall sensitivity of the area to dust soiling impacts is considered to be ‘**Medium**’. For the construction phase of the Proposed Project, the potential impact from dust emissions is considered to be a short term, slight, negative effect, which is not significant.

Table 10-16 Sensitivity of the Area to Dust Soiling Effects on People and Property. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
		<20	<50	<100	<250
High	>100	High	High	Medium	Low
	10-100	High	Medium	Low	Low
	1-10	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Medium	>1	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Low	>1	Low	Low	Low	Low

Table 10-17 below identifies the high sensitivity receptors in the area surrounding the development footprint of the Proposed Project to the health effects of PM₁₀, as described in Section 10.1.6.3.1 above. The overall sensitivity of the area to human health effects of PM₁₀ is considered to be ‘**Low**’. As indicated in Section 10.1.6.1 above, the Proposed Project is situated in Zone D. According to the 2024 EPA baseline air quality data²⁸, the average PM₁₀ for Zone D is 11.5µg/m³. Therefore, the only annual PM₁₀ concentration categorised in the IAQM 2024 Guidance relevant to the Proposed Project is the minimum concentration of <24µg/m³ (<14 µg/m³ in Scotland).

Table 10-17 Sensitivity of the Area to Human Health Impacts from the Proposed Project construction works. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Annual Mean PM ₁₀ Concentration	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
			<20	<50	<100	<250
High	<24 µg/m ³ (<14 µg/m ³ in Scotland)	>100	Medium	Low	Low	Low
		10-100	Low	Low	Low	Low
		1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low
Medium	<24 µg/m ³ (<14 µg/m ³ in Scotland)	>10	Low	Low	Low	Low
		1-10				

²⁸ <https://www.epa.ie/resources/charts-data/air/air-quality-pm10.php>

Low	-	≥1	Low	Low	Low	Low
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Table 10-18 below identifies the sensitivity of the receptors to ecological effects in the area surrounding the development footprint of the Proposed Project. As noted above in Section 10.1.6.3, there are 8 no. sensitive ecological receptors (habitats) within 20m of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project, The overall sensitivity of the areas surrounding the permanent built footprint of the Proposed Project is ‘Medium’. Please note, a detailed ecological impact assessment assessing impacts on these ecological receptors during the construction phase (including effects from dust) is contained in Chapter 6 in Section 6.5.2 of this EIAR and the NIS.

Table 10-18 Sensitivity of the Proposed Project to Ecological Impacts. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

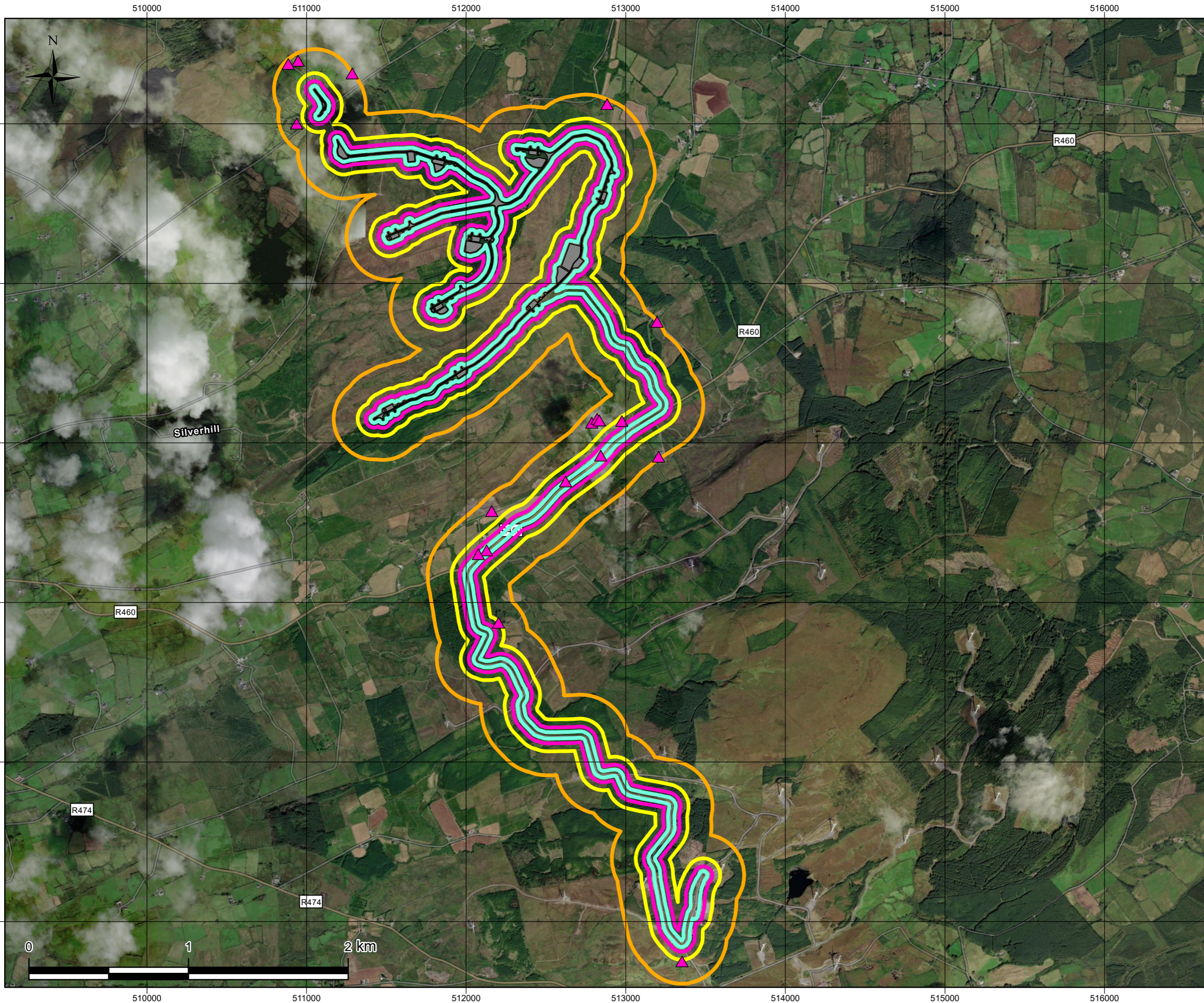
Receptor Sensitivity	Distance from source (m)	
	<20	<50
High	High	Medium
Medium	Medium	Low
Low	Low	Low

As identified in Section 10.1.6.3 above, the Proposed Project is classified as ‘Large’ for Earthworks, Construction and Trackout activities. Therefore, when combined with the sensitivity of the area, using Tables 10-6 to 10-8 above as guidance, the pre-mitigation risk of impacts from the Proposed Project is summarised in Table 10-19 below.

Table 10-19 Summary Dust Risk Table for Proposed Project Activities

Potential Impact	Dust Emission Magnitude			
	Demolition	Earthworks	Construction	Trackout
Dust Soiling	N/A	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk
Human Health	N/A	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk
Ecological	N/A	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk

The overall risk of dust emissions impacts with no mitigation applied for the major dust generating activities during the construction phase of the Proposed Project is ‘Medium’. Therefore, the potential effects of dust from the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be equivalent to short-term, moderate negative effect, which is not significant.



- Map Legend**
-  Proposed Project Built Infrastructure
 -  Sensitive Receptors
 -  20m IAQM Dust Deposition Band
 -  50 IAQM Dust Deposition Band
 -  100 IAQM Dust Deposition Band
 -  250 IAQM Dust Deposition Band

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SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title
Dust Deposition Bands and Relevant High Sensitivity Receptors

Project Title
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Project No. 240718	Drawing No. 10-2	Scale 1:22,000
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Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT	Date 22/04/2026
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10.3.2.4 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

- Groundworks (i.e. works with potential to create dust) associated with the Proposed Project will be fully supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).
- The ECoW will regularly monitor adjacent marsh fringing habitat on a daily basis for potential signs of dust deposition or any other habitat degradation. Dust level thresholds and weather will also be monitored.
- If any signs of habitat degradation are noted, the dust-producing works will be immediately halted and further mitigation to protect larval web areas from dust will be implemented in advance of resuming work.
- The ECoW will have power to halt construction works if required as outlined above.
- Sporadic wetting of loose stone surface will be carried out during the construction phase to minimise movement of dust particles to the air. In periods of extended dry weather, dust suppression may be necessary along haul roads to ensure dust does not cause a nuisance. Water bowser movements will be carefully monitored by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to avoid, insofar as reasonably possible, increased runoff.
- All plant and materials vehicles shall be stored in dedicated areas within the Site.
- Areas of excavation will be kept to a minimum, and stockpiling of excavated material will be minimised by coordinating excavation, placement of material in peat and spoil management areas.
- Turbines and construction traffic will be transported to the Proposed Wind Farm Site on specified haul routes only.
- The agreed haul route road adjacent to the Proposed Wind Farm Site will be regularly inspected for cleanliness and cleaned as necessary.
- The roads adjacent to the Proposed Wind Farm Site proposed new entrance will be checked weekly for damage/potholes and repaired as necessary.
- The transportation of construction materials from locally sourced quarries for the Proposed Grid Connection Site infrastructure and for the Proposed Wind Farm Site will be covered by tarpaulin where necessary.
- If necessary, excavated material will be dampened prior to transport to the spoil management areas.
- Approximately 5 dust monitoring gauges will be deployed across the Proposed Wind Farm Site to detect any exceedances of acceptable dust levels.
- Waste material will be transferred to a licensed/permitted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal. The MRF facility will be local to the Proposed Project to reduce the amount of emissions associated with vehicle movement.

10.3.2.4.1 Residual Effect

With the implementation of the above, the Proposed Project is considered to have a short-term, slight, negative effect on air quality brought about by dust emissions generated during the construction activities.

10.3.2.4.2 Significance of Effects

The effects on air quality from dust emissions arising from the construction of Proposed Project infrastructure during the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.2.5 Dust Emissions: Transport to and from the Site

10.3.2.5.1 Pre-Mitigation Impact

Proposed Project

The transport of turbine components, supporting infrastructure materials, construction and staff vehicles, small volume of aggregate material and waste removal vehicles to/from the Proposed Wind Farm Site, the departure of empty vehicles and/or minor waste volumes (please see accompanying CEMP Appendix 4-5) from the Proposed Wind Farm Site and daily staff movements will also give rise to some localised dust emissions during periods of dry weather. This is a short-term slight negative impact, which is not significant. Mitigation measures are presented below.

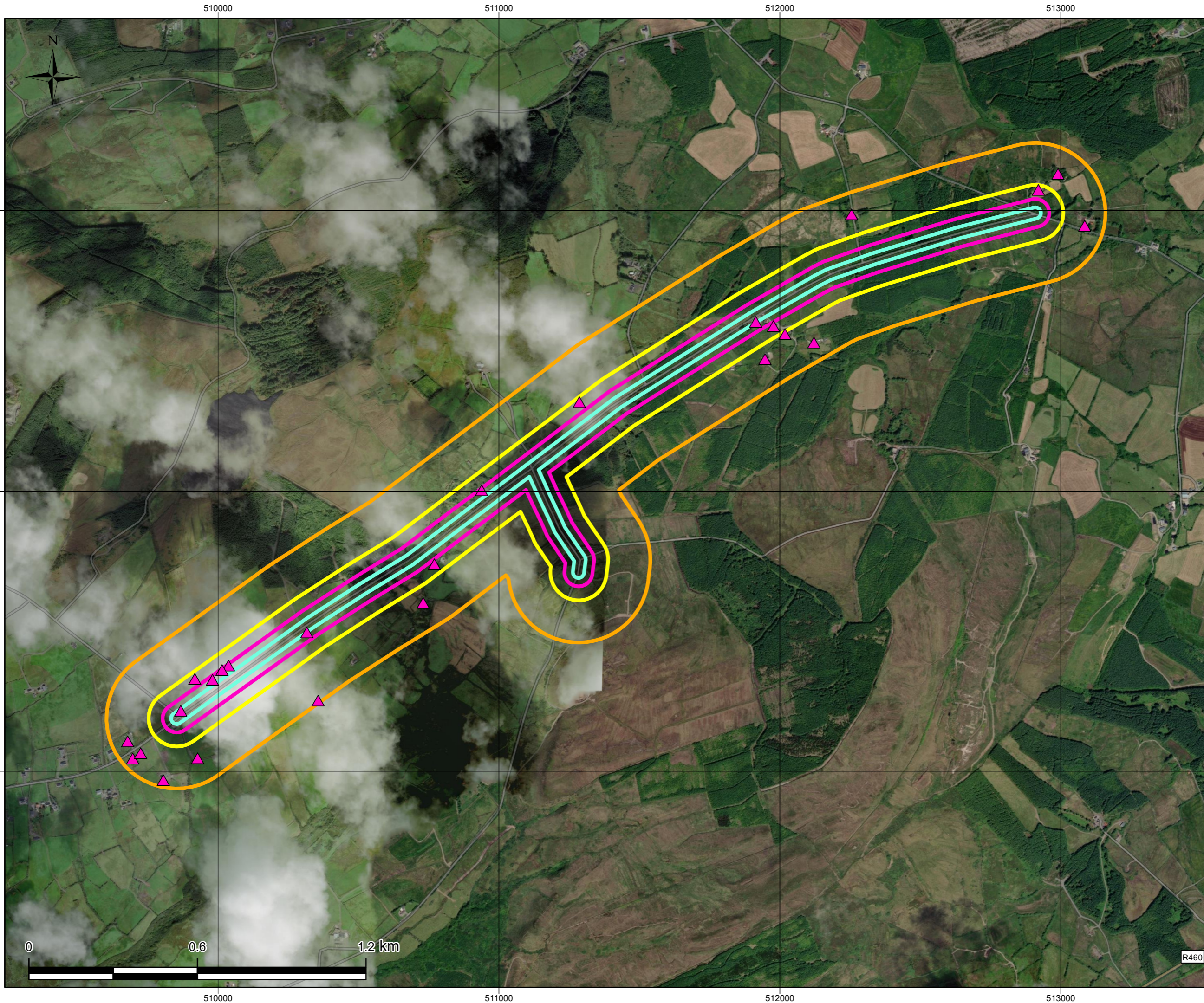
Transport

The IAQM 2024 Guidance states that the routes of construction traffic should also be included in an assessment of dust arising from trackout, and that related construction dust impact increases with respect to the number of movements of HGVs per day, length of unpaved road, distance to receptors and the sensitivity of local receptors.

For the purposes of this assessment of the dust emissions arising from trackout related to the construction of the Proposed Project, the L6230 local road, along which the proposed new site entrance is located, was scoped in for assessment and is approximately a 400m stretch of local road that runs in a north-south orientation to the northwest of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. In relation to the turbine delivery route and construction traffic related to the proposed site access along the L2118/L1076 to the northwest of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, it is considered that the numbers of vehicle movements per day will be low and therefore there will be no potential for significant effects from trackout related dust emissions. The L2118/L1076, scoped in for assessment, is approximately a 3.6km stretch of local road that runs in a north-south orientation to the west of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Beyond either end of these roads, construction traffic will disperse in different directions along different routes to a degree that there will be no potential for significant effects from trackout related dust emissions.

The IAQM 2024 Guidance as discussed in Section 10.1.6.3 above is used to assess the potential risk to high sensitivity receptors from dust deposition. Dust deposition impacts can occur for a distance of 250m from source (the 3.6km stretch of the L2118), but the majority of deposition occurs within the first 50m (IAQM, 2024). The high sensitivity receptors were identified using a constraints mapping process, and detailed and updated planning searches which informed the project sensitive receptor dataset. The sensitive receptors located within the appropriate distance from potential dust emission sources, provided by the IAQM 2024 Guidance, are detailed below and presented in Figure 10-4 below.

- There are 3 no. high sensitivity receptors located within 20m of the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118;
- There are 7 no. high sensitivity receptors within 50m of the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118;
- There are 12 no. high sensitivity receptors within 100m of the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118; (1 no. of which is an involved landowner)
- There are 25 no. high sensitivity receptors within 250m of identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118. (2 no. of which are involved landowners)



Map Legend

- ▲ Dwellings_List_250_2026_
- Ballard_Road_IAQM_20mV
- Ballard_Road_IAQM_50mV
- 100 IAQM Dust Deposition Band
- Ballard_Road_IAQM_250m

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SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title		
Local Road Dust Deposition Bands and Sensitive Receptors		
Project Title		
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare		
Project No.	Drawing No.	Scale
240718	10-3	1:12,500
Drawn By	Checked By	Date
MVN	BT	22/04/2026



MKO

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Table 10-20 below identifies the sensitivity of the area surrounding the L2118 to dust soiling effects from trackout, as described in Section 10.1.6.3 above.

As per the criteria in Table 10-21 below, there are 3 no. high sensitivity receptors within 20m of the L2118, and 4 no. high sensitivity receptors within 50m of the L2118. The overall sensitivity of the area to dust soiling impacts is considered to be **‘Medium’**.

Table 10-20 Sensitivity of the Area to Dust Soiling Effects on People and Property. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
		<20	<50	<100	<250
High	>100	High	High	Medium	Low
	10-100	High	Medium	Low	Low
	1-10	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Medium	>1	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Low	>1	Low	Low	Low	Low

Table 10-21 below identifies the high sensitivity receptors in the area surrounding the L2118 to the health effects of PM₁₀, as described in Section 10.1.6.3 above. The overall sensitivity of the area to human health effects of PM₁₀ is considered to be **‘Low’**. As indicated in Section 10.1.6.1 above, the Proposed Project is situated in Zone D. According to the 2021 EPA baseline air quality data²⁹; the average PM₁₀ for Zone D is 14µg/m³. Therefore, the only annual PM₁₀ concentration categorised in the IAQM 2024 Guidance relevant to the Proposed Project is the minimum concentration of <24µg/m³ (<14 µg/m³ in Scotland).

Table 10-21 Sensitivity of the Area to Human Health Impacts from the transportation of construction plant and vehicles on the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118 local road. Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024)

Receptor Sensitivity	Annual Mean PM ₁₀ Concentration	Number Of Receptors	Distance from source (m)			
			<20	<50	<100	<250
High	<24 µg/m ³ (<14 µg/m ³ in Scotland)	>100	Medium	Low	Low	Low
		10-100	Low	Low	Low	Low
		1-10	Low	Low	Low	Low
Medium	<24 µg/m ³ (<14 µg/m ³ in Scotland)	>10	Low	Low	Low	Low
		1-10				
Low	-	≥1	Low	Low	Low	Low

²⁹ <https://www.epa.ie/resources/charts-data/air/air-quality-pm10.php>

As identified in Section 10.1.6.3 above, the Proposed Project is classified as ‘Large’ for Trackout activities. Therefore, when combined with the sensitivity of the area, using Table 10-11 above as guidance, the pre-mitigation risk of impacts from the Proposed Project on the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118 is summarised in Table 10-22 below.

Table 10-22 Summary Dust Risk for the Identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118

Potential Impact	Dust Emission Magnitude
	Trackout (Proposed Project)
Dust Soiling	Low Risk
Human Health	Low Risk
Ecological	N/A

The overall risk of dust emissions impacts on the identified 3.6km stretch of the L2118, with no mitigation applied for the major dust generating activities, during the construction phase of the Proposed Project is ‘Low’. Therefore, the potential effects of dust from the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be equivalent to short-term, slight, negative effect, which is not significant.

10.3.2.5.2 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

- Sporadic wetting of loose stone surface will be carried out during the construction phase to minimise movement of dust particles to the air. In periods of extended dry weather, dust suppression may be necessary along haul roads to ensure dust does not cause a nuisance. Water bowser movements will be carefully monitored by the ECoW to avoid, insofar as reasonably possible, increased runoff.
- All plant and materials vehicles shall be stored in dedicated areas within the Site.
- Turbine components and construction materials will be transported to the Proposed Wind Farm Site on specified haul routes only, as agreed with the local authority.
- Construction materials for the Proposed Project will be sourced locally from the onsite borrow pit.
- The agreed haul route roads adjacent to the Site will be regularly inspected for cleanliness and cleaned as necessary.
- The roads adjacent to the Proposed Wind Farm Site entrance will be checked weekly for damage/potholes and repaired as necessary.
- The transport of construction materials around the onsite borrow pit will be covered by tarpaulin where necessary.
- Waste material will be transferred to a licensed /permitted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal.
- The MRF facility will be local to the Site to reduce the amount of emissions associated with vehicle movements
- A CEMP will be in place throughout the construction phase (see Appendix 4-5).

10.3.2.5.3 Residual Effect

Following implementation of mitigation measures as outlined above, residual effects on air quality from dust emissions from traffic movements to and from the Site during the construction phase will have a short-term, imperceptible, negative effect.

10.3.2.5.4 Significance of Effects

The effects on air quality from dust emissions arising from transportation activities during the construction phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.3 Operational Phase

10.3.3.1 Exhaust Emissions: Proposed Project Infrastructure

10.3.3.1.1 Pre-Mitigation Impact

The operational phase of the Proposed Project will generate additional traffic to the area in the form of light goods vehicles (LGVs) visiting the Site 1-2 times per day for inspections but on occasion, daily visits by LGVs and HGVs may be required over short periods during maintenance/component replacement activities. The addition of a LGV to the area 1-2 times per day during the operational phase will give rise to a long-term, imperceptible, negative effect on air quality due to exhaust emissions, which is not significant.

The addition of several HGVs on occasion over the 35-year lifetime of the Proposed Project will give rise to a long-term, imperceptible, negative effect due to the localised and intermittent nature of the maintenance.

In addition to the above, parts of the Site will continue to be used as a working farm and therefore farm machinery will continue to utilise the Site as required.

The proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation will be operated and maintained by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and/or EirGrid. It is anticipated that substation operators will visit the Site 1-2 times per day in LGVs but on occasion, HGVs may be required to visit the Site for maintenance/substation component replacement. On occasion, the removal of hydrocarbons (transformer oil) and waste from substation welfare facilities will be removed from the Site by a licenced waste disposal company. The addition of a LGV to the area 1-2 times per day during the operational phase will give rise to a long-term, imperceptible, negative effect on air quality due to exhaust emissions, which is not significant. The addition of several HGVs on occasion over the 35-year lifetime of the Proposed Project will give rise to a long-term, imperceptible, negative effect on air quality.

10.3.3.1.2 Mitigation Measures

- Any vehicles or plant brought onsite during the operational phase will be maintained in good operational order that comply with the Road Traffic Acts 1961 as amended, thereby minimising any emissions that arise.
- When stationary, delivery and onsite vehicles will be required to turn off engines.
- Waste material will be transferred to a licensed/permitted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal.
- The MRF facility will be local to the Site to reduce the emissions associated with vehicle movements.

10.3.3.1.3 Residual Effect

Based on the above, the impact on air quality from exhaust emissions during the operational phase is a long-term, imperceptible, negative effect.

10.3.3.1.4 Significance of Effects

The effects on air quality from exhaust emissions arising during the operational phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.3.2 Dust Emissions: Proposed Project Infrastructure

10.3.3.2.1 Pre-Mitigation Impact

As discussed above in Section 10.3.3.1, the operational phase of the Proposed Project will generate additional traffic to the area in the form of LGVs 1-2 visits per day and on occasion, daily LGVs and HGVs for short periods if maintenance or component replacement is required. This additional traffic may give rise to dust emissions. This will be a long-term imperceptible negative impact on air quality, which is not significant, due to dust emissions.

The proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation will be operated and maintained by ESB and/or EirGrid. It is anticipated that substation operators will visit the Site 1-2 times per day in LGVs but on occasion, HGVs may be required to visit the Site for maintenance/substation component replacement. On occasion, the removal of hydrocarbons (transformer oil) and waste from substation welfare facilities will be removed from the Site by a licenced waste disposal company. This additional traffic may give rise to dust emissions. This will be a long-term imperceptible negative impact on air quality due to dust emissions.

10.3.3.2.2 Mitigation Measures

- Any vehicles or plant brought onsite during the operational phase will be maintained in good operational order that comply with the Road Traffic Acts 1961 as amended, thereby minimising any dust emissions that arise.
- Waste material will be transferred to a licensed /permitted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) by a fully licensed waste contractor where the waste will be sorted into individual waste streams for recycling, recovery or disposal.
- The MRF facility will be local to the site to reduce the emissions associated with vehicle movements.

10.3.3.2.3 Residual Effect

Based on the above, the residual effect on air quality from dust emissions during the operational phase is a long-term imperceptible negative effect.

10.3.3.2.4 Significance of Effects

The effects on air quality from dust emissions arising during the operational phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.3.3 Overall Effect on Air Quality

10.3.3.3.1 Pre-Mitigation Impact

Although a long-term imperceptible negative effect on air quality is expected during the operational phase due to exhaust and dust emissions from maintenance vehicles, there will be no net carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from operation of the Proposed Project. By providing an alternative to electricity derived from coal, oil or gas-fired power stations, the Proposed Project will result in emission savings of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). The production of renewable energy from the Proposed Project will have a long-term moderate positive effect on air quality due to the offsetting of approximately 34, 791 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) per annum. Please see Section 11.4 of Chapter 11 Climate for further details on carbon displacement calculations.

10.3.3.3.2 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

10.3.3.3.3 **Residual Effect**

The overall effect will be a long-term moderate positive effect on air quality due to the offsetting of approximately 34,791 tCO₂eq per annum (see Chapter 11 for details), due to the provision of renewable energy in the range of approximately 49,056 Irish households with electricity per year.

10.3.3.3.4 **Significance of Effects**

The effects on overall improved air quality during the operational phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.3.4 **Human Health**

10.3.3.4.1 **Pre-Mitigation Effect**

Whilst the operational phases of the Proposed Project will give rise to minor increases in dust and vehicle emissions, the implementation of the mitigation measures discussed above, and good management practices can prevent or minimise potential effects off-site. Good management practice consists of good site design and layout, adopting appropriate working methods, choosing the right equipment and ensuring that the workforce understands the company's responsibilities and is familiar with good working practice and dust suppression techniques. The potential for health effects are considered negligible as the potential for both exhaust and dust emissions will be limited and controlled through site layout design and mitigation measures outlined in Sections 10.3.2.1 to 10.3.2.4.

Exposure to chemicals such as SO₂ and NO_x, Pb, benzene and O₃ are thought to be harmful to human health. The production of clean renewable energy from the Proposed Project will offset the emission of these harmful chemicals by fossil fuel powered sources of electricity and, therefore, will have a long term, moderate, positive impact on human health. Further information on the impact of the Proposed Project on human health is contained in Chapter 5: Population and Human Health.

10.3.3.4.2 **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation required.

10.3.3.4.3 **Residual Effect**

No residual effects.

10.3.3.4.4 **Significance of Effects**

The effects on human health arising from improved air quality during the operational phase of the Proposed Project are considered to be Not Significant.

10.3.4 **Decommissioning Phase**

The Proposed Project is seeking permission for an operational life of 35 years. The Proposed Turbines are expected to have a lifespan of approximately 35 years. Following the end of their life, the Proposed Turbines may be replaced with a new set of turbines, subject to planning permission being obtained, or the Proposed Project may be decommissioned fully. The proposed extension to the Slievecallan 110kV substation will remain in place as it will be under the ownership of the ESB and/or EirGrid.

A Decommissioning Plan is included as Appendix 4-6 of this EIAR for the decommissioning of the Proposed Project, the detail of which will be agreed with the local authority prior to any decommissioning. Any impact and consequential effect that occurs during the decommissioning phase are similar to that which occur during the construction phase, be it of less effect. The mitigation measures prescribed for the construction phase of the Proposed Project will be implemented during the decommissioning phase thereby minimising any potential effects. The potential for effects during the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Project has been fully assessed within this EIAR.

10.3.5 Cumulative Effects

The potential for impact between the Proposed Project, and other relevant developments has been carried out with the purpose of identifying what influence the Proposed Project will have on the surrounding environment when considered cumulatively and in combination with relevant existing permitted or proposed projects and plans in the vicinity of the Site, such as other wind energy developments, extractive industries, battery energy storage systems, forestry etc. Please see Section 2.9 of Chapter 2 Background to the Proposed Project for the cumulative assessment methodology used.

During the construction phase of the Proposed Project and the construction of other permitted or proposed projects and plans in the area (please see Section 2.9 in Chapter 2 and Appendix 2-3 of this EIAR), there will be exhaust emissions from construction plant and machinery and potential dust emissions associated with the construction activities. Potential significant effects due to dust and exhaust emissions, including NO_x and Fine Particulate matter (among others) could cumulatively cause potentially significant cumulative effects on sensitive receptors. The significance of these effects would be similar to those outlined in Section 10.3.2 to Section 10.3.4 above. It is assumed that the developers of all plans and projects in the area will or will continue to adhere to best practice guidance and mitigation measures which have been outlined in planning documentation submitted which will ensure no significant effects on air quality will take place on an individual and cumulative scale in conjunction with the Proposed Project.

However, once the mitigation proposals, as outlined in the above assessment are implemented during the construction phase of the Proposed Project, there will be no cumulative negative effect on air quality.

Exhaust and dust emissions during the operational phase of the Proposed Project will be minimal, relating to the use of maintenance machinery and vehicles onsite, and therefore there will be no measurable negative cumulative effect with other developments on air quality.

The nature of the Proposed Project is such that, once operational, it will have a long-term, moderate, positive impact on the air quality. There will be no measurable negative cumulative effect with other developments on air quality.

10.3.5.1 Construction Phase

10.3.5.1.1 Air Quality

During the construction phase of the Proposed Project and other permitted or proposed projects and plans in the area, there will be minor exhaust emissions from construction plant and machinery and potential dust emissions associated with the construction activities. However, once the mitigation proposals, as outlined in Sections 10.3.2.1 to 10.3.2.4 are implemented during the construction phase of the Proposed Project, there will be no cumulative negative effect on air quality.

As established in Section 10.3.2, there are short-term, slight to imperceptible, negative effects on air quality during the construction phase from:

- Exhaust emissions arising from the construction of Proposed Project infrastructure;

- Exhaust emissions arising from transit of vehicles to, from and within the Site;
- Dust Emissions arising from the construction of Proposed Project infrastructure; and,
- Dust emissions arising from the transit of vehicles to, from and within the Site.

Therefore, it is considered there will be no cumulative effects on air quality, should other proposed or consented plans and projects within the surrounding landscape be constructed in parallel with the Proposed Project.

10.3.5.2 Operational Phase

10.3.5.2.1 Air Quality

Exhaust emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) or dust emissions during the operational phase of the Proposed Project will be minimal, relating to the use of operation and maintenance vehicles onsite, and therefore there will be no measurable negative cumulative effect with other developments on air quality.

As established above in Section 10.3.3, there will be a long-term imperceptible negative effect on air quality due to:

- Exhaust and dust emissions from maintenance LGV vehicles visiting the site daily for site inspections; and,
- Increased exhaust and dust emissions on occasion due to more frequent LGV and HGV visits during component or substation infrastructure replacement.

It is similarly established in Section 10.3.3 that there will be an overall long-term moderate positive effect on air quality given:

- There will be no net carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from operation of the Proposed Project. By providing an alternative to electricity derived from coal, oil or gas-fired power stations, the Proposed Project will result in emission savings of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂).
- The production of renewable energy from the Proposed Project will have a long-term moderate positive effect on air quality due to the offsetting of approximately 34,791 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) per annum, or 1,217,690 tonnes of carbon dioxide over the proposed 35-year lifecycle of the Proposed Project.

It is therefore considered there will be no measurable negative cumulative effects on air quality should other proposed or consented plans and within the surrounding landscape be operational in parallel with the Proposed Project. However, once the Proposed Project is operational, there will be a long-term, moderate, positive impact on the air quality.

10.3.5.3 Decommissioning Phase

The works required during the decommissioning phase are described in Section 4.12 in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project. Any cumulative impact and consequential effect that occurs during the decommissioning phase are similar to that which occur during the construction phase, be it of less impact. The mitigation measures prescribed for the construction phase of the Proposed Project will be implemented during the decommissioning phase thereby minimising any potential cumulative effects.

10.3.6 EIA Classification Summary

Topic	Pre-Mitigation Effect	Mitigation Section Reference	Residual Effect	Significance
Construction Phase				
Exhaust Emissions: Construction of Proposed Project Infrastructure	Short-term, slight, negative effect	Section 10.3.2.1	Short-term, imperceptible, negative effect	Not Significant
Exhaust Emissions: Transportation to and from the Site	Short-term, slight, negative effect	Section 10.3.2.2	Short-term, imperceptible, negative effect	Not Significant
Dust Emissions: Construction of Proposed Project Infrastructure	Short term, slight, negative effect	Section 10.3.2.3	Short-term, slight, negative effect	Not Significant
Dust Emissions: Transport to and from the Site	Short term, slight, negative effect	Section 10.3.2.4	Short-term, imperceptible, negative effect	Not Significant
Operational Phase				
Exhaust Emissions: Proposed Project Infrastructure	Long term, imperceptible, negative effect	Section 10.3.3.1	Long term, imperceptible, negative effect	Not Significant
Exhaust Emissions: Transportation to and from the Site	Long term, imperceptible, negative effect	Section 10.3.3.2	Long term, imperceptible, negative effect	Not Significant
Operational Phase: Air Quality	Long-term moderate positive effect	N/A	Long-term moderate positive effect	Not Significant
Operational Phase: Human Health	Long term, moderate, positive impact	N/A	None	Not Significant
Decommissioning Phase				
Air Quality	Any impact and consequential effect that occurs during the decommissioning phase will be similar to that which occurs during the construction phase, however to a lesser extent and lesser duration, and the mitigation measures outlined in Section 10.3.2 will be implemented during the decommissioning phase also	10.3.2	N/A	N/A