

Chapter 2 Background to the Proposed Project

Slieveacurry Renewable
Energy Development,
Co. Clare

Environmental Impact Assessment
Report (EIAR)



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2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the EIAR presents the relevant energy and climate change related policy and targets along with the strategic, regional, and local planning policies relevant to the Proposed Project. It also summarises the EIA scoping exercise, the pre-planning and community consultation undertaken, as well as the planning history and the cumulative impact assessment process undertaken in relation to the Proposed Project.

This chapter should be read in should be read in conjunction with the Planning Report which accompanies the planning application.

The Proposed Project, known as ‘Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development’ is being brought forward in response to local, regional, national and European policy regarding Ireland’s transition to a low-carbon economy, associated climate change policy objectives and to reduce Ireland’s dependence on imported fossil fuels for the production of electricity.

As detailed in Section 1.1.2 of Chapter 1; Introduction, of this EIAR the various project components are described and assessed using the following references: ‘Proposed Project’, ‘Proposed Wind Farm Site’, ‘Proposed Grid Connection Site’, ‘Proposed Turbines’, ‘Proposed Enhancement Site’ and the ‘Site’. A detailed description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project, of this EIAR.

As the anticipated installed capacity of the Proposed Project is c. 54MW, and as this is above the Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) threshold of 50MW, the application for the Proposed Project will be made to the An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) under Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (“the Planning Act”). It is intended that the Proposed Turbines will connect to the national electricity grid at the existing Knockalassa 110kV substation. With regards the proposed extension to the existing Knockalassa 110kV substation, it has been determined by ACP that the works do not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development (decision ABP-308005-19 refers).

2.1.1 Statement of Authority

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 15 years in preparing Background and Planning Policy Context Chapters for a range of projects, including multiple large scale wind energy development.

This chapter was led by Ronan Dunne of MKO with review from Sean McCarthy. Ronan Dunne is a Project Planner with MKO with over 3 years of experience in private practice. Ronan holds a BSc (Hons) in City Planning and Environmental Policy, and a MSc (Hons) in Urban and Regional Planning from University College Dublin where he focused his studies on wind energy development. Since joining MKO, Ronan has been involved in a range of infrastructure projects, including onshore and offshore wind, solar, battery storage and grid infrastructure developments. In his role as a Project Planner, Ronan works with multidisciplinary teams including members from MKO’s Environmental, Ecological and Ornithological departments as well as sub-contractors from various fields in the develop/deliver reports to facilitate the planning process. Through his professional and academic experience, Ronan has gained skills in renewable energy planning, Environmental Impact Assessment, strategic and spatial planning, development management, planning appeals, condition compliance, and project management.

Sean McCarthy is a Project Director in the Planning Team at MKO with over 10 years of experience in both private practice and local authorities. Sean holds a BSc. (Hons) in Property Studies from ATU and a Masters in Regional & Urban Planning for Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. Prior to taking up his position with McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan in September 2015, Sean worked as a Planning Officer with the Western Isles Council in Scotland in the UK and prior to that worked as a Graduate Planner with Tipperary County Council. Sean is a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute with extensive experience in residential, commercial, renewable energy, industrial, quarries and healthcare development projects. Sean has been involved in complex and large-scale development projects from inception through to planning permission both as a project manager and working as part of wider design teams. Sean has extensive experience in working on Strategic Housing Development Projects, Large Scale Residential Development Projects and EIAR projects. Within MKO, Sean plays a large role in the management of staff and works as part of a large multi-disciplinary team to produce planning applications.

2.1.2 Renewable Energy Resources

Renewable energy resources are constantly replenished through the cycles of nature, unlike fossil fuels, which are finite resources that are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive to extract. Renewable energy resources offer sustainable alternatives to our dependency on fossil fuels as well as a means of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and opportunities to reduce our reliance on imported fuels.

A gradual shift towards increasing Ireland's use of renewable energy is no longer viable. There is an urgency now to ensure real changes occur without delay. Renewable energy development is recognised as a vital component of Ireland's strategy to tackle the challenges of combating climate change and ensuring a secure supply of energy. Ireland is heavily dependent on the importation of fossil fuels to meet its energy needs. In 2024, 79.5% of Ireland's energy was imported from abroad, far higher than the European Union (EU) 2023 average of 58.3%¹. This high dependency on energy imports is highly risky, and Ireland is currently extremely vulnerable both in terms of meeting future energy needs and ensuring price stability. As such, expanding indigenous renewable energy supply is critical for energy security and price stability. The provision of the Proposed Project would aid in achieving the shift to decarbonising the electricity sector and energy security in Ireland.

2.1.3 Need for the Proposed Project

Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 sets ambitious yet essential targets for renewable energy, including 9GW of onshore wind capacity by 2030 –with at least 6GW to be delivered by 2025– and an 80% share of renewable electricity by the same year. However, multiple assessments, including the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) Annual Review 2025 and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions projections², confirm that Ireland is not on track to meet these targets. Significant gaps remain in renewable energy deployment, particularly in grid capacity expansion, as well as onshore and offshore wind energy development, while continued reliance on fossil fuels threatens national and EU climate commitments.

Failure to meet binding EU targets will expose Ireland to financial penalties, increased carbon credit costs, and continued dependence on fossil fuel imports - posing serious risks to energy security and economic stability. Furthermore, Ireland's national interest, as outlined in Section 143(1) of the Act requires the rapid expansion of renewable energy, making this a matter of strategic economic and social importance.

Every viable renewable energy project plays a crucial role in meeting Ireland's climate targets. The approval of well-planned, appropriately located renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed

¹ *Energy in Ireland - 2025 Report* (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, December 2025)

² *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2024-2050* (Environmental Protection Agency, May 2025)

Project is not just beneficial, it is imperative. Without decisive action to facilitate renewable energy deployment, Ireland risks missing national and EU commitments, incurring financial penalties, and undermining energy security.

Please see the accompanying Planning Report and Section 1.6 of Chapter 1 of this EIAR: Introduction for further information on the need for the Proposed Project.

2.2

Climate Change Policy and Targets

International and national policy consistently identifies the need to reduce GHG emissions and stresses the importance of reducing global warming. The context of international policy has altered over the last 30-years from being of a warning nature to the current, almost universally accepted belief, that there is a climate change emergency occurring both within Ireland and at a broader global scale. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Sixth Assessment Report³ published in 2021 provides a stark assessment of global climate change and presents evidence that climate changes will increase in all regions of the globe over the coming decades and that much of the damage caused by climate change up to this point is now likely irreversible, such as the rise in sea levels over the course of the 21st century.

The Synthesis Report⁴ of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report published in March 2023 summarises the state of knowledge of climate change, its widespread impacts and risks. The Synthesis Report states that '*continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, global monsoon precipitation, and very wet and very dry weather and climate events and seasons*'. The IPCC's projections are evident in extreme climate events occurring across the world.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation's (WMO) '*State of the Global Climate Report 2024*' published in March 2025⁵, atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide in 2023 reached the highest levels in the last 800,000 years. These levels continued to increase in 2024. The report also states that the year 2024 was the warmest year on observational record, with temperatures exceeding 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels⁶.

"*The European State of the Climate Report 2024*" produced by WMO and European Union⁷ indicated that:

- Global average values of surface air and sea surface temperatures have increased significantly since the pre-industrial era, by around 1.3° C to 1.4° C and 1° C, respectively.
- Since 1999, an average sea level rise of around 3.7mm globally and 2mm-4mm in the European region has been observed.
- A record increase in carbon dioxide (+2.4 ppm) and methane (+12 ppb) has been observed since 2020.
- Glaciers in Scandinavia and Svalbard recorded the highest annual rates of mass loss.
- In 2024, Europe experiences the most widespread flooding since 2013.

"*The Annual Climate Statement for 2025*" produced by MET Eireann⁸, also gives depicts a clear long-term warming trend in Ireland's climate, characterised by record-high annual and seasonal temperatures, increasing frequency of extreme weather events, and persistent above-average rainfall. The Statement indicates that:

³ *Climate Change 2021 'The Physical Science Basis' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, August 2021)*

⁴ *Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023)*

⁵ *State of the Global Climate 2024 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2025)*

⁶ *State of the Global Climate 2024 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2025)*

⁷ *The European State of the Climate Report 2024 (World Meteorological Organization and European Union, April 2025)*

⁸ *Annual Climate Statement for 2025 (MET Eireann, January 2026)* <https://www.met.ie/annual-climate-statement-for-2025>

- The average annual air temperature for Ireland in 2025 was 11.14 °C, which is 1.59° C above the 1961-1990 long-term average (LTA) or 0.97° C above the most recent 1991-2020 LTA.
- 2025 was the second warmest year on record, which is only slightly behind the warmest year in 2023 (11.21 °C).
- The last 4 years (2022-2025) were the 4 warmest years on record with 2024 and 2007 tying for 4th warmest, and seven of the top ten warmest years have occurred since 2005.
- The coldest year on record was in 1919 with 8.73 °C, of the top ten coldest years – none have occurred since 2000.
- Provisionally rainfall data suggests 2025 was the 15th wettest year since 1941, 104% of the 1991-2020 LTA, with observed average of 1,338.7 mm.

The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report does not, however, conclude that a climate catastrophe is inevitable, but rather, there remains a 'narrow path' to determine the future course of climate, mainly by cutting emissions down to net zero. The Proposed Project will contribute to the decarbonisation of the energy sector and reduce harmful emissions. In this regard, it is compliant with national and international climate change policy and targets.

2.2.1 International Climate Policy

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

In 1992, countries joined an international treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as a framework for international efforts to combat the challenge posed by climate change. The UNFCCC seeks to limit average global temperature increases and the resulting climate change. In addition, the UNFCCC seeks to cope with impacts that are already inevitable. It recognises that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The framework set no binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms. Instead, the Framework outlines how specific international treaties (called "protocols" or "Agreements") may be negotiated to set binding limits on greenhouse gases.

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol operationalises the UNFCCC by committing industrialised countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce GHG emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. Ireland is a Party to the Kyoto Protocol, which came into effect in 2005, and as a result of which, emission reduction targets agreed by developed countries are now binding.

In Doha, Qatar, on 8th December 2012, the "Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol" was adopted. The amendment includes:

- New commitments for Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period from 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2020;
- A revised list of greenhouse gases (GHG) to be reported on by Parties in the second commitment period; and
- Amendments to several articles of the Kyoto Protocol which specifically referenced issues pertaining to the first commitment period and which needed to be updated for the second commitment period.

Under the protocol, countries must meet their targets primarily through national measures, although market-based mechanisms (such as international emissions trading) can also be utilised. An annual Conference of Parties (COP) has been established building upon the Protocol, with the Paris Agreement (COP21) shifting the focus to all countries not just developed nations.

COP21 Paris Agreement

COP21 was the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC. Every year since 1995 (excluding 2020 due to COVID-19), the COP has gathered the 196 Parties (195 countries and the European Union) that have ratified the Convention in a different country, to evaluate its implementation and negotiate new commitments. COP21 was organised by the United Nations in Paris and held from 30th November to 12th December 2015. COP21 closed with the adoption of the first international climate agreement (concluded by 195 countries and applicable to all). The 12-page text, made up of a preamble and 29 articles, provides for a limitation of the global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and **to limit the increase to 1.5°C**. It is flexible and takes into account the needs and capacities of each country. The IPCC's 6th Assessment Report (2021) further collaborates this need to limit any increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C, stating that (underlined for emphasis),

“Humanity has emitted 2,560 billion equivalent tons of CO₂ since 1750, and we only have a budget of 500 more if we want to limit warming to 1.5°C.”

By following a trajectory of very low GHG emissions (SSP1-1.9), the threshold of 1.5°C will be reached in the short term, between 2021 and 2040, before being very slightly exceeded (1.6°C anticipated over the period 2041-2060) then respected in the long term (1.4°C anticipated over the period 2081-2100).

“Everything is not lost, but we must pursue the Paris Agreement’s most ambitious goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C.”

An article published by the IPCC on the 6th October 2018 titled ‘*Global Warming of 1.5°C*’, notes the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways; in the context of mitigation pathways, strengthening of the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. This special report is part of an invitation contained in the Decision of the 21st Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to adopt the Paris Agreement and provides an update on the impact of climate change if emissions are not reduced.

COP25 Madrid

COP25, the 25th session of the COP, was held between the 2nd and 13th of December 2019 in Madrid. The conference was characterised by repeated warnings from civil society (National Government Organisations and corporates) on emerging evidence and scientific consensus on climate change risk. Specifically, it was noted that there are only c. ‘*10 years left before the opportunity of limiting global warming to 1.5°C is no longer feasible*’. As such, the only remaining approach to limiting rising global temperatures is a ‘*7.6% reduction of global GHG emissions every year between 2020 and 2030, and to reach net zero emissions by 2050*’.

However, consensus was not achieved between States on finalising the operating rules of the Paris Agreement and to ensure that it became operational by 2020. Three issues which emerged between States from the COP25 are summarised below:

- There was no uniform consensus between States to raise countries’ climate ambitions, e.g. to make increased commitments in light of growing climate change data. Some States were opposed to imposing any obligation on countries to submit enhanced pledges next year, arguing it should be each country’s own decision. All states were required to submit a review of their commitments for COP26 in 2020. At the current level of climate targets, within a decade, the objective of the Paris Agreement will no longer be achievable;
- There was no agreement on finalising Article 6, the foundations for international cooperation to combat climate change. The aim was to establish the rules for new international mechanisms for financing and transferring GHG emission reductions; and

- There was no agreement on financing (Green Climate Fund); specifically, relating to both loss and damage caused by climate change.

Despite the lack of consensus on the above challenges, the COP25 did achieve more limited success with regard to the introduction of the “*San Jose Principles for High Ambition and Integrity of International Carbon Markets*”, which sets out the framework on which a robust carbon market should be built. These principles include, but are not limited to:

- Ensures environmental integrity and enables the highest possible mitigation ambition;
- Delivers an overall mitigation in global emissions, moving beyond zero-sum offsetting approaches to help accelerate the reduction of global GHG emissions;
- Prohibits the use of pre-2020 units, Kyoto units and allowances, and any underlying reductions toward Paris Agreement and other international goals; and,
- Ensures that double counting is avoided and that all use of markets toward international climate goals is subject to corresponding adjustments.

These principles received backing from 23 EU nations, including Ireland, as well as countries in Latin America, 5 Pacific islands, and 2 Caribbean nations.

COP26 Glasgow

COP26 took place in Glasgow, Scotland between the 31st of October and 12th November 2021. The summit was centred around the fact that “*climate change is the greatest risk facing us all.*”

The key items COP26 seeks to achieve are:

- Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach;
- Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats;
- Mobilise finance; and
- Work together to deliver.

All world leaders at the summit confirmed the need to urgently address the gaps in ambition and work together to achieve climate action. The summit highlighted that the Paris Agreement is working, with leaders outlining national targets and efforts to further reduce emissions. There was a clear commitment to working together to achieve climate aims, with significant announcements including:

- Over 40 leaders joined the Breakthrough Agenda, a 10-year plan to work together to create green jobs and growth globally, making clean technologies and solutions the most affordable, accessible and attractive option before 2030 – beginning with power, road transport, steel, hydrogen and agriculture.
- Over 120 countries covering more than 90% of the world’s forests endorsed the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests & Land Use committing to work collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, backed by the biggest ever commitment of public funds for forest conservation and a global roadmap to make 75% of forest commodity supply chains sustainable.
- A Just Energy Transition Partnership was announced to support South Africa’s decarbonisation efforts; a powerful example of collaboration between an emerging economy and international partners.
- The launch of the Global Methane Pledge saw over 100 countries committing collectively to reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030.

COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh

COP27 took place in Sharm el-Sheikh from the 6th of November to the 20th of November 2022. COP27 centred around three major topics:

- Closing the emissions gap to keep 1.5° C alive
- Loss and Damage
- Climate Finance

COP27 officially ended on the 18th of November, but due to the nature of negotiations an outcome text and the final press conference was not held until November 20th. The first outcomes of the negotiations of the COP27 agenda were seen in the first draft document. After further discussion, a consolidated final document was produced and, while it removed much of the vague wording of the first draft, it also removed some critical key points, particularly in relation to the strengthening of actions required by developed nations. The most significant outcomes from COP 27 are outlined below:

- **Phase down/out language:** The final agreement was delayed due to the stance of China and India, among others, who were not comfortable with the *'phase out'* of coal wording in the draft text. This led to the watering down of this commitment to a *'phase down'* of coal use. The hope was that COP27 would work to include further language on coal and fossil fuel reduction efforts. However, the wider commitment to phase out all fossil fuels, led by India, and backed by the US and the EU, was taken out and can be marked as the biggest disappointment of COP27.
- **1.5° C Pathway:** The 1.5° C warming limit has been retained and reassurances have been made that there is no room for backsliding;
- **Climate Finance & Loss and Damage:** There has been the launch of an initiative by the V20 and G7 known as the Global Shield Against Climate Risk (GSACR). The intention of this initiative has been framed almost as an insurance policy backed by the World Bank to prepare and protect those most vulnerable to climate change disasters.

COP28 Dubai

COP28 took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates was held from the 30th of November until the 13th December 2023. The Conference recognised the urgent need to reduce GHG emissions and emphasised the importance of mitigating climate change. The agreement reached at the COP provided a significant boost to renewable energy industries and set the stage for countries to prioritise clean and sustainable energy generation. By committing to this transition, the international community took a crucial step towards addressing climate change and creating a more sustainable future. Key actions arising from COP28 include:

- Adoption of enhanced climate commitments and targets by participating countries, aimed at limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- Development of mechanisms and strategies for implementing these commitments, including the mobilisation of financial resources to support developing nations in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- Advancing the implementation of the Paris Agreement, with a focus on transparency, accountability, and reporting of progress.
- Accelerating the global transition to clean, renewable energy sources and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies.
- Promoting nature-based solutions and conservation efforts to mitigate climate change and preserve biodiversity.
- Addressing the impacts of climate change, such as adaptation measures for vulnerable communities and sectors.
- Collaborating on international climate finance mechanisms, carbon pricing, and technology transfer to support climate action globally.
- Strengthening international partnerships and cooperation to foster shared responsibility and collective action in addressing climate change.

The final COP28 text includes a pledge whereby signatory countries commit to work together to triple the world’s installed renewable energy generation capacity to at least 11,000GW by 2030, taking into consideration different starting points and national circumstances.

COP29 Baku

COP29 took place in Baku, Azerbaijan between the 11th and 22nd of November 2024. There was a central focus on climate financing with agreements being reached on tripling finance to developing countries to help them protect their people and economies from climate-related disasters and also sharing the benefits of the boom in renewable energy. Key actions arising from COP29 include:

- Launch of the COP29 Global Energy Storage and Grids Pledge which commits signatories to a collective goal of deploying 1,500GW of energy storage globally by 2030.
- COP29 Green Energy Pledge: Green Energy Zones and Corridors which promotes the connection of green energy zones and corridors to communities in need through the development of intraregional and interregional interconnected electricity grids.
- Call to action for an equitable and renewable energy transition and increased renewable energy capacity globally.

Progress was also made on carbon markets and how they will operate under the Paris Agreement. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement allows countries to trade carbon credits, which are produced through reducing GHG emissions, to support other countries to meet their climate goals. Country-to-country trading and a carbon crediting mechanism have been made fully operational through agreements at COP29.

COP30 Belém

COP30 took place in Belém, Brazil between the 10th and 21st of November 2025, marking the first UN climate summit hosted within the Amazon region. It was framed as the “Implementation COP”, progressing the post-Paris Agreement framework from pledges to delivery after the first Global Stocktake (GST-1). Key actions arising from COP30 include:

- Launch of the ‘Global Implementation Accelerator’, a voluntary initiative designed to support rapid, high-impact interventions. It creates a structured space for countries to receive technical support, identify barriers, and coordinate investment strategies. Its remit covers a wide spectrum of mitigation and adaptation priority areas, including renewable energy deployment, battery storage, methane reduction, digital grid management, and crucial nature-based interventions.
- Through the Belém Package, Parties committed to accelerating “*zero- and low-emission technologies*” in hard-to-abate sectors such as industry, transport and power.
- COP 30’s redefined Action Agenda included 117 ‘Plans to Accelerate Solutions’ (PAS) across sectors, many of which target low-carbon energy, industrial decarbonization, and clean system deployment.
- COP30 set a long-term ambition to mobilise USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035 for climate action. This finance is intended to help scale clean energy infrastructure (such as renewables, storage and grid infrastructure), support adaptation, and enable just transitions.

COP30 made strong progress on tools, mechanisms and political momentum for scaling renewable energy, improving efficiency and enabling just transitions. However, the inability to deliver a clear, binding fossil fuel phase-out remains a major barrier to aligning global energy systems with the 1.5°C pathway.

European Green Deal – European Climate Law (2021)

The European Green Deal, initially introduced by the European Commission in December 2019, sets out the ‘blueprint’ for a transformational change of the 27-country bloc from a high- to a low-carbon economy, without reducing prosperity and while improving people’s quality of life, through cleaner air and water, better health and a thriving natural world.

The European Green Deal is intended to work through a framework of regulation and legislation setting clear overarching targets, e.g. a bloc-wide goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and a 55% cut in emissions by 2030 (compared with 1990 levels). This is a substantial increase compared to the existing target, upwards from the previous target of at least 40% (2030 Climate & Energy Framework), and furthermore, these targets demonstrate the ambition necessary to keep the global temperature increase to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5°C as per the Paris Agreement. With regard to the energy sector, the European Green Deal focuses on 3 no. key principles for the clean energy transition, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance the quality of life for citizens:

1. *Ensuring a secure and affordable EU energy supply;*
2. *Developing a fully integrated, interconnected and digitalised EU energy market; and*
3. *Prioritising energy efficiency, improving the energy performance of our buildings and developing a power sector based largely on renewable sources (e.g. the subject development)*

The European Climate Law (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament, as amended) entered into force on 29th July 2021. The European Climate Law writes into law the objectives set out above in the European Green Deal for Europe’s economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050. Climate neutrality by 2050 means achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for EU countries as a whole, mainly by cutting emissions, investing in green technologies and protecting the natural environment. The Climate Law includes:

- A legal objective for the Union to reach climate neutrality by 2050;
- An ambitious 2030 climate target of at least 55% reduction of net emissions of greenhouse gases as compared to 1990, with clarity on the contribution of emission reductions and removals;
- A process for setting a 2040 climate target, taking into account an indicative greenhouse gas budget for 2030-2050 to be published by the Commission;
- A commitment to negative emissions after 2050;
- The establishment of European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change, that will provide independent scientific advice;
- Stronger provisions on adaptation to climate change; and
- Strong coherence across Union policies with the climate neutrality objective

The law aims to ensure that all EU policies contribute to this goal and that all sectors of the economy and society play their part. All 27 no. EU Member States have committed to turning the EU into the first climate neutral continent by 2050. One third of the 1.8 trillion-euro investments from the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan, and the EU’s seven-year budget, will finance the European Green Deal. On 14th July 2021, the European Commission adopted a set of proposals⁹ to make the EU’s climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

Achieving these emission reductions in the next decade which is crucial to Europe becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050 would clearly be assisted by the Proposed Project.

⁹ ‘Fit for 55’: delivering the EU’s 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality (July 2021).

2.2.1.1 Project Compliance with International Climate Policy

Based on a review of key international climate policy documents, it is clear that the Proposed Project will contribute to reducing dependence on fossil fuels for electricity generation. This shift supports the objectives of the UNFCCC to limit global temperature increases driven by climate change, as well as the goals set out in the Kyoto Protocol and various COP agreements outlined above. By making a just transition to more renewable forms of electricity generation, the level of carbon emissions will drop as our reliance on non-renewable forms of energy lessen.

The Proposed Project is also considered to be in line with the European Green Deal, and European Climate Law, which also aims to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. These goals will not be met if projects, such as Proposed Project, are not implemented. The construction of this renewable energy development would also aid in ensuring energy security within the EU which is a target of the European Green Deal. As wind is an indigenous and abundant resource, countries can tap into their own wind potential, reducing the vulnerability to price fluctuations and geopolitical risks associated with fossil fuel imports.

2.2.2 National Climate Policy

Programme for Government – Securing’s Ireland’s Future (January 2025)

The Programme for Government 2025 – Securing Ireland’s Future (January 2025) places specific emphasis on climate change, recognising that time is critical in addressing the climate crisis. The Programme states that the Government is committed to taking *“decisive action to radically reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and to achieve a 51% reduction in emissions from 2018 to 2030, and to achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050”*.

The Programme states that the next ten years are a critical period in addressing the climate crisis, and therefore, a deliberate and swift approach to reducing more than half of Ireland’s carbon emissions over the course of the decade (2020-2030) must be implemented. The programme states that the Government are committed to reducing GHG emissions by an average 7% per annum over the next decade in a push to achieve net-zero emissions by the year 2050.

With regard to renewable energy generation, the Programme notes that the Government is committed to the rapid decarbonisation of the energy sector. The Programme states the Government is *“is committed to achieving 80% of Ireland’s electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030”* through the acceleration of the renewable energy deployment.

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) (‘the Climate Act’) legally binds Ireland to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade.

The Climate Act provides the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate commitments and to become a leader in addressing climate change. As indicated by the premise of the legislation, the reduction of emissions is a key proponent of the Climate Act and incorporates the following key provisions:

- Embeds the process of setting binding and ambitious emissions-reductions targets in law;
- Provides for a national climate objective, which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy;

- Provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030, relative to a baseline of 2018;
- The role of the CCAC has been strengthened;
- The government must adopt carbon budgets that are consistent with the Paris Agreement and other international obligations;
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan which must be updated annually; and
- Local Authorities must prepare individual Climate Action Plans which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and will be updated every five years.

Section 15(1) below places an obligation on public bodies to exercise their functions in favour of climate concerns when making decisions, unless it is objectively impracticable to do so.

“A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with:

- a) the most recent approved climate action plan,*
- a) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,*
- b) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,*
- c) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and*
- d) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.”*

The implications for public bodies in exercising their functions in accordance with Section 15 of the Climate Act has been scrutinised by the Irish legal system. The Supreme Court judgment on 4th February 2026 (*Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v An Coimisiún Pleanála [2026] IESC 5*) confirmed that consenting authorities must make decisions in a manner ‘consistent with’ the approved national long term climate action strategy, ‘in so far as is practicable’. This means that departure from climate objectives is permissible but only where there are genuine practical difficulties that make full alignment impracticable.

Consenting Authorities, in making a decision on this application, must meaningfully engage with national climate objectives when exercising their decision-making functions. Consenting Authorities must also ensure that their decision on an application falls within a spectrum of outcomes which can be considered to be consistent with, in so far as practicable, national climate objectives.

Carbon Budgets

To achieve the 51% emissions reduction target, the Climate Act, requires the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) to recommend a proposed programme of economy-wide 5-year Carbon Budgets to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications. The first national carbon budget programme proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council, approved by Government and adopted by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022 comprises three successive 5-year carbon budgets¹⁰. The total emissions allowed under each budget are shown in Table 2-1 below.

Table 2-1: Carbon Budgets of the Climate Change Advisory Council

	2021 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2035
	Carbon Budget 1	Carbon Budget 2	Provisional Carbon Budget 3
	All Gases		

¹⁰ Carbon Budget Technical Report (Climate Change Advisory Council, October 2021)

Carbon Budget (Mt CO ₂ eq)	295	200	151
Annual Average Percentage Change in Emissions	-4.8%	-8.3%	-3.5%
The Figures are consistent with emissions in 2018 of 68.3 Mt CO ₂ eq reducing to 33.55 Mt CO ₂ eq in 2030 thus allowing compliance with the 51% emissions reduction target by 2030.			

Section 6C of the Climate Act provides that the Minister shall prepare, within the limits of the carbon budget, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings. These ceilings set out the maximum amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are permitted in each sector. The Government approved Sectoral Emissions Ceilings on 28th July 2022. The electricity sector was allocated a sectoral ceiling of 40 Mt CO₂ eq for the first budget (2021-2025) and has sectoral ceiling of 20 Mt CO₂ eq for the second budget period (2026-2030). In 2024, electricity sector emissions were 6.95 Mt CO₂ eq. With 85.2% of the budget already used, an emissions reduction of 14.8% was required for 2025 to stay within the first 2021-25 budget¹¹.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported in May 2025¹² that the first two carbon budgets (2021-2030) – which aim to support the achievement of the 51% emissions reduction target - would not be met. In regard to the first carbon budget, it is projected that it will be exceeded by 12 Mt CO₂eq in the ‘With Existing Measures (WEM)’ scenario and by 8 Mt CO₂eq in the ‘With Additional Measures (WAM)’ scenario. Section 6D – paragraph 5 – of the Climate Act states that non-achievement of the first carbon budget would see the excess emissions carried forward into the second budget period and the second carbon budget would be reduced by that amount. If this occurs this would make achievement of the second budget substantially more difficult. Taking into account the projected excess from the first carbon budget, it is projected that the second carbon budget will be exceeded by 114 MtCO₂eq in the WEM scenario and 77 MtCO₂eq in the WAM. As a result of this, it is stated that “far higher emissions cuts will be needed to comply with Budget period 3 and subsequent carbon budgets”.

According to the EPA, Ireland is not on track to meet the targets for the first and second carbon budget periods, as set out by the CCAC. As such, it is imperative that projects such as the Proposed Project are consented as they have the potential to decrease carbon emissions through the provisions of renewable electricity to the national grid, thus decreasing the country’s reliance on carbon-emitting fossil fuels.

Report of the Joint Committee on Climate Action - Climate Change: A Cross-Party Consensus for Action (2019)

In March 2019, the Joint Committee on Climate Action Change released a report detailing a cross-party consensus for action. In 2019 there was already concern that Ireland’s performance in meeting international and national obligations was poor, and concern remained regarding emission projections the ability to meeting 2030 targets under relevant EU Directives.

The report states that the transformation of Ireland’s energy system will be required for the country to meet its future 2030 and 2050 GHG emission targets; specifically, in order to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, Ireland will be required to fully decarbonise electricity generation. Therefore, there is a clear incentive for developing, and safeguarding, Ireland’s capacity in renewable energies and renewable electricity.

¹¹ Ireland’s Final Greenhouse Gas Emissions (EPA, March 2026) <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/irelands-provisional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-1990-2024.php>

¹² Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024-2050 (Environmental Protection Agency, May 2025)

Given the clear concern that the county’s future emissions targets may be missed, it is crucial that projects, such as the Proposed Project, which can contribute in a meaningful manner towards climate change targets, and which can be provided without significant adverse environmental effects arising, are brought forward and supported with favourable consideration through the planning system and constructed.

Climate Action Plan 2023

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (‘CAP 23’) was published in December 2022 by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. This outlines the actions required up to 2035 and beyond to meet Ireland’s commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. CAP 23 sets out a roadmap to deliver on Ireland’s climate ambition and is aligned to ensure that Ireland achieves its legally binding target (the Climate Act) of net-zero GHG emissions no later than 2050.

A target aims for a reduction in emissions of 51% over the period 2018 to 2030 and in doing so, prevent/mitigate the potentially devastating consequences of climate change on Ireland’s environment, society, economy and natural resources. CAP 23 states that to do so, Ireland must harness the untapped indigenous renewable resources and has a target of achieving 80% of energy being produced from renewable sources by 2030 (unchanged from the previous Climate Action Plan, 2022) with a target of 9GW of that being produced by onshore wind. Measures set out in CAP 23 to achieve these targets include to ‘accelerate and increase the deployment of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels’ (Section 12.1.4 of CAP 23). It is clear from the message and ambition of CAP 23 that the drive to deploy renewable energy projects such as the Proposed Project in Ireland are critical to achieving the aims and objectives of CAP 23 including the 9GW of onshore wind energy by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

“Achieving these ambitions will require a coordinated effort across Ireland and every economic sector will be involved. It requires no less than a national transformation over the coming years in how we work, travel, heat our homes, source our energy and use our land”.

Decarbonisation of the electricity sector is, as noted in CAP 23, key to the decarbonisation of other sectors who will depend on electrification including transport, heating and industry. The increase in the portion of renewable electricity of 80% by 2030 will come in part from a targeted 9GW of onshore wind. CAP 23 notes:

“Achieving further emissions reductions between now and 2030 requires a major step up in how we accelerate and increase the deployment of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels, deliver a flexible system to support renewables, and manage electricity demand”.

Chapter 12 of CAP 23 sets out the state of play, targets and actions for the decarbonisation of the electricity sector. Carbon emissions from electricity have fallen by 45% between 2005 and 2020, falling by 19% between 2005-2012 and by 33% between 2012 and 2020. This trend is largely due to the availability of renewable energy generated electricity (a sixfold increase between 2005 and 2020) and an associated reduction in the use of carbon heavy fuels such as peat and coal.

Due to the scale of the challenge, and the recognition of central role of the electricity sector in achieving sector wide targets, the electricity sector has been allocated the smallest carbon budget and will require the steepest carbon emissions decline of all sectors – namely a reduction in carbon emission by -75% relative to 2018 baseline. The measures set out for electricity sector include inter alia:

- Reduce annual CO₂eq. emissions from the sector to 3 MtCO₂eq by 2031 (75% reduction compared to 2018);
- Accelerate and increase the deployment of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels;
- Accelerate the delivery of onshore wind, offshore wind and solar through a competitive framework to reach 80% of electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030;

- Target 6GW of onshore wind and to 5 GW of solar by 2025;
- Target 9 GW onshore wind, 8 GW Solar and at least 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030;
- Align the relevant constituent elements of the planning and permitting system to support accelerated renewable energy development, supported by national policy and associated methodologies to inform regional and local planning policies, noting that Development Plans are obliged to set out objectives to facilitate energy infrastructure.

Having regard to the targets and measures set out above, it is evident that there is strong policy support for the provision of additional renewable energy generators, such as the Proposed Project.

Climate Action Plan 2024

The Climate Action Plan 2024 ('CAP 24') builds on CAP 23 by refining and updating the status of the actions required to deliver the decarbonisation required under the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. The renewable electricity generation targets are unchanged from the CAP 23 (9GW of onshore wind & 80% renewable electricity share).

CAP 24 includes the latest trends in the electricity sector:

- In 2022, renewable generation accounted for 38.6% of electricity, an increase from 35% in 2021.
- Electricity accounted for 14.4% of Ireland's GHG emissions in 2022.
- To meet the first carbon budget the electricity sector requires a decarbonisation rate of 17.3% per annum in the period 2023-2025. For context, the decarbonisation rate between 2018 and 2022 was 1.4% per annum.

CAP 24 acknowledges the urgency and importance of the decarbonising the electricity sector. The plan states:

“Given that the programme of large-scale offshore wind deployment is expected to be realised towards end decade, deployment rates for onshore renewables will need to increase to match demand growth to ensure we keep electricity emissions within range of the carbon budgets. This requires a major upscaling and accelerating in current deployment of renewables, particularly onshore wind.”

The scale of the challenge is apparent when quantified:

*“As an example, the historical average deployment of onshore wind installed capacity connected between 2008 and 2020 inclusive was ~280 MW per annum from 19 projects (with an annual maximum of 612 MW). To achieve the necessary emissions abatement, an approximately eight-times increase of renewable energy deployment to **2.3 GW annually** would be needed between **2024 and 2030.**” (emphasis added)*

CAP 24 identifies the alignment of local and national policy as a critical to accelerate renewable energy rollout.

“greater alignment between local plans and renewable energy targets at national and regional level to support investment in and delivery of onshore wind and solar renewable energy is also critical”.

Having regard to the targets and measures set out above, it is clear that there is strong policy support for the provision of additional renewable energy generators, such as the Proposed Project.

Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025 ('CAP 25') represents the third statutory update to Ireland's climate roadmap under the Climate Act. Building on the foundations laid by previous plans, CAP 25 refines and strengthens the strategies necessary to deliver Ireland's legally binding carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. It sets out a well-defined course of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to achieve climate neutrality no later than 2050.

A cornerstone of CAP 25 is the decarbonisation of Ireland's electricity system through a substantial increase in renewable energy generation. The plan reaffirms ambitious targets for renewable electricity share which includes 80% by 2030, and 50% by 2025. This is to be achieved through the accelerated deployment of onshore wind (6GW by 2025; 9GW by 2030), offshore wind (at least 5GW by 2030), and solar energy (up to 5GW by 2025; 8GW by 2030).

CAP 25 recognizes that "A renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland's plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness. This requires the accelerated and increased deployment of new renewable electricity generation capacity and related infrastructure."

CAP 25 also lays emphasis on the importance of aligning local and national policies to accelerate the rollout of renewable energy.:

"The Planning and Development Act, 2024, the Renewable Energy Directive and the revised NPF together will ensure greater alignment between national, regional, and local authority levels to deliver on the renewable electricity ambition."

The draft first revision of the NPF includes policy support for the development and upgrading of electricity grid infrastructure, the delivery of renewable electricity generation capacity, and the introduction of regional renewable electricity capacity allocations for each of the three Regional Assemblies by 2030"

CAP 25 sets out a clear roadmap to achieve Ireland's climate ambition, including specific 2030 targets and decarbonisation objectives. This roadmap provides strong policy support for the provision of additional renewable energy generators, such as the Proposed Project, to reach these targets.

2.2.2.1 Project Compliance with National Climate Policy

The Proposed Project, consisting of 9 no. wind turbines and associated infrastructure aligns with the national climate policy objectives. The Proposed Project will make a significant contribution to achieving the CAP 25 target of 9GW of onshore wind energy by the year 2030. Furthermore, the Proposed Project will aid Ireland in adhering to, or limiting the exceedance of, the country's carbon budgets. The proposed renewable energy project will help Ireland address the challenge of decarbonising electricity generation as well as address the country's over-dependence on imported fossil fuels. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Project is in compliance with climate policy.

2.3 Renewable Energy Policy and Targets

This section of the EIAR provides a breakdown of international and national renewable energy policy with regard to the Proposed Project. Under this section, the following are discussed:

- EU Renewable Energy Policy
- National Renewable Energy Policy

National policy has developed in line with European and international policies, targets and commitments, in that the importance and urgency of decarbonising the energy generation sector, the economy in general and reducing GHG emissions has become increasingly more apparent.

The Proposed Project complies with the nationally stated need to provide a greater amount of renewable energy onto the national grid and will further reduce the national reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation.

2.3.1 European Renewable Energy Policy

2.3.1.1 Renewable Energy Directive

The Renewable Energy Directive ('RED') is the EU legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting clean energy cooperation across EU countries. Since the introduction of the RED in 2009, it has undergone several revisions, the most recent of which occurred in November 2023. Since its adoption in 2009, the share of renewable energy sources in energy consumption has increased from 12.5% in 2010 to 24.5% in 2023¹³. Of the 27 EU member states the lowest proportions of renewables were recorded in Ireland (13.1%). Crucially, the RED sets the overall target for renewable energy in the EU.

RED I – 2009

Renewable Energy Directive 2009 (RED I - the original RED) (2009/28/EC), adopted in 2009, set binding targets for EU member states to achieve a 20% share of renewable energy in final energy consumption by 2020. It established a framework for national renewable energy action plans, sustainability criteria for biofuels and bioliquids, and a system of guarantees of origin for renewable energy.

RED II – 2018

RED II, the first major amendment to the RED, (2018/2001/EU) entered into force in December 2018, as part of the Clean Energy for all Europeans packages. In RED II, the overall EU target for Renewable Energy Sources consumption by 2030 was raised to 32%.

RED III – 2023

In November 2023, a revision of the Renewable Energy Directive¹⁴ (RED III), came into force. RED III increases the EU wide renewable energy target from 32% set under the previous revision of the directive to at 42.5%, with an ambition to reach 45% by 2030. The increase was proposed under the publication of REPowerEU plan in May 2022. The Directive also introduces specific targets for Member States in the industry, transport, and building (district heating and cooling) sectors.

Under Article 15c of RED III, EU member states must identify 'Renewables Acceleration Areas' of where projects will undergo a simplified and fast-track procedure. RED III defines the timeframes for the permit-granting procedure. In Renewables Acceleration Areas, the permit-granting procedure shall not exceed 12 months for renewable energy projects and outside renewables acceleration areas the permit granting procedure shall not exceed two years.

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20241219.3>

¹⁴ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast)

Central to REDIII is the presumption that renewable energy development must be considered to be **in the overriding public interest** when addressing competing interests under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC) and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). The recognition of renewable energy projects being in the ‘*overriding public interest*’ was originally introduced under Article 3(1) of emergency Regulation 2022/2577 of 22nd December 2022 named ‘*laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy*’ in response to REPowerEU which found that the permitting process is the biggest bottleneck for deploying wind at scale, with approximately 80 GW of wind power capacity stuck in permitting procedures across Europe.

Article 16f of RED III states:

“By 21 February 2024, until climate neutrality is achieved, Member States shall ensure that, in the permit granting procedure, the planning, construction and operation of renewable energy plants, the connection of such plants to the grid, the related grid itself, and storage assets are presumed as being in the overriding public interest and serving public health and safety when balancing legal interests in individual cases for the purposes of Article 6(4) and Article 16(1), point (c), of Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 4(7) of Directive 2000/60/EC and Article 9(1), point (a), of Directive 2009/147/EC.”

There is an 18-month period to transpose most of the directive's provisions into national law which ended on the 1st of July 2025, with a shorter deadline of July 2024 for some of the provisions related to permitting for renewables. In September 2024, the EU Commission opened infringement proceedings against Ireland for failures in relation to the transposition of permitting procedures. On the 17th of July 2025, the EU decided to send a ‘reasoned opinion’, a formal request to comply with EU law, giving Ireland two months to respond and take the necessary measures to complete the transposition. In August 2025, some of the provisions of RED III were transposed into national law through the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 274 of 2025). This legislation was adopted for the purpose of giving effect to Articles 15e(5), 16, 16b, 16c(2), 16d, 16e and 16f of the RED III Directive.

The legislation introduces new decision timelines based on a “completeness check” (ss.34E, 37JB, 295B): 52 weeks for new wind farms, 30 weeks for repowering projects, and one to two years for IROPI cases (two years for projects over 150 kW, one year for projects under 150 kW or repowering). Importantly, renewable energy developments, including related grid and storage infrastructure, are now presumed to be in the **overriding public interest**.

Energy Roadmap 2050

The Energy Roadmap 2050 was published by the European Commission in 2011 and analyses the transition of the contemporary energy system in ways that would be compatible with the GHG reductions targets as set out in the RED (Directive 2009/28/EC) while also increasing competitiveness and security of supply. To achieve these targets and objectives, the Roadmap states that significant investments will need to be made in new low-carbon technologies and renewable energy, e.g. wind energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and grid infrastructure. Five main routes are identified to achieving a more sustainable, competitive and secure energy system in 2050:

- High Energy Efficiency;
- Diversified Supply Technologies;
- High Renewable Energy Sources;
- Nuclear energy; and
- Carbon capture and storage.

The analysis found that decarbonising the energy system is technically and economically feasible. The Roadmap notes that all scenarios show the biggest share of energy supply technologies in 2050 comes from renewables.

As such, a major prerequisite for a more sustainable and secure energy system is a higher share of renewable energy up to and beyond 2030 to 2050. Each of the scenarios assumes in the analysis that increasing the share of renewable energy and using energy more efficiently are crucial, irrespective of the particular energy mix chosen.

The Proposed Project will aid in achieving the scenarios set out in the Energy Roadmap 2050, by increasing the share of renewable energy being produced onto the national grid thereby reducing the reliance on more unsustainable forms of electricity production.

European Green Deal

The European Green Deal, further detailed in Section 2.2.1 above, was launched in December 2019 and proposes to increase the binding target of renewable sources in the EU's energy mix from 32% to 40% by 2030 via amendments to the RED as per the 'Fit for 55' package (July 2021)¹⁵. The European Green Deal recognises that 75% of the EU's GHG emissions stems from the production and use of energy, hence emphasising the need to decarbonise the EU's energy system. The deal identifies three key principles to support a clean energy transition:

1. *Ensuring a secure and affordable EU energy supply.*
2. *Developing a fully integrated, interconnected, and digitalised EU energy market.*
3. *Prioritising energy efficiency, improving the energy performance of our buildings and developing a power sector based largely on renewable sources¹⁶.*

REPowerEU

REPowerEU, launched in May 2022 by the European Commission, proposes an outline of a plan to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels, starting with gas, due to the high and volatile energy prices, and security of supply concerns following Russia's unprecedented military attack on Ukraine. Currently, the EU imports 90% of its gas consumption, with Russia providing around 45% of those inputs. Russia also accounts for around 25% of oil and 45% of coal imports. Phasing out dependence on fossil fuels can be done well before 2030, increasing the resilience of the EU-wide energy system based on two pillars:

1. *Diversifying gas supplies, via higher Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and pipeline imports of biomethane and renewable hydrogen production and imports from non-Russian suppliers.*
2. *Reducing faster the use of fossil fuels by boosting energy efficiency, increasing renewables and addressing infrastructure bottlenecks.*

In September 2023, the European Parliament agreed to update the RED. The updates including raising the share of renewables in the EU's final energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030 with Member States encouraged to achieve 45% and a more efficient approval procedure for deploying renewables in Europe. In addition, as a part of the REPowerEU Plan, the European Commission has proposed a series of additional targeted amendments to the renewable energy directive to reflect the ongoing changes in the energy landscape and the continued invasion of Ukraine. This will make the sector more efficient and reach the set goals faster.

In addition, the REPowerEU Plan highlights the overriding public interest in achieving renewable energy targets. The REPowerEU Plan states that: "***the revised proposal operationalises the principle of renewable energy as an overriding public interest***, introduces the designation of ***'go-to' areas*** and other ways to shorten and simplify permitting while also minimising potential risks and negative impacts on the environment." This highlights the importance of public interest and incentive to achieve the

¹⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

¹⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/energy-and-green-deal_en

renewable energy target, highlighting the importance of appropriate designation of sufficient areas for wind energy development by local authorities within the EU.

AccelerateEU - Energy Union

In a communication dated 22nd April 2026, the European Commission addressed the vulnerability of Europe’s dependency on fossil fuel imports as evident by the rising energy costs. The AccelerateEU plan is a comprehensive plan of actions and measures by the European Commission in response to the energy crisis triggered by the conflict in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The plan consists of five key areas of action which aim to support member states in providing short-term relief to energy consumers most affected by the crisis. It also sets an accelerated path to achieving a more resilient energy system in the medium and long term:

- greater coordination between Member States and with international partners;
- supporting Member States to protect consumers, including industry, from price shocks, and simultaneously helping them in the energy transition;
- accelerating the shift to homegrown clean energy and electrification;
- stepping up our energy system; and
- boosting investment by mobilising both public and private funding for the energy transition.

The communication places a strong emphasis on the need to “*accelerate electrification, the roll out of additional domestic clean energy production and the energy transition*”. The following is also stated in relation to renewable energy developments:

“By taking immediate action to generate strong results in the medium-term, Member States can replace significant volumes of oil and gas by accelerating the shift to clean, homegrown and abundant energy, including through electrification, deployment of solar thermal and geothermal energies as well as other renewable energy, nuclear, biomethane, sustainable biofuels and hydrogen.

For example, the capacity of renewable electricity deployed per year should increase to 100 GW/year, including through new large-scale renewable energy projects and accelerated solar deployment, which can deliver rapid results. To deliver at pace, it is therefore critical to streamline national permitting regimes in line with the requirements set in EU legislation. Beyond transposition efforts, frontloading implementation can deliver concrete results. By the end of 2026, the length of permitting procedures should decrease across Europe to maximum two years and each Member State should unlock the potential of renewable acceleration areas by establishing at least one.”

Ultimately, the European Commission asserts the need to accelerate the transition to a renewable led energy sector in the interest of preserving the overall socio-economic and energy security in the EU.

2.3.1.1 Project Compliance with EU Policy

The Proposed Project is fully aligned with, and supported by, relevant EU energy and climate policy. It will contribute to the objectives of the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, including the EU-wide binding targets of achieving at least 27% renewable energy and 27% energy efficiency by 2030. Additionally, the Proposed Project supports the increased ambition to raise the share of renewables in the EU’s energy mix from 32% to a minimum of 42.5% by 2030.

The EU Energy Roadmap 2050, which outlines pathways to meet long-term climate and energy goals, highlights that all projected scenarios foresee renewables as the dominant source of energy supply by 2050. As such, the Proposed Project aligns with this long-term vision.

Regulation 2022/2577 introduced significant measures to facilitate the acceleration of the deployment of renewable energy, including an obligation on member states to prioritise the roll out of renewable energy projects when balancing competing legal interests. Furthermore, the REPowerEU plan, which aims to enhance energy security and accelerate the integration of renewables into the EU grid, explicitly calls for faster permitting processes for renewable projects and improvements to grid infrastructure. The Proposed Project directly supports these objectives and is therefore considered to be strongly underpinned by current EU energy policy.

The provisions of Regulation 2022/2577, the REPowerEU and the AccelerateEU Plans are applicable to the current planning application and EIAR, and they provide further justification for granting consent for the Proposed Project.

2.3.2

National Renewable Energy Policy

White Paper on 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future' 2015 – 2030

In May 2014, the Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland was launched which marked the start of a public consultation process on the future of Ireland's energy policy over the medium to long-term. The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (now the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications or DECC) acknowledged that energy is an integral part of Ireland's economic and social landscape and that *“a secure, sustainable and competitive energy sector is central to Ireland's ability to attract and retain Foreign Direct Investment and sustain Irish enterprise. The three key pillars of energy policy are to focus on security, sustainability and competitiveness”*.

Following an extensive consultation process, the Government published the White Paper *‘Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015–2030’* in December 2015. This document, produced by the then Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), provides an updated energy policy framework to guide Ireland's transition to a low-carbon energy system through 2030 and towards 2050. It outlines the Energy Vision 2050, which targets an 80–95% reduction in energy sector GHG emissions (compared to 1990 levels), primarily through increased renewable electricity generation and greater use of electricity and bioenergy in heating and transport.

The policy framework was developed to guide policy and actions that the Irish Government intends to take in the energy sector up to 2030 and also reaching out to 2050 to ensure a low carbon future that maintains Ireland's competitiveness and ensures a supply of affordable energy. The Energy Vision 2050, as established in the White Paper, describes a *‘radical transformation’* of Ireland's energy system which will result in GHG emissions from the energy sector reducing by between 80% and 95%, compared to 1990 levels. The paper advises that a range of policy measures will be employed to achieve this vision with emphasis on the generation of electricity from renewable sources, which there are plentiful indigenous supplies and increasing the use of electricity and bio energy to heat homes and fuel transport.

The White Paper highlights onshore wind as Ireland's leading and most cost-effective renewable resource, noting its high efficiency and lower support costs due to the country's strong wind profile. It also recognises the growing competitiveness of solar technology and its potential to enhance energy security, meet renewable targets, and stimulate economic growth.

“Onshore wind continues to be the main contributor (18.2% of total generation and 81% of RESE in 2014). It is a proven technology and Ireland's abundant wind resource means that a wind generator in Ireland generates more electricity than similar installations in other countries. This results in a lower cost of support.”

National Energy Security Framework

More recently, the National Energy Security Framework (NESF) (DECC, April 2022) highlights clearly the impacts the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting war has had on Europe's energy system. The resulting decision by the European Union to phase out the import of Russian gas, oil and coal has brought to the fore the importance of security of supply and how energy policy is designed for long-term resilience. It takes account of the need to decarbonise society and economy, to reduce Ireland's emissions by 51% over the decade to 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050. According to the SEAI's Energy in Ireland (2025) report, oil accounts for 49% of Ireland's primary energy requirement making it one of the highest rates of oil dependency in the EU. The International Energy Agency, of which Ireland is a member country, includes a 10-point plan to cut oil use which calls for an acceleration in the deployment of wind and solar projects. Ireland's response per the NESF is set out over three themes:

- Theme 1 – managing the impact on consumers and businesses
- Theme 2 – ensuring security of energy supply in the near-term
- Theme 3 – reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU

In relation to Theme 3, the NESF highlights that replacing fossil fuels with renewables, including wind energy, will be a focus area of work. The NESF calls for “*Supportive policies across Government and State agencies*” which “*can reduce barriers and fast track permitting for renewable energy generation projects. Similarly, renewable energy developers need to match this through taking a leadership role in delivering high quality applications to relevant consenting authorities, meeting project milestones on time and minimising delays.*” There are a number of ‘Responses’ set out in the NESF aimed at reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels and increasing indigenous renewable energy generation, including Response 25 which seeks the alignment of all elements of the planning system to support accelerated renewable energy development.

Having regard to the above, it is clear that the provision of additional renewable energy generation, such as the Proposed Project, is vital in helping to secure the State's energy supplies and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 – Energy Security Package

Published in November 2023, the energy security package titled ‘Energy Security in Ireland to 2030’ builds on the policies set out in the NESF. The energy security package is based on the recognition of the following fact:

“Ireland's future energy will be secure by moving from an oil-, peat-, coal- and gas-based energy system to an electricity-led system maximising our renewable energy potential, flexibility and being integrated into Europe's energy systems.”

The energy security package includes a range of measures to implement this approach by the prioritisation of the following:

1. *Reduced and Responsive Demand.*
2. *Renewables-Led System.*
3. *More Resilient Systems*
4. *Robust Risk Governance.*

Independent research undertaken as part of the package, McCarthy Report¹⁷, provides an analysis of developments in the electricity sector in Ireland. The McCarthy Report makes the following observation in relation to the consenting process:

“The problem of delays encountered by major infrastructure projects, including in the electricity system, due to planning and environmental consent issues was evident. They had been commented upon by the International Energy Agency in its 2019 review of Ireland which named planning delays as the principal challenge to delivery of policy for the sector.”

A key finding from the technical analysis conducted as part of the energy security package is the interdependence of energy security on two essential pillars: ‘harnessing our indigenous renewable energy resources at speed and at scale and the rapid electrification of energy demand’. As such, the energy security package provides additional measures to supplement the existing measures introduced under previously published government policy documents. The additional measure most relevant to the Proposed Project is as follows:

“Action 10: To implement Planning and Consenting System Reforms and provide greater certainty to the sector.”

The energy security package aims to ensure that the planning system is fully aligned and resourced to fully support accelerated renewable energy development. It also aims to ensure renewable energy projects are prioritised in line with the recast Renewable Energy Directive and REPowerEU.

The Proposed Project will significantly support the government's objectives in ensuring the State's energy security. The Proposed Project serves as a domestic renewable energy generator capable of providing clean electricity to the national electricity grid, contributing to a renewables-led system.

2.3.2.1 Project Compliance with National Renewable Energy Policy

The National Energy Security Framework outlines several steps to accelerate Ireland's shift to renewable energy initiatives. It is evident that the Proposed Project aligns with this framework by increasing the proportion of renewable energy on the national grid, thus expediting Ireland's transition to a low-carbon energy future.

2.4 Climate and Renewable Energy Target Progress

At a European level, the latest data shows that, as of 2024, 25.2% of energy came from renewable energy sources¹⁸. This represents an increase of 0.8% compared to 2023 levels. While progress is being made to increase the share of renewable energy, it is clear that all EU member states need to intensify their efforts to collectively comply with the target of 42.5% set in the latest revision of the renewable energy directive.

Of the 27 EU member states, Ireland had one of the lowest proportions of renewable energy at 16% in 2024¹⁹. It is evident that Ireland is not performing well when compared against our European counterparts and that urgent action is required to increase the overall share of renewable energy in our gross final energy consumption. When it comes to the share of renewable energy in electricity, Ireland does perform better generating 41.3% in 2024, but still below the EU average of 47.5%²⁰.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/276441/eb496e01-5c01-4594-af09-74342b4ac971.pdf#page=null>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Renewable_energy_2024_infographic.jpg

²⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics

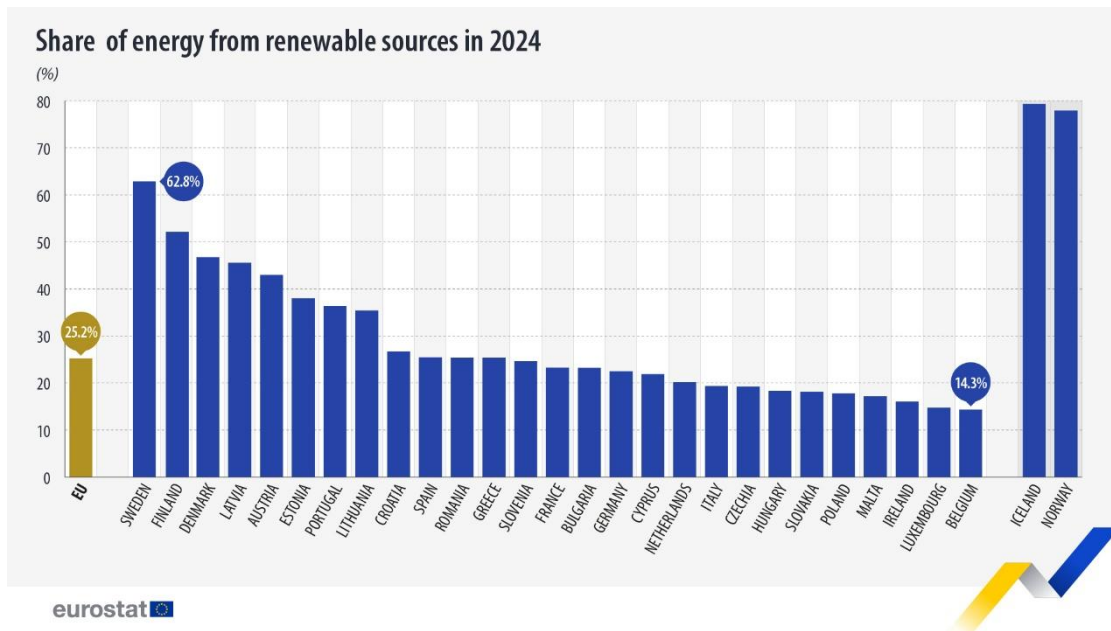


Figure 2-1: Overall share of energy from renewable sources (source: Eurostat)

Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024 – 2050 (May 2025)

The EPA published Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections and at the time of writing, the most recent report, *‘Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024-2055’* in May 2025. The report includes an assessment of Ireland’s progress towards achieving its emission reduction targets out to 2030 set under the EU Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR).

The EPA has produced two scenarios in preparing greenhouse gas emissions projections to 2050, a “With Existing Measures” (WEM) scenario and a “With Additional Measures” (WAM) scenario. These scenarios forecast Ireland’s GHG emissions in different ways. The WEM scenario assumes that no additional policies and measures, beyond those already in place by the end of 2023. This is the cut off point for which the latest GHG emission inventory data is available, known as the ‘base year’ for projections. The WAM scenario has a higher level of ambition and includes government policies and measures (at the time the Projections are compiled) to reduce emissions such as those in Ireland’s CAP 25.

The EPA Emission Projections Update notes the following key trends:

- Ireland is not on track to meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections which include the CAP 25 measures. GHG emissions are projected to be 9% to 23% lower by 2030 (compared to 2018), placing Ireland further from the 2030 National climate target when compared to previous assessments.
- Budget period 1, 2021-2025, of 295 Mt CO₂eq is projected to be exceeded by 8 to 12 Mt CO₂eq. Budget period 2, 2026-2030 of 200 Mt CO₂eq is also expected to be exceeded by a significant margin of 77 to 114 Mt CO₂eq (with carryover from Budget period 1).
- Ireland will not meet its non-Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) EU targets of a 42% emissions reduction by 2030 even with flexibilities applied. The assessment shows a reduction by 13% to 26% by 2030 with the use of flexibilities.
- Sectoral emissions ceilings for 2025 and 2030 are projected to be exceeded by the Buildings, Electricity, Industry and Transport sectors.
- Emissions from the Energy Industries sector are projected to decrease by between 59 and 68%. Renewable energy generation at the end of the decade is projected to range from 60 to 68% of electricity generation.

As decarbonising electricity generation will have a significant positive contribution in achieving Ireland's emissions it is clear that additional renewable energy production, such as that of the Proposed Project, must be encouraged and supported if carbon saving targets are to be met.

National Energy Projections (September 2025)

The National Energy Projections report, published by the SEAI in September 2025, sets out the most recent updates to Ireland's progress towards its binding European and National renewable energy targets.

In 2023 RED II set an EU wide target for overall RES of 32% RES in 2030. Member states set their national contributions to the EU-wide target, with Ireland setting its at 34.1% in 2030. RED III increased the binding EU-wide target for overall RES to at least 42.5% with Ireland subsequently increasing the target to 43% in 2030.

The decarbonisation of the electricity generation is critical considering the need to electrify other sectors such as heating and transport in order to achieve the sectoral decarbonisation targets. By 2030, renewable energy sources are anticipated to dominate electricity generation, particularly experiencing a significant surge later in the decade attributed to the integration of substantial offshore wind projects.

The most notable conclusion drawn from the Report is the significant gap between projections across both the WEM and WAM scenarios and the legally binding national and EU emission reductions targets. The Report states that even with full implementation of CAP 24, Ireland is projected to face significant gap in meeting many legally binding energy and climate obligations, including national carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings, and EU obligations on renewable energy, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions.

The SEAI projections explore the risk scenarios WEM and WAM, the aim being to address the gap between current policy trajectories and the most ambitious planned policies scenarios. The SEAI WEM and WAM scenario modelling considers the latest CAP published at the time of policy assumptions for the modelling scenarios (CAP 24).

The Report projects GHG emissions under the WEM and WAM scenarios. In the WEM scenario, total greenhouse gas emissions are expected to exceed the carbon budgets for CB1, CB2 and provisional CB3 in 2025, 2029 and 2031, respectively, with a cumulative exceedance of 23% by the end of 2030. In the WAM scenario, cumulative exceedance of 16% is projected by the end of 2030. The projected overall carbon budgets exceedance has reduced from the 2024 projections, though there are still significant risks that this could increase again subject to market changes and the pace of implementation of policy.

Energy in Ireland (December 2025)

In December 2025, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) released an annual publication '*Energy in Ireland*' report which looks at trends in national energy use and at the underlying driving forces, such as the economy and weather, and more recently the impacts of high energy prices. It also examines GHG emissions from energy use, energy security, cost competitiveness, and Ireland's progress towards EU renewable energy targets.

The Report identifies that Ireland's national energy-related emissions in 2024 were at their lowest level in over 30 years. Energy-related emissions in 2024 were 30.9MtCO₂eq, down 1.5% on 2023 levels. Energy-related emissions were 6.9MtCO₂eq in 2024 the lowest on record, down 8.3% from 2023 levels. The following are some of the key points, relating to renewable energy and energy emissions:

- 14.6% of Ireland's primary energy was renewable in 2024, the highest value to date.
- Ireland used 1.31 TWh more renewable energy in 2024 than in 2023.

- Ireland’s RES-Overall result is now above its 2020 16% baseline target, with a 2030 target of 43%.
- Ireland’s 2024 RES-Electricity result was 41.3%, up from 40.4% in 2023 – the highest value to date.
- Wind accounted for 4.59 MtCO₂eq or 62.2% of the total avoided GHG emissions in 2024.

Ireland’s installed wind capacity in 2024 was 4.94 GW, which indicates a 4.3% increase from the previous year. Ireland’s 2025 CAP target for installed wind capacity is 6 GW, and its 2030 CAP targets for onshore and offshore capacity are 9 GW and 5 GW, respectively. SEAI’s projections under the WAM scenario indicate a total installed capacity of 9.8 GW by the end of 2030. This WAM scenario is the most optimistic reporting scenario modelled, achieving 68% RES-E by 2030.

The Report states that over the last 10-years, Ireland has added wind capacity at an average rate of 0.27 GW per annum, although this has dropped to a rate of 0.16 GW over the last 5-years. To align to the pace of the WAM projections needed to deliver on the 80% RES-E target, the rollout of onshore wind capacity needs to return to the rate previously achieved between 2016 and 2019.

Figure 1.25 of the Report, copied below, illustrates the year-on-year increase in installed wind capacity required to align the pace of the WAM.

Figure 1.25: Year-to-year increases in installed wind capacity to 2024, and year-to-year increases in WAM capacity projections of capacity from 2025 to 2030

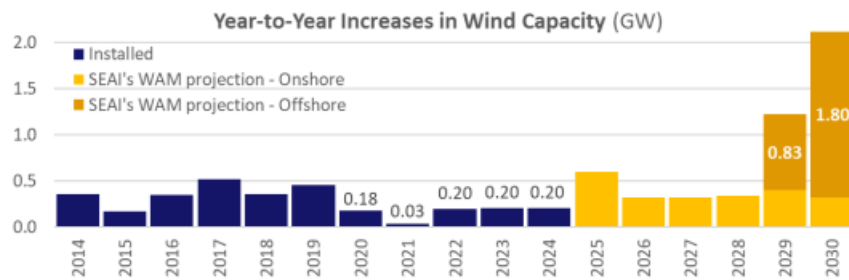


Figure 2.2: Ireland’s year-to-year increases in installed wind capacity required to align the pace of the WAM

The Report also identifies a plateauing of wind generation, which is the largest contributor to renewable electricity, over the last 5 years. For four of the last five years, Ireland’s wind generation has varied between 11.40 TWh and 11.87 TWh, which is only a ±2% variation. In contrast, wind generation in the preceding 5 years (2016 to 2020) showed an average annual increase of over 20%.

The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2025

The Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) open their ‘Annual Review 2025 - Summary for All’²¹ quite starkly,

“1. Ireland remains substantially off track in meeting its EU and national emissions reduction targets, with progress in the Agriculture and Transport sectors, which collectively account for approximately 55% of Irish emissions, proving particularly slow. The Government is urged to move from ambitious statements to implementing impactful and demonstrable actions that build momentum and public buy-in.

2. Failure to meet targets will potentially result in substantial compliance costs, estimated to be in the range of €8–26 billion, and a colossal missed opportunity to invest in Irish households,

²¹ <https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications/annualreviewandreport/CCAC-AR-2025-SfA-final.pdf>

communities and businesses – creating jobs, improving health and wellbeing, and protecting the most vulnerable in society.”

In addition, the standout recommendation from the CCAC is that “*The delay in transposing EU directives into law, particularly in relation to energy, is concerning given the urgent need to transition to a low-carbon energy system. The Council urges the Government to ensure full transposition of all climate- and energy related directives into law in advance of Ireland’s presidency of the Council of the European Union in July 2026.*”

The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2025 – Electricity

The CCAC published its annual review in April 2025 where it outlines detailed observations and recommendations for the Electricity sector in Ireland. This review emphasises the urgent need for Ireland to accelerate its transition to renewable energy to meet its 2030 electricity capacity targets and adhere to sectoral emissions ceilings. The CCAC states:

“To meet the carbon budgets, emissions from the Electricity sector will need to reach zero by the end of the 2030s. In 2024, electricity emissions fell by approximately 7% relative to 2023, reaching the lowest level since record-keeping began in 1990. This was driven by a continued decline in the use of coal for electricity generation, coupled with a notable rise in imported electricity for the second consecutive year. Renewable energy is still not being rolled out fast enough, and insufficient investment in the electricity grid means that some of the renewable energy we currently generate cannot be used. Emissions are currently projected to exceed the sectoral emissions ceiling, even in the most optimistic scenario.”

Key observations in relation to Renewable Electricity are outlined below:

- In 2024, 1.6 GW of onshore wind (0.7 GW) and solar (0.9 GW) projects received planning permission, but only 0.5 GW (0.2 GW wind, 0.3 GW solar) were connected, which is well below the 1.8 GW annual target needed to achieve 2030 targets.
- Grid constraints led to 1,266 GWh (10.1% of the total available wind energy) of wind and energy being curtailed.
- During 2024, an additional 0.5 GW (0.2 GW wind and 0.3 GW solar) of new utility scale renewable capacity was connected, representing a decrease compared with the 0.6 GW connected in 2023 and significantly below the 1.8 GW annual average increase in capacity that is required to meet 2030 targets.

Ireland’s Climate Change Assessment (January 2024)

In January 2024, the EPA published Ireland’s Climate Change Assessment (ICCA). This assessment provides a comprehensive overview and breakdown of the state of knowledge around key aspects of climate change with a focus on Ireland. The ICCA report is presented in four volumes:

- Volume 1: Climate Science – Ireland in a Changing World
- Volume 2: Achieving Climate Neutrality in 2050
- Volume 3: Being Prepared for Ireland’s Future
- Volume 4: Realising the Benefits of Transition and Transformation

The ICCA Synthesis Report states that having peaked in 2001, Ireland’s GHG emissions have reduced in all sectors except agriculture. However, Ireland currently emits more GHGs per person than the EU average. The ICCA Synthesis Report goes on to state that there has been an identified gap in policy that indicates that Ireland will not meet its statutory GHG emission targets. Achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 requires significant and unprecedented changes to Ireland’s energy system. Policies tailored to suit different stages of technology development are critical for achieving a net zero energy system. Established technologies, such as wind energy, solar photovoltaics and bioenergy will be

key in meeting short-term emission reduction targets (i.e. 2030), whereas offshore wind infrastructure is expected to be the backbone of future energy systems. This can only be achieved with appropriate support schemes, regulation and investments for synergistic growth of offshore wind and other renewable technologies.

In relation to Ireland’s target of achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and the role renewable energy will contribute to this; the ICCA Synthesis Report states the following:

“There are well-established ‘no-regret options’ that need to happen now, which can get Ireland most of the way to net zero carbon dioxide emissions. Beyond that, there are ‘future energy choices’ relating to the scale and magnitude of technologies that will assist in achieving Ireland statutory climate targets. Ireland’s no-regret options are demanding reduction (e.g. through energy efficiency and reduced consumption), electrification (e.g. electric vehicles and heat pumps), deployment of market-ready renewables (e.g. wind energy and solar photovoltaics) and low-carbon heating options (e.g. district heating); Irelands future choices include hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, nuclear energy and electro-fuels. Renewable energy can increasingly provide our future energy needs but will need to be complemented with carbon dioxide removals to achieve a net zero energy system in hard-to-abate sectors.”

2.5 Planning Policy Context

2.5.1 Introduction

This section of the EIAR provides the strategic planning context of the Proposed Project. As is examined below, the Proposed Project is in line with national, regional and local policies, frameworks, guidelines and plans. This section has been broken down to the following sections:

- National Policy Context
- Regional Policy Context
- Local Policy Context
- Other Relevant Material Considerations

As a renewable energy project, the Proposed Project is consistent with the overall national policy objectives to increase penetration and deployment of renewable energy resources and has been designed in the context of the relevant wind energy and other guidelines. The specific compliance with the National, Regional and Local/County Development Plan provisions is dealt with in detail in the sections below.

2.5.2 National Planning Policy Context

The Planning and Development Act 2024

The Planning and Development Act 2024 (the New Planning Act) was signed into law by the President on the 17th of October 2024, following its passage through both Houses of the Oireachtas. At the time of lodgement of this planning application, the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) remains in place until the New Planning Act is commenced by Ministerial Orders, with the Government indicating that this will be done on a phased basis.

The Government has approved an Implementation Plan for the New Planning Act, which sets out the schedule for its phased commencement. The Implementation Plan also outlines a series of initiatives aimed at supporting training and stakeholder engagement across the planning sector to ensure a smooth transition to the new legislative framework. Concurrently, work is ongoing to revise and update the supporting Regulations that will underpin the operation of the New Planning Act.

The planning application for the Proposed Project accounts for the latest commenced provisions of the New Planning Act at the time of submission.

National Planning Framework First Revision (2025)

On 8th April 2025, the Government approved the National Planning Framework First Revision (Revised NPF) which was subsequently passed through both Houses of the Oireachtas. The Revised NPF aims to address changes that have occurred in Ireland since 2018.

The Revised NPF provides an updated projection for the population of Ireland, with the population expected to increase to 6.1 million by 2040. This population growth will place further demand on both the built and natural environment, and subsequently, the services required to meet said demands. In order to strengthen and facilitate more environmentally focused planning at the local level, the Revised NPF states that future planning and development will need to:

“Tackle Ireland’s higher than average carbon-intensity per capita and enable a national transition to a competitive low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, through harnessing our country’s prodigious renewable energy potential.”

National Strategic Outcome 8 (*“Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society”*) notes that in creating Ireland’s future energy landscape, new energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary to enable a more distributed energy generation which connects established and emerging energy sources, i.e. renewables, to major sources of demand.

Chapter 9: Climate Transition and Our Environment, aims to address key national environmental challenges including the transition to a climate neutral economy, sustainable land management, renewable energy and resource efficiency. As per **NPO 70**, the Revised NPF highlights the importance of renewable energy infrastructure to achieve national climate action targets.

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

Regional Renewable Energy Capacity Allocations have been introduced under the Revised NPF. This was one of the key actions for CAP24 and is supported under CAP25. The Southern Region, in which the Proposed Project is located, is allocated a target of installing an **additional 978 MW of onshore wind energy by 2030**.

Under **NPO 74** Regional Assemblies are required to plan for the delivery of the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations outlined in the Revised NPF and identify allocations for each of the local authorities within their RSES. Furthermore, **NPO 75** requires Local Authorities to plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant RSES, through their City and County Development Plans. At the time of writing, no local Target Power Capacity allocations have been established, however it is clear from the regional allocation that the Southern Region is set to deliver a significant amount of onshore wind energy in the coming years.

The introduction of renewable energy targets represents a more active and prescriptive approach to land use planning for renewable energy development. The Revised NPF aligns the national target of 9GW of onshore wind energy with the policies and objectives of Local Authorities. In regard to this, it is clear that the provision of new renewable energy generation through the Proposed Project is in line with aims and objectives of the Revised NPF, which seeks to transition to a carbon neutral economy.

National Development Plan 2021-2030

The National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (NDP) was published on the 4th of October 2021 and sets out the major public investment projects identified by the Government which are to play a significant

role in addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by Ireland over the coming years such as housing, health, population growth, and most relevant to the Proposed Project, climate change.

Reflecting on the recent publication of the IPCC's 6th Assessment Report, the NDP notes that the Irish Government is fully committed to 'playing its part' to ensure that the worst climate change damage can be avoided, e.g. significant reductions in CO₂ and other GHG emissions as assisted by the achievement of both European and national renewable energy targets. Specifically, the NDP states that,

“The next 10 years are critical if we are to address the climate crisis and ensure a safe and bright future for the planet, and all of us on it.

The investment priorities included in this chapter [Ch. 13] must be delivered to meet the targets set out in the current and future Climate Action Plans, and to achieve our climate objectives. The investment priorities represent a decisive shift towards the achievement of a decarbonised society, demonstrating the Government's unequivocal commitment to securing a carbon neutral future.”

Notwithstanding this, the NDP acknowledges that it is not its role to set out a specific blueprint for the achievement of Ireland's climate targets; but as noted above, facilitate capital investment allocations for the climate and environmental strategic priorities.

One of the NDP's strategic climate priorities is the need for low-carbon, resilient electricity systems; specifically, the plan commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030. This is characterised by the NDP as an '*unprecedented commitment to the decarbonisation of electricity supplies*' which, is certainly ambitious and an explicit driver for the deployment of new renewable generators e.g. the Proposed Project, and the safeguarding / maintenance of existing assets. It is noted that the reliability of electricity supplies will also be strengthened through investment in the electricity transmission and distribution grid. The focus of investment in regulated network infrastructure is to contribute to a long-term, sustainable and competitive energy future for Ireland.

National Development Plan – 2025 Review

The National Development Plan Review 2025 sets out a comprehensive capital investment framework for the period 2026–2035, totalling €275.4 billion. Within this framework, wind energy is recognised as a key enabler of the State's legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030, including a 75% reduction in emissions from the electricity sector. To support the expansion of renewable electricity generation, the Government has allocated €3.5 billion in equity funding to ESB Networks and EirGrid to enhance grid transmission and distribution infrastructure, which will directly facilitate increased integration of wind energy developments such as the Proposed Project.

Under the National Development Plan Review 2025, the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment have been allocated €9.14 billion in capital funding for 2026 – 2030. This includes €3.5 billion in new equity to EirGrid and to ESB, a significant investment aimed at expanding Ireland's onshore and offshore electricity transmission and distribution network infrastructure. This investment aims to support Ireland's transition to a secure, sustainable, and affordable '*renewables-led energy system*'.

2.5.2.1 Project Compliance with the National Policy

With regard to the above, it is considered that the Proposed Project is in line with and supported by the NPF, Revised NPF, and the NDP.

The Revised NPF projects a population increase of approximately one million people by 2040 and therefore recognises the strain and demand this will put on Ireland's energy system. In order to ensure

Ireland delivers on our renewable energy and carbon emission reduction targets, the NPF recognises the need for increased renewable energy onto the national grid.

The NDP is clear in its priority to reach a low-carbon, climate resilient society over the lifetime of the NDP. The Proposed Project, if permitted, will provide clean, renewable electricity to the national grid, furthering development objectives of the NDP, namely the target to increase the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030.

This shift from fossil fuels is dependent upon schemes such as the one proposed to generate renewable energy. Given the projected population increase, it is considered that if the share of renewable energy onto the grid is not increased, Ireland will fail to reach the National and International targets on emission reductions. The addition of 9 no. wind turbines, with an estimated electricity generation capacity of c. 54MW, will contribute to Ireland's national targets and support the country in meeting its renewable energy and carbon emission reduction goals at the EU level.

2.5.3 Regional Policy

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The Proposed Project is located in County Clare, which falls within the administrative area of the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA). The SRA, established in 2015, is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland and is primarily focused on the preparation and implementation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES), integration of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), management of EU Operational Programmes, EU project participation, implementation of national economic policy, and working with the National Oversight and Audit Commission.

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the Project Ireland 2040 NPF and NDP and the economic policies and objectives of the Government. The RSES aims to build on the region's strengths and potential to become a more prosperous, sustainable, climate resilient and attractive region for the benefit of all its people up to 2040 and beyond.

“The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the ten local authorities in the Region.”

The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019 (superseded by CAP 25) by playing its part in the development of wind, wave, tidal, solar, hydro, and bio energy. The ambition is reflected in the Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) which sets out the key regional policies for the 12-year lifetime of the plan. RPO 87: Low Carbon Future, states:

“The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019 by playing its part in the development of renewable energy. This is clearly reflected in the Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) which sets out the key regional policies for the lifetime of the plan, from 2018 – 2030”

With regards to climate change the RSES notes that:

“All global risks of climate change are risks to the Southern Region. The Southern Regional Assembly is committed to plays its role to put in place a high-level regional strategy for transition to a low carbon economy and society across all sectors.”

Chapter 5 of the RSES details the regions plans and objectives with regards to the environment. The RSES focus includes the following areas:

- > Renewable Energy
- > Energy Efficiency
- > Sustainable transport
- > Agriculture
- > Forestry
- > Climate resilience

The following Regional Policy Objectives have been listed with regards to climate change:

- > **RPO 87 Low Carbon Energy Future:** The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Government’s policy under Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30 and Climate Action Plan 2019. It is an objective to promote change across business, public and residential sectors to achieve reduced GHG emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture
- > **RPO 88 National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework:** The RSES is committed to the implementation of the National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland to enable the Region transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. It is an objective to ensure effective co-ordination of climate action with the Climate Action Regional Offices and local authorities to implement the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework in the development and implementation of long-term solutions and extensive adaptation measures.
- > **RPO 90 Regional Decarbonisation:** It is an objective to develop a Regional Decarbonisation Plan to provide a framework for action on decarbonisation across all sectors. The Regional Decarbonisation Plan shall include existing and future targets for each sector and shall be prepared with key stakeholders, including the Climate Action Regional Offices, and shall identify the scope and role of the Plan, the requirements for SEA, AA and the timescale for its preparation. Implementation mechanisms and monitoring structures for the Plan should also be established.

The region has abundant resources of wind, solar and ocean energy to provide a significant amount of renewable energy. Over the next ten years there is a predicted growth in electricity demand to align with CAP25 and as such, additional generating capacity will be required to accommodate this demand. The RSES recognises wind energy as a major source of renewable energy generation capable of providing clean electricity to the grid and meeting the county’s energy needs.

“The RSES recognises and supports the many opportunities for wind as a major source of renewable energy. Opportunities for both commercial and community wind energy projects should be harnessed, having regard to the requirements of DoHPLG Guidelines on Wind Energy. Wind Energy technology has an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland.”

The following Regional Policy Objectives have been listed with regard to renewable energy:

- > **RPO 95 Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation:** It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation.
- > **RPO 96 Integrating Renewable Energy Sources:** It is an objective to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.

- **RPO 97 Power Stations and Renewable Energy:** *It is an objective to support the sustainable technology upgrading and conversion of power stations in the Region to increase capacity for use of energy efficient and renewable energy sources.*
- **RPO 98 Regional Renewable Energy Strategy:** *It is an objective to support the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy with relevant stakeholders.*
- **RPO 99 Renewable Wind Energy:** *It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.*
- **RPO 100 Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection:** *It is an objective to support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.*

Regional Policy Objectives 95 – 100 reflect the strong support for renewable energy throughout the RSES. The Proposed Project will continue to generate renewable electricity contributing to the objectives of the RSES. The Proposed Project is therefore in alignment with policy at a regional level.

The RSES also acknowledges the need to develop a strong grid to support the integration of renewable energy on to the national electricity grid. The RSES sets out a number of RPOs relating to infrastructure, relevant to the Proposed Project, which indicate the Region’s continued support and investment in renewable energy generation:

- **RPO 220 Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM):** *It is an objective to support the Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) as a key priority for the Region and seek the sustainable development and reinforcement of the energy grid including grid connections, transboundary networks into and through the Region and between all adjacent Regions subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning processes.*
- **RPO 221 Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission Network:** *a. Local Authority City and County Development Plans shall support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation and demand centres such as data centres which can be serviced with a renewable energy source (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to spatially suitable locations to ensure efficient use of the existing transmission network; b. The RSES supports strengthened and sustainable local/community renewable energy networks, micro renewable generation, climate smart countryside projects and connections from such initiatives to the grid. The potential for sustainable local/community energy projects and micro generation to both mitigate climate change and to reduce fuel poverty is also supported, The RSES supports the Southern Region as a Carbon Neutral Energy Region.*
- **RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure:** *It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid’s (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity.*

2.5.3.1 Project Compliance with Regional Planning Policy

The SRA states that its region has a crucial role to play in Ireland’s transition to a low carbon future. At present, the RSES notes that the Region has more renewable energy generation than demand which indicates a strategic role for the region’s energy assets in national energy generation and transmission

with projected increases in population and economic growth, the demand for energy is set to increase in the coming years.

It is considered that the provision of the Proposed Project would facilitate this just transition and is particularly in line with the RPO objectives as outlined above. In the region, a noticeable trend has emerged to recognise and take advantage of emerging opportunities related to the shift towards a decarbonised economy, particularly in the realm of renewable energy generation and therefore the Proposed Project is considered to be in line with Regional Policy.

2.5.4 Local Policy Context

2.5.4.1 Clare County Council

The Clare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (CDP) was formally adopted by Elected Members of Clare County Council (CCC) on March 9th, 2023. The CDP officially came into effect on April 20th, 2023, 6 weeks later and provides overall guidance for the proper planning and development of County Clare through the use of supporting policies and objectives.

The CDP recognises its position in supporting the delivery of meaningful action on climate change. Climate action is thus an important strategic objective of the CDP, with aims to achieve decarbonisation and climate resilience as a county. This has been reflected in Chapter 2 - Climate Action, in addition to other climate action and renewable energy related objectives introduced throughout the Plan.

The significance of climate change and the need for continued support / investment within renewable energy generation as part of the county’s adaption strategy is captured within the objectives of the CDP’s Climate Action Chapter:

“Goal 1: A county that is resilient to climate change, plans for and adapts to climate change and flood risk, is the national leader in renewable energy generation, facilitates a low carbon future, supports energy efficiency and conservation and enables the decarbonisation of our lifestyles and economy.”

Table 2-2 below sets out the relevant policies and objectives within the CDP which currently support the continued investment in renewable/ wind energy generation in County Clare.

Table 2-2: Renewable Energy Policy – Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

Policy	Description	Proposed Compliance
<p>CDP2.1 Climate Action</p>	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To support the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan 2023 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (and any subsequent versions thereof), and to work with the Regional Climate Action Offices to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county;</i> <i>b) To adopt sustainable planning strategies through integrating land use and transportation and by facilitating mixed use developments as a means of supporting national targets of climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, and reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions; and;</i> <i>c) To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of climate change on both the local economy and communities in the county, and the ways communities can increase their response and grow their resilience to these impacts.</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project is in compliance with CDP2.1 Climate Action as it supports the implementation of the CAP and will generate clean, renewable electricity, which can be integrated into the grid to meet the increasing demand for electricity across various sectors.</p> <p>By supplying sustainable renewable energy, the Proposed Project will reduce the need for non-renewable sources like coal and oil, helping to transition toward cleaner energy usage in the county</p>
<p>CDP2.2 Climate Change Mitigation, Adaption and resilience</p>	<p><i>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To support the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 (and any subsequent versions);</i> <i>b) To promote measures that build resilience to climate change to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature based solutions and emergency planning;</i> <i>c) To raise awareness of issues relating to climate change and climate change adaptation during the lifetime of this plan;</i> <i>d) To liaise, collaborate and work in partnership with the relevant government approved sectors in relation to initiatives and activities across the county;</i> <i>e) To support the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy and its aspiration for Ennis to become Irelands first climate adaptive town; and</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project supports the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, and the more recent Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, in promoting measures that build resilience to climate change to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning.</p> <p>By providing a potential installed capacity of c. 54 MW, the Proposed Project, consisting of 9 no. wind turbines, supports renewable energy generation in the County and</p>

Policy	Description	Proposed Compliance
	<p><i>f) To facilitate and support the relevant stakeholders and enterprises in the progression of advancements in climate adaptation solutions and renewable energy generation and technologies.</i></p>	<p>contributes to meeting the total renewable energy targets for Strategic Areas.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will contribute to the progression of advancements in climate adaptation solutions and renewable energy generation and technologies in Co. Clare.</p>
<p>CDP2.14 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society</p>	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p><i>a) To facilitate measures which will accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy and a circular economy through mechanisms such as the Climate Action Competitive Fund;</i></p> <p><i>b) To support the development of enterprises that create and employ green technologies and to promote County Clare as a low carbon county as a means of attracting inward investment to the county and to the wider Southern Region;</i></p> <p><i>c) ...</i></p> <p><i>d) To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024;</i></p> <p><i>e) To ensure that the development of green industry and technologies incorporates careful consideration of potential environmental impacts at project level including the capacity of the receiving environment and existing infrastructure to serve these new industries.</i></p> <p><i>f) To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon output.</i></p> <p><i>g) ...</i></p> <p><i>h) To work to implement the provisions of Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 as they relate to County Clare;</i></p> <p><i>i) ...</i></p> <p><i>j) To promote climate change issues across business, public and residential sectors and to target measures and support initiatives to achieve reduced greenhouse gas</i></p>	<p>By supplying sustainable renewable energy, the Proposed Project will reduce the need for non-renewable sources like coal and oil, helping to transition toward a low carbon economy and cleaner energy usage in the county.</p> <p>By providing c. 54 MW of energy, the Proposed Project of 9 no. wind turbines at Slieveacurry, Co. Clare supports the implementation of the provisions of Ireland’s transition to a low carbon energy future through renewable energy generation in the County.</p>

Policy	Description	Proposed Compliance
	<p><i>emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture;</i></p> <p><i>k) ...</i></p> <p><i>l)</i></p>	
<p>CDP6.17 Energy Supply</p>	<p><i>To contribute to the economic development and enhanced employment opportunities in the County by:</i></p> <p><i>a) Enabling the development of a self-sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply and storage for the County in line with CDP Objective 3.3;</i></p> <p><i>b) Facilitating the county to become a leader in the production of sustainable and renewable energy for national and international consumption through research, technology development and innovation; and</i></p> <p><i>c) Supporting on-land and off-shore renewable energy production by a range of appropriate technologies in line with CDP Objective 3.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will contribute to the development of a self-sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply and storage for the County by contributing positively to the levels of renewable electricity on the national grid. This will aid in ensuring there is adequate capacity for the growing energy needs of the County.</p>
<p>CDP 6.18 Green Technology</p>	<p><i>To support the development of low carbon and green tech businesses and industries throughout the County</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will support the growth of low carbon and green technology businesses across the County by enabling renewable energy production, thereby aiding the shift towards a low carbon economy.</p>
<p>CDP8.12 Renewable Energy Development</p>	<p><i>To support the implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Clare Wind Energy Strategy and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy to facilitate the development of renewable energy developments in rural areas to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050 subject to the requirement of the RES SEA Environmental Report and the mitigation measures arising from the CDP Appropriate Assessment as contained in Volume 10(a).</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will support the development of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Clare Wind Energy Strategy and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy through the production of renewable energy thereby</p>

Policy	Description	Proposed Compliance
		aiding the shift towards a low carbon economy.
CDP 11.44 Energy Security	<p><i>It is an objective of the Development Plan: To promote and facilitate the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure, to integrate renewable energy sources, thereby creating a secure and efficient energy supply and storage system for County Clare which is ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.</i></p>	<p>Projects such as the Proposed Project are a critical component in decoupling the county from reliance on fossil fuels. By generating renewable energy, wind farms contribute to achieving the long-term goal of replacing fossil fuels with sustainable energy sources.</p>
CDP11.47 Renewable Energy	<p><i>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To encourage and to favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet National, Regional and County renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy;</i> <i>b) To assess future renewable energy related development proposals having regard to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2030 in Volume 5 of this plan and associated SEA and AA;</i> <i>c) To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on-shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and of its related grid infrastructure in County Clare, in accordance with all relevant policies, guidance and guidelines pertaining to the protection of the environment and protected habitats and species, and to assess proposals having regard to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in Volume 6 of this plan and the associated SEA and AA, or any subsequent updated adopted Strategy and to national Wind Energy Guidelines;</i> <i>d) To prepare a new and updated Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare during the lifetime of this plan, subject to the publication of the update to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006;</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project will contribute c. 54MW to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy for Strategic Areas (totalling 400MW of renewable wind energy by 2030).</p> <p>Through support of this Proposed Project, Clare County Council will be fulfilling their objective CDP11.47 'Renewable Energy' to 'favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet National, Regional and County renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy.</p>

Policy	Description	Proposed Compliance
	<p>e) <i>To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy-related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties;</i></p> <p>f) <i>To support and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to renewable energy production and storage, that may emerge over the lifetime of this Plan;</i></p> <p>g) <i>To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection;</i></p> <p>h) <i>To ensure that all proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in the County are in full compliance with the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives and Objective CDP3.3 of this plan; and</i></p> <p>To promote and market the County as a leader of renewable energy provision.</p>	
<p>CDP 18.3 Development of a Low Carbon Economy</p>	<p>a) A) To promote County Clare as a Low Carbon County as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the Mid-West region;</p> <p>b) B) To facilitate measures to establish a low carbon economy and society by 2020;</p> <p>c) C) To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon outputs.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project is estimated to provide c. 54MW of energy, facilitating the transition to a low carbon economy and promoting County Clare as a Low Carbon County to attract investment to both the County and the wider Mid-West region.</p>

2.5.4.2 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

As reflected within the key goals of the CDP, the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) sets out the necessary land use and strategy framework to maximise its renewable energy resources, guiding the planning process for future renewable energy development. The Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 (LARES) was adopted as part of the CDP 2023 – 2029, includes the following vision of the LARES:

“A County Clare that is the national leader in renewable energy generation which supports energy efficiency and conservation, and which achieves balanced social and economic development throughout the County and assists in achieving national climate change mitigation targets.”

This Vision is underpinned by several strategic aims of which the following are considered to be of particular relevance to the Proposed Project:

- To support the attainment of and to exceed in County Clare, where possible, the National targets and commitments to renewable energy;
- To identify/highlight the opportunities for various renewable energy technologies and resources and identify broad areas suitable for their development in full compliance with the requirements of all environmental legislation including the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive;
- To maximise the opportunities for renewable energy development whilst safeguarding the environment and existing residential amenities; and
- To safeguard, where appropriate, areas with potential for renewable energy projects and to guide renewable energy development to preferred locations.

The LARES acknowledges that Co. Clare has the natural resources needed to maximise energy generation by renewable means: geographical location on the Shannon Estuary and its Atlantic coastline, strong wind resource, undulating topography and a significant grid network. These attributes present opportunities for both on-shore and off-shore wind, wave and tidal energy, and pumped freshwater hydro energy storage. The LARES notes that *“energy needs in County Clare are expected to rise by 2020...”* which is balanced against a recognition that *“the County has considerable capacity to produce energy from renewable and indigenous resources”*. In this regard, Policy RES 2.1 states that *“it is an objective of Clare County Council to meet the County’s energy needs from 100% indigenous renewable energy sources”*.

The LARES sets out a sustainable balance of renewable energy resources up to 2023 which ensures that there is no over reliance or over concentration on any single technology. With regard to wind energy, a target of 550MW has been identified. It should be noted, however, that this target is not a ‘cap’ and will not limit the potential for greater generation of renewable energy if exceeded.

Objective RES 3.1 (Renewable Energy Targets): *To facilitate the achievement of (or to exceed where possible) the renewable energy targets set out in Table 3.2 by 2030, ensuring that County Clare is the national leader in sustainable renewable energy generation, supporting energy efficiency, security and conservation, achieving balanced social, environmental and economic development throughout the County and assisting in the achievement of Ireland’s Green Energy target.*

2.5.4.3 Clare Wind Energy Strategy 2023-2029

The Interim Wind Energy Strategy (WES) for County Clare was published in April 2023 and is incorporated into the CDP as Volume 6. The WES has been developed as a planning framework to support the implementation of wind developments in the county.

Within the preface of the WES it states:

The Clare Wind Energy Strategy forms part of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. In accordance with the requirements of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government as set out in Circular PL20-13, the previous *“Clare Wind Energy Strategy 2017-2023”* has not been reviewed as part of the preparation of this draft plan

“Circular PL20-13, dated 20th December 2013, in the cyclical review of a Development Plan it is advised that, until the national policy review processes have concluded in relation to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines and the Renewable energy Export Policy and Development Framework, local authorities should defer amending their existing Development Plan policies and should instead operate their existing Development Plan policies and objectives until the completion of these processes and further advice is issued.”

The WES highlights 11 Strategic objectives that outline the overall rationale behind the strategy, with the aim of contributing to national legally binding targets while also capitalising on those opportunities associated with the generation and harnessing of wind energy in a sustainable matter. A key objective being:

“To promote economic development through wind energy and other renewables in the County, underpinning the need for energy security, the promotion and establishment of a low carbon economy and the development of green business within the County.”

The WES also includes wind energy planning policy and development management standards to manage wind energy development. Strategic policy objectives for the development of the Wind Energy sector set out within the strategy are detailed in Table 2-3 below:

Table 2.3: Strategic policy for the development of wind energy – Clare Wind Energy Strategy

General Objective	Description	Proposed Project Compliance
<p>WES One: Development of Renewable Energy Generation</p>	<p>It is the objective of the Council to support, in principle and in appropriate scales and locations, the development of wind energy resources in County Clare. It is an objective of the Council to ensure the security of energy supply by accommodating the development of wind energy resources in appropriate areas and at appropriate scales within the County.</p>	<p>The Proposed Turbines are located within an area designated primarily as a ‘Strategic Area’ which is considered suitable for wind energy development as outlined in the WES. The Proposed Project will support the Council in achieving its objective to ensure the security of energy supply by accommodating the development of wind energy resources.</p>
<p>WES Two: Development of Low Carbon Economy</p>	<p>County Clare will seek to promote itself as moving towards becoming a low carbon County as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the wider Mid-West region.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project will support County Clare in towards becoming a low carbon County as it will contribute c. 54MW of renewable wind energy generation to County Clare’s Wind Energy targets.</p>
<p>WES Three: County Partnership Approach</p>	<p>Clare County Council will seek to promote wind energy in appropriate sites in the County and will work with agencies such as the Clare County Development Board, Clare Enterprise Board, Limerick Clare Energy Agency, Shannon Development, I.D.A and Enterprise Ireland to encourage investment in research and technology associated with wind farms and other renewable energy technology.</p>	<p>Projects such as the Proposed Project support Co. Clare in encouraging investment in technology associated with wind farms and other renewable energy technology. By generating renewable energy, wind farms such as the Proposed Project contribute to achieving the long-term goal of replacing fossil fuels with sustainable energy sources.</p>
<p>WES Four: Response to National Policy</p>	<p>The White Paper on Energy has set a target of 40% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2020. In the Mid-West Regional Climate Change Strategy, County Clare is identified as having a potential 600MW energy produced from renewables by 2020. Clare County Council will aim to achieve a minimum target of 550MW from wind energy by the conclusion of this Strategy.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project will contribute c. 54MW of renewable wind energy generation to Clare’s County Clare’s Wind Energy targets.</p>

<p>WES Five: Promotion of Community Involvement</p>	<p>Clare County Council will seek to promote community involvement and require community benefit where possible in Wind farm developments.</p>	<p>A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was appointed and remains as the point of the contact for the Proposed Project and has been engaging with the local community. The purpose of the CLO is to introduce the Proposed Project to the local community, engage and establish a line of dialogue with the local community and facilitate one-to-one consultation meetings, or small group meetings where requested.</p> <p>Please see Section 2.8.2 of this chapter for further detail on the Community Consultation process.</p>
<p>WES Six: Infrastructure Development Proposals</p>	<p>Proposals for the development of infrastructure for the production, storage, and distribution of electricity through the harnessing of wind energy will be considered in appropriate sites and locations, subject to relevant policy, legislation and environmental considerations.</p>	<p>The design and layout of the Proposed Project follows the recommendations and guidelines set out in the ‘Wind Energy Development Guidelines’ (Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, 2006), the ‘Draft Wind Energy Guidelines’, (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2019), and the ‘Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Energy Industry’ (Irish Wind Energy Association, 2008).</p> <p>The Site has been subject to a comprehensive environmental and ecological appraisal to ensure that the Proposed Project does not result in any significant adverse environmental or ecological impacts. A detailed analysis of site-specific constraints was carried out in order to inform the placement of the proposed infrastructure. These assessments are mainly included within Chapter 3 of this EIAR: ‘Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives’, however ecological and environmental considerations are included throughout each chapter of the EIAR</p>

<p>WES Seven: Natura 2000 Sites</p>	<p>Having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, where a proposed development will give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites, (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), permission will only be granted where there is no alternative solution and where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest in favour of granting permission, including those of a social or economic nature.</p>	<p>The impact of the Proposed Project on designated sites is considered in full in the EIAR and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS). Chapter 6 Biodiversity of the EIAR and NIS conclude that the Proposed Project will not give rise to any significant negative impacts on designated sites.</p>
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The WES designates areas as being ‘Strategic’, ‘Acceptable in Principle’, ‘Open for consideration’ and ‘Not Normally Permissible’. The total land area designated as ‘Strategic’ is 9,112 hectares and the area proposed as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ is 47,320 hectares. This represents 2.6% and 13.8% of the County respectively or 16.4% of the total land area of County Clare. The Proposed Project is located within a ‘Strategic’ designated site with the surrounding lands designated as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ (refer to Figure 2-3), accordingly the site of the Proposed Project is located in an area that has been designated as the most suitable in the hierarchy for the provision of wind energy development in the County.

➤ **WES 8: ‘Strategic Areas’**

These key areas are considered to be eminently suitable or wind farm development and are of strategic importance because of:

- Good / excellent wind resources;
- Access to grid;
- Distance from properties and outside any Natura 2000 sites.

Strategic areas are considered suitable for wind farm development with good/excellent wind resources, access to grid, distance from properties and location outside designated sites. A target of minimum 400MW from these areas is identified in the WES.

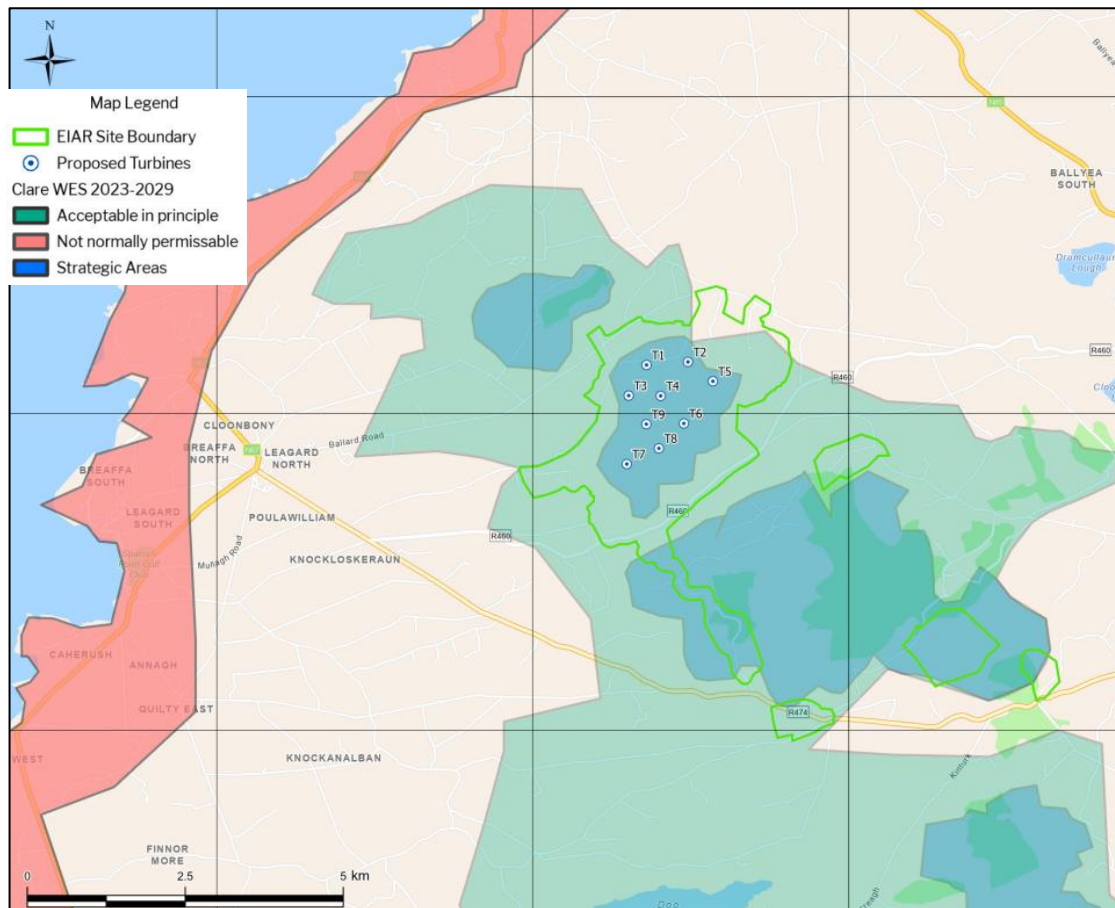


Figure 2-3: Co. Clare Wind Energy Designations

The site layout of the Proposed Project as submitted as part of this application takes account of all site constraints and the distances to be maintained between turbines and other infrastructure from houses, roads, etc. The layout is based on the results of all site investigations that have been carried out during the EIA process. As information regarding the site of the Proposed Project was compiled and assessed, the proposed layout has been revised and amended to take account of the physical constraints of the site and the requirement for buffer zones and other areas in which no turbines could be located. The selection of turbine number and layout has also had regard to wind-take, noise and shadow flicker

impacts and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines. The EIAR and Wind Farm Site design process was an iterative process, where findings at each stage of the assessment were used to further refine the design, always with the intention of minimising the potential for environmental impacts.

The WES has remained largely unchanged since first published in 2009, in terms of the identified suitable areas and MW targets. The first version of the WES set a 400MW target for wind energy generation from strategic areas, 250MW of which was to be identified as the potential renewable (wind) energy generation for the Sliabh Callan landscape character area (LCA). The WES set a “working target” of 550MW “to enable the County to make the initial steps towards a low carbon economy by 2020”, which was considered to represent “a realistic target that can be achieved over the lifetime of the WES”. Despite more than ten years passing since the current WES was first prepared and adopted, there has been no increase in the Megawatt (MW) target set out in the WES. The 550MW (County Clare) and 400MW (Strategic Areas) targets remain in place and unchanged since 2009. As detailed in the preceding sections, the national and international policy context for renewable energy, wind energy and decarbonisation has changed dramatically in the same time period. The Proposed Project is entirely consistent with the policies and objectives of the WES and CDP in contributing to the achievement of MW targets set out in those policy documents. It is acknowledged that the WES was first adopted in December 2009 and was considered ambitious at the time. However, the targets and objectives of the current WES have not kept pace with the rapidly evolving national and international policy environment for renewable energy and climate change. As a result, they are now likely to be out of date and will have to be increased further to keep in line with national and international policy.

2.5.4.4 Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is CCC’s first climate action plan prepared under the requirements of the Climate Act. The plan sets out 120 climate actions across the areas of governance and leadership, built environment, transportation, communities and partnerships and the natural environment.

Relevant to the Proposed Project is Objective BE2 which aims to ‘*Ensure the integration of climate action in spatial planning to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and resilient society*’. In order to achieve this, CCC include the following action, No. BE2.1:

‘Support the development of renewable energy infrastructure and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional and county renewable energy targets through planning policy and land use objectives’

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for this action is the ‘*MW of Renewable Energy Submitted for Planning Approval*’. The Proposed Project will directly contribute to the realisation of this action.

2.5.4.5 Electrical Infrastructure

In relation to electricity, the CDP will facilitate the delivery of a secure and adequate electricity infrastructure to meet the growth in demand and to ensure that an efficient and reliable electricity supply is available to households, business, and industry. The CDP states that CCC will continue to work closely with EirGrid to facilitate the ongoing development of the grid infrastructure in line with national, regional and local requirements. Specific relevant policies of the CDP in relation to the proposed underground electrical cabling route for the Proposed Project are included in Table 2-4 below.

Table 2-4: Policy Objectives of the CDP in relation to the Proposed Grid Connection Site

General Objectives	Description	Proposed Project Compliance
<p>CDP 11.45</p>	<p>Objective CDP11.45 (Electricity Networks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>To facilitate improvements in energy infrastructure and encourage the expansion of the infrastructure within the County;</i> b) <i>To facilitate future alternative renewable energy developments and associated utility infrastructure throughout the County;</i> c) <i>To support the Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) as a key priority for the Southern Region and the sustainable development and reinforcement of the energy grid including grid connections, transboundary networks into and through County Clare subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning processes;</i> d) <i>To collaborate with EirGrid to facilitate the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, enhanced electricity networks and new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan under EirGrid’s (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process);</i> e) <i>To collaborate with EirGrid over the lifetime of the plan to ensure that the County’s minimum target of 1,167MW of renewable energy generation is achieved and can be accommodated on the electricity network in County Clare; and</i> f) <i>To have regard to environmental and visual considerations in the assessment of developments of this nature and ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP3.3 of this plan.</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project will include a permanent extension to the 110kV substation at Knockalassa to facilitate the connection and distribution of the renewable energy generated by the Proposed Project thereby supporting improvements in energy infrastructure and expanding grid infrastructure within the County.</p>

2.5.4.6 Conclusion on Local Policy for County Clare

Having regard to the above, it is clear there is strong policy support for wind energy development and associated infrastructure at a local level and a commitment to shift to a low carbon economy and away from using fossil fuels.

Having regard to the Co. Clare’s significant available renewable resources, it is imperative that the County delivers on its renewable energy targets. CCC in the CDP has set out its intention to take a leading role in respect of renewable energy technology to assist in meeting national, regional and county targets in energy consumption and CO₂ reduction. In this regard, CCC has set the County a minimum target of 1,167MW of renewable energy generation over the lifetime of the plan, with a target of 550MW from wind energy generation.

At present, it is estimated that wind farms in Co. Clare are generating approximately 246MW²² of electricity and so it is clear there is a significant challenge ahead for the Council if it is to deliver on its renewable energy targets from wind energy developments. The Proposed Project, which is appropriately located for wind energy development having regard to the WES, will make a meaningful contribution towards the renewable energy targets for the County.

Therefore, the Proposed Project is considered compliant with the relevant provisions of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

2.5.5

Other Relevant Onshore Wind Energy Planning Policy Publications

The following relevant onshore wind planning policy publications and/or best practice guidelines were considered in the design and assessment of the Proposed Project.

Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006

In June 2006, the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) published the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)) under Section 28 of the Act. The aim of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) was to assist the proper planning of wind power projects in appropriate locations around Ireland. The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) also highlight general considerations in the assessment of all planning applications for wind energy. They set out advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. They contain guidelines to ensure consistency of approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development.

Each wind energy development has its own characteristics and defining features, and it is therefore impossible to write specifications for universal use. The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) should be applied practically and do not replace existing national energy, environmental and planning policy. While the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) remain the relevant guidelines in place, at the time of lodgement, decision makers (Planning Authorities and the Commission) are not bound to their provisions, and they (and do) consider updated standards/requirements/specifications in assessing impacts and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG) published the draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)) in December 2019. A consultation process in relation to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) concluded on the 19th of February 2020. A further review of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) is currently underway by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DoECC), particularly in relation to noise limits. Since the publication of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), there have been significant changes in national policy regarding renewable energy targets, giving further impetus to the importance of the further review. The Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) set out that the proper planning and sustainable development of areas and regions must be considered when local authorities prepare their development plans and assess planning applications, irrespective of the significant role renewable energy has to play in tackling climate change.

²² <https://www.windenergyireland.com/about-wind/wind-energy-by-county>

The Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) note that potential impacts of wind energy development proposals on the landscape, including the natural and built environment, must be considered along with the legitimate concerns of local communities. With this in mind, and in line with the previously stated “preferred draft approach”, the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) primarily focus on addressing a number of key aspects including, but not limited to:

- Acceptable noise thresholds and monitoring frameworks;
- Visual amenity setback;
- Control of shadow flicker;
- Compliance with Community consultation and dividend requirements, as included within the obligatory Community Report; and
- Consideration of the siting, route and design of the proposed grid connection as part of the whole project.

The design of the Proposed Project has taken account of the “preferred draft approach” as articulated by the Department in June 2017, and accordingly, has been developed with the provisions of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) in mind (for example in relation to 4 times turbine tip height set back distance from third party sensitive receptors) and the inclusion of a standalone community report.

As stated above, the submission period for the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) closed in February 2020. Under the consultation, concerns were raised in relation to a number of themes including but not limited to; noise, visual amenity, set back and shadow flicker. With regards to noise, a number of the received submissions noted that the provisions put forward in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) were unworkable and could impact the viability of the entire onshore wind sector. In relation to set back distances there was strong criticism with regards to this distance being measured to the curtilage of a property due to this measurement being ambiguous and difficult to implement. Furthermore, questions were raised surrounding the strict measures proposed for shadow flicker; the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) put forward the provision that *‘there will be no shadow flicker at any existing nearby dwelling or other relevant existing affected sensitive property’* which didn’t allow time for the safe shutting down of turbines.

At time of writing the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) are not yet finalised and have not been adopted. The relevant wind energy guidelines for the purposes of Section 28 of the Act, as amended, remain those published in 2006, the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). Notwithstanding this, however, due to the timelines associated with the planning process for renewable energy projects it is possible that an updated version of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) may be finalised during the consideration period for the current planning application for the Proposed Project. To this end, on the basis of the details available from the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) it is anticipated that the Proposed Project will be capable of adhering to the relevant noise and shadow flicker standards. While the final guidelines have not yet been published it should be noted that Shadow Flicker and Noise are entirely controllable and are discussed further in Chapter 5: ‘Population and Human Health’ and Chapter 12: ‘Noise and Vibration’, respectively. In addition, the Proposed Project maintains a four times tip height set back between turbines and third-party sensitive receptors which is currently the recognised standard for visual amenity purposes, as outlined in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). Furthermore, comprehensive community consultation has also been undertaken (refer to Appendix 2-2 Community Engagement Report) and detail of the Proposed Project has been provided and assessed as part of this EIAR, forming an integral part of this planning application

IWEA Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Energy Industry 2012

The Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) (now Wind Energy Ireland) published updated Wind Energy Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Industry in 2012. The guidelines aim to encourage and define best practice development in the wind energy industry, acting as a reference document and guide to the main issues relating to wind energy developments. The purpose of the guidelines is to encourage responsible and sensitive wind energy development, which takes into consideration the concerns of local communities, planners, and other interested groups. The guidelines outline the main

aspects of wind energy development with emphasis on responsible and sustainable design and environmental practices, on aspects of development which affect external stakeholders, and on good community engagement practices. In approaching the development of IWEA's guidelines the aim was to be complementary to the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006).

IWEA Best Practice Principles in Community Engagement and Community Commitments 2013

IWEA extended its guidance with the publication of this Best Practice in Community Engagement and Commitment. IWEA and its members support the provision of financial contributions by wind farm operators to local communities and have sought to formulate best practice principles for the provision of a community commitment. The document sets out IWEA's best practice principles for delivering extended benefits to local communities for wind farm developments of 5 Megawatts (MW) or above. Best Practice Principles of community engagement when planning the engagement strategy and preparing associated literature are also outlined in the document. The aim of these guidelines is to ensure that the views of local communities are taken into account at all stages of a development and that local communities can share in the benefits.

DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development Ireland – Guidelines for Community Engagement 2016

In December 2016, the (then) Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) issued a Code of Practice for wind energy development in relation to community engagement. The Code of Good Practice is intended to ensure that wind energy development in Ireland is undertaken in adherence with the best industry practices, and with the full engagement of local communities. Community engagement is required through the different stages of a project, from the initial scoping, feasibility and concept stages, right through construction to the operational phase. The methods of engagement should reflect the nature of the project and the potential level of impact that it could have on a community. The guidelines advise that ignoring or poorly managing community concerns can have long-term negative impacts on a community's economic, environmental or social situation. Not involving communities in the project development process has the potential to impose costly time and financial delays for projects or prevent the realisation of projects in their entirety.

Further details on the community engagement that has been undertaken as part of the Proposed Project are presented below. A Community Engagement Report has been prepared by MKO and is included as Appendix 2-2 to this chapter. This report outlines the steps taken by the Applicant to communicate effectively with the local community in respect of the Proposed Project.

Department Circular PL5/2017

On the 3rd of August 2017, the (then) Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) issued Circular PL5/2017 to provide an update on the review of the wind energy and renewable policies in development plans, and the advice contained within a previous Departmental Circular PL20-13. Circular PL20-13 advised that local authorities should defer amending their existing Development Plan policies in relation to wind energy and renewable energy generally as part of either the normal cyclical six-yearly review or plan variation processes and should instead operate their existing development plan policies and objectives until the completion of a focused review of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). The new circular (PL05/217) reconfirms that this continues to be the advice of the Department.

The Circular also set out the four key aspects of a preferred draft approach being developed to address the key aspects of the review of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) as follows:

- The application of a more stringent noise limit, consistent with World Health Organisation (WHO) noise standards, in tandem with a new robust noise monitoring regime, to ensure compliance with noise standards;
- A visual amenity setback of 4 times the turbine height between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, subject to a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property;
- The elimination of shadow flicker; and
- The introduction of new obligations in relation to engagement with local communities by wind farm developers along with the provision of community benefit measures.

Commission for Regulation of Utilities: Grid Connection Policy

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) (previously the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER)) launched a new grid connection policy in March 2018 for renewable and other generators, known as ECP-1, which seeks to allow “shovel ready” projects that already have a valid planning permission, connected to the electricity networks. The principal objective which guides this decision is to allow those projects to have an opportunity to connect to the network, along with laying the foundations for future, more regular batches for connection. August 2018 saw the applicants for new connection capacity under ECP-1 published. ECP-2 was launched in June of 2020, which set policy for at least three annual batches of connection offers (ECP 2.1, ECP-2.2, and ECP-2.3). On 4th April 2023 the CRU published its Decision on ECP-2.4, confirming a fourth batch under the ECP-2 policy. The first four ECP-2 application windows (2.1 -2.3 and -2.4) opened for the month of September each year. The application window for the fifth annual batch (ECP-2.5) closed on the 30th of November 2024. The enduring connection policy regime replaces the previous ‘Gate’ system of grid connection applications. The grid connection application window under ECP-1 was the first time since 2007 that certain renewable energy projects including wind farms had an opportunity to secure a new grid connection offer.

The design of the proposed underground electrical cabling for the Proposed Project has taken account of the “*preferred draft approach*” and accordingly, has been developed with the provisions of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) in mind. This grid connection policy will allow for the Proposed Project, once it is permitted, to connect to the electricity networks under the enduring connection policy regime.

Renewable Energy Support Scheme

CAP 25 is the Government’s plan to give Irish people a cleaner, safer and more sustainable future to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050. The Plan sets out actions across every sector which will ensure we meet our future climate commitments. A key part of the CAP 25 is to increase the proportion of renewable electricity to up to 80% by 2030, with a target of 9GW from onshore wind. These measures will be driven by introduction of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (‘RESS’) which aims to promote the generation of electricity from renewable sources.

The RESS is an auction-based scheme which invites renewable electricity projects to bid for capacity and receive a guaranteed price for the electricity they generate.

RESS 1 was the first Renewable Electricity Support Scheme run by the Government of Ireland and concluded in 2020. RESS 2 was run in 2022 and concluded in June 2022. The successful projects in RESS 2 represent a potential increase of nearly 20% in Ireland’s current renewable energy generation capacity. They will be delivered between 2023 and 2025. A public consultation was opened in 2022 to refine the Terms and Conditions developed for RESS 2 with a limited and specific set of changes for RESS 3. This consultation closed in December 2022. RESS 3 auction was run in 2023 and concluded in September 2023. The RESS 4 auction concluded in August 2024, successfully procured approximately 2,071 GWh of renewable electricity, equivalent to around 1,300 MW of new capacity, largely from solar PV and onshore wind projects. The most recent RESS auction was the RESS 5 auction submissions closed in September 2025, and results were announced later the same month. It secured its full target of

around 1,500 GWh of renewable electricity, delivering over 1,000 MW of additional onshore wind and solar capacity.

The RESS ensures that we are on a pathway to meet our ambitious climate targets and lays the foundations of a thriving and cost-effective renewable electricity market. This will support the growth of the green economy, create sustainable work opportunities, and ultimately benefit the consumer as renewables become more cost effective and increase Ireland’s energy security.

The Proposed Project is in accordance with the CAP 25 and a grant of permission for the onshore wind energy development will allow for the Proposed Project to participate in the RESS auction and contribute renewable energy generation in achieving Ireland’s CAP 25 target of 9GW of onshore wind generation by 2030.

2.6 Planning History

This Section of the EIAR sets out the relevant planning history of the application site and also identifies other wind energy developments within the wider area (25km from the EIAR site boundary).

2.6.1 Planning Applications within the Planning Application Boundary

A planning search was carried out through the Clare County Council’s online planning portal and An Coimisiún Pleanála’s online planning portal in April 2026 for relevant planning applications lodged within the planning application boundary of the Proposed Project. The planning applications within the red line planning application boundary are outlined in Table 2-5 below.

Table 2-5: Planning applications within the red line planning application boundary

PI Ref.	Description	Decision
CCC Ref: 20806	Up to 8 no. turbines (max TH 175m), met mast, 33kV grid connection to 110kV Substation Knockalassa, Extension to 110kV Substation at Knockalassa, other ancillary development works.	Withdrawn 18/01/2021
CCC Ref: 21370 ABP-310707- 21	Up to 8 no. turbines (max TH 175m), met mast, 33kV grid connection to 110kV Substation Knockalassa, Extension to 110kV Substation at Knockalassa, other ancillary development works.	Refused by CCC - 03/06/2021 Appealed and Withdrawn - 26/10/2021
CCC Ref: 211226 ABP-312728- 22	8 no. turbines (173m -175m TH, 66.5m to 75m HH, 100m – 108.5m HH), met mast, 33kV grid connection to Knockalassa 110kV Substation, Extension to Knockalassa 110kV Substation, other ancillary development works.	Refused by CCC - 20/01/2022 Appealed and Refused by ABP - 16/05/2024

Pl. Ref: 18223	to construct a battery storage compound adjacent to an existing 110KV electricity substation. The proposed works will involve the construction of new palisade fencing, bunded concrete plinths, up to 21 no. battery storage units and associated equipment, transformers and all ancillary site works.	Granted - 16/06/2018
Pl. Ref: 109	for the construction of a wind farm which will comprise 31 no. wind turbines with hub height of 80 metres and rotor diameter of 90 metres, substation and associated 2 No. control buildings, borrow pits, 1 No. anemometry mast, underground electricity connection to site boundary, new and upgraded access roads and all associated site and ground works. This application is seeking a 10-year planning permission. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.	Granted - 18/08/2011
Pl. Ref: 13558	for the construction of a revised electricity substation in the townland of Knockalassa. This application represents an amendment to the substation already granted permission under Pl. Ref. No. P10/9 (An Bord Pleanála Ref: PL03.237524) The revised substation layout includes 3 No. control buildings, associated electrical plant and equipment and ancillary works. The application also includes consequent alterations to the adjacent borrow pit permitted under the above planning permission. This application is seeking a 10-year planning permission. This application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	Granted - 24/01/2014

The Site was the subject of a previous wind farm proposal. Slieveacurry Ltd. submitted an application in November 2021 for planning permission of an 8 no. turbine renewable energy development and associated works in the townland Glendine North and adjacent townlands, in Co. Clare (Planning Ref. 21/1226). In January 2022 the application was refused by Clare County Council for 4 no. reasons and a First Party Appeal was lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála in February 2022 (ABP 312728-22). The Commission dismissed the appeal on 3 no. grounds. This application was preceded by two earlier application attempts for the same development (Planning Ref: 20/806 & 21/370) that were withdrawn due to third party legal challenge against the Clare County Council’s procedures surrounding the processing of the application. For further detail on the previous planning applications for wind energy developments on the Site, please see Section 3.3 of the Planning Report and Section 1.2 of Chapter 1: ‘Introduction’ of this EIAR.

2.6.2 Wind Energy Developments within 25km of the Site

A planning search was carried out to establish permitted, operational and proposed wind energy developments within 25km of the Proposed Turbines for the purposes of informing the potential cumulative effects (see section 2.9 of this Chapter for further details and Table 2-10 for details on the rationale for this study area). The search was carried out using the relevant local authority, An Coimisiún Pleanála and EIA planning portals in April 2026 for relevant planning applications. In total, 19 no. applications relating to wind energy were identified within 25km of the Proposed Turbines. These are outlined in greater detail in Table 2-6 below:

Table 2-6: Wind Farms within 25km of the Proposed Turbines

Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl Ref: 109 ACP. 237524	West Clare Renewable Energy Ltd	Slievecallan Wind Farm	for the construction of a wind farm which will comprise 31 no. wind turbines with hub height of 80 metres and rotor diameter of 90 metres, substation and associated 2 No. control buildings, borrow pits, 1 No. anemometry mast, underground electricity connection to site boundary, new and upgraded access roads and all associated site and ground works. This application is seeking a 10-year planning permission. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.	Granted - 18/08/2011	Existing	29	1.6 km
Pl Ref: 07/2900	D P Energy Ireland Ltd	Booltiagh Wind Farm (Extension)	Permission for development which will consist of the erection of six wind turbines with towers up to 80 metres in height and total tip height up to 120 metres with ancillary equipment for generation of electricity and two borrow pits at Booltiagh townland and Carncreagh Townland near Connolly, Co. Clare adjacent to Booltiagh Wind Farm.	Granted – 17/10/2008	Existing	6	8.6 km
Pl Ref: 00/567 ACP. 120616	D P Energy Ireland Ltd	Booltiagh I Wind Farm	Erection of a wind farm comprising 26 wind turbines with towers not exceeding 60 metres in height and rotor diameter not exceeding 62 metres and ancillary equipment for generation of electricity and control building and monitoring mast	Granted – 03/08/2001	Existing	12	9.2 km

Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl Ref: 14/551 ACP. 245189	Mid Clare Renewable Energy Ltd	Cahermurphy Wind Farm	for a ten year planning permission to construct a windfarm and all associated infrastructure in the townland of Cahermurphy, Kilmihil. The proposed windfarm will comprise a) the provision of a total of 4 No. wind turbines, with a maximum ground to top blade tip height of up to 131m, b) upgrading of existing and provision of new internal access roads, c) provision of a wind anemometry mast (up to 90m in height), d) borrow pit, e) an electricity sub-station with control rooms and f) associated equipment, underground electricity connection cabling, temporary construction compound and all ancillary site works, and includes the upgrading of site access junctions. The current proposed development is intended to replace an existing planning permission for a six turbine wind farm development permitted under Pl. Ref. 03-2071, as extended by Pl. Ref. 09-267 and pl. Ref. 13-507 which is valid until 2019. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).	Granted – 28/07/2016	Existing	4	9.5 km
Pl Ref: 11/361 ACP. 239933	Seahound Wind Energy Developments Ltd.	Letteragh Wind Farm	for a 10 year planning permission for a wind energy development. The development will consist of the erection of six wind turbines (maximum hub height 90m, maximum blade diameter 93m), one permanent meteorological mast, access road and internal side tracks, electricity sub-station, underground cabling and all associated site works. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared in respect of the proposed development and will accompany the planning application.	Granted – 21/02/2013	Existing	6	10.8 km

Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl Ref: 14575 ACP. 245392	Clare Winds Ltd	Glenmore / Sorrell Wind Farm	for a ten year Planning Permission to construct a wind farm and all associated infrastructure in the townlands of Glenmore, Boolynamweel, Boolynaknockaun and Furoor. The proposed wind farm will comprise a) the provision of a total of up to 12 No. wind turbines, with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 136.5m, b)Upgrading of existing and provision of new internal access roads, c)Provision of a wind anemometry mast (up to 90m in height), d) 3 No. borrow pits, e)An electricity sub-station with control building and associated equipment, f) underground electricity connection cabling, g) 3 No. temporary construction compounds and h)All ancillary site works, and includes the upgrading of site access junctions. This application is intended to supercede the wind farm development previously permitted on part of this site under Pl. Ref. P02/2228 as extended by Pl Ref. P09/438 and Pl. Ref. P14/309. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	Granted – 24/10/2016	Existing	12	11 km

<p>PI Ref: 20658 ACP. 318525</p>	<p>MCRE Windfarm Ltd (MCRE)</p>	<p>Cahermurphy II Wind Farm</p>	<p>for the development of a windfarm in the townlands of Cahermurphy, Knocknahila More South, Carrownagry South, Caheraghacullin and Drummin, together with the development of an underground grid connection cable to the National Grid in the townlands of Cahermurphy, Drummin, Doolough, Glenmore, and Booltiagh. The development will consist of 1. Construction of up to 10 no. wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 170 metres and associated hard strand areas. 2. 1 no. permanent meteorological mast with a maximum height of up to 100 metres. 3. 1 no. 38kV permanent electrical substation which will be constructed at one of two possible locations on site: either Option A in Carrownagry South townland or Option B in Cahermurphy townland. The electrical substation will have 1 no. control building with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing, all associated underground cabling, waste water holding tank and all ancillary works. 4. All associated under-ground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed on-site substation. 5. All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid via an underground cable to the existing Booltiagh 110kV substation. 6. Upgrade of existing tracks, roads and provision of new site access roads and hardstand areas. 7. Junction access road works. 8. 2 no. borrow pits. 9. 1 no. temporary construction compound. 10. Site Drainage. 11. Forestry Felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development; and 12. All associated and ancillary site development works. The application is seeking a ten year planning permission and 30 year operational life from the date of commissioning of the wind farm. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed developemnt</p>	<p>Commission's Decision quashed, remitted back to ABP</p>	<p>In Planning</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>9.75 km</p>
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Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl. Ref. PAX03.324155	Cahermurphy Renewables DAC	Cahermurphy West Wind Farm	Proposed wind farm development at Cahermurphy, Knocknahila More South, Carrownagry South, Caheraghcullin and Drummin, Co. Clare.	Pre-planning	In Planning	8	9.95 km
Pl. Ref: 09/358, 14/754 ACP. 234010	Aonghus Coughlan	Kiltumper Wind Farm	to construct a wind farm. The development will consist of 2 wind turbines, site tracks and hard standing areas, an anemometry mast, a small control building and compound, underground cabling, site signage, temporary site works and all ancillary works. An environmental impact statement has been submitted with the planning application.	Granted – 20/10/2010	Existing	2	11.6 km
Pl. Ref: 09/479 ACP. 236736	Booly Windfarm Ltd	Boolynagleragh Wind Farm	for a development which will consist of a Wind Energy Project comprising 11 wind turbines, each with a nominal rated capacity of approximately 2,500KW, access tracks, a fenced Switchyard comprising a single-storey Control Building and Substation, and an anemometer mast. Each wind turbine will comprise a tower up to 80 metres high, with a diameter of about 4 metres at the base. Three blades of up to 45 metres length will be attached. An Environmental Impact Statement will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the Application	Granted – 07/12/2010	Existing	9	13.1 km

Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl. Ref: 13/681 ACP. 244095	ESB Wind Development Limited	Boolynagleragh Wind Farm Extension	for a 10 year Planning Permission for an extension to Boolynagleragh Wind Farm. The development will comprise seven wind turbines, access tracks, anemometer masts, borrow pits and all associated site works, above and below ground. Each wind turbine will have an overall maximum dimension of 126 metres, comprising a tower 75 - 80 metres high, with a diameter of about 4 metres at the base, to which three blades of 45 - 51 metres length will be attached. An Environmental Impact Statement and Natura Impact Statement will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the Application.	Granted – 13/12/2013	Existing	7	13.9 km
Pl. Ref: 09123, 19388	Energia Renewables ROI Limited	Crossmore Wind Farm	for development which will consist of seven wind turbines with hub height of 80m and blade diameter of 90m, construction of access roads, substation and associated works. An Environmental Impact Statement has been submitted with this application	Granted - 22/11/2009	Existing	7	18.1 km
Pl. Ref: 10/64	CP Energy Limited	Tullabrack Wind Farm	for a 5 year planning permission for development of a wind farm. The development will consist of six (6) electricity generating wind turbines with a hub height of 85 metres and a rotor diameter of 71 metres giving an overall height of 120.5m hardstandings, and electrical compound, substation building, electrical cabling, four car parking spaces, associated site roads and site works. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).	Granted – 02/01/2010	Existing	6	22 km

Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
Pl. Ref: 2460143 ACP. 319961	Ballykett Green Energy Limited	Ballykett Wind Farm	for the erection of 4 no. wind turbines with an overall ground to blade tip height of 150m with a rotor diameter of 136m and a hub height of 82m, the construction of crane hardstand areas and turbine foundations, the creation of a new site entrance onto the L6132, construction of 1 no. temporary construction compound with associated temporary site offices, parking areas and security fencing, installation of 1 no. permanent meteorological mast of 82m overall height, construction of new internal site access tracks and upgrade of existing site track, to include all associated drainage including new clear span bridge crossing of the Moyasta River, development of a site drainage network, biodiversity enhancement measures, construction of 1 no. permanent 38kV electrical substation, 2 no. permanent spoil storage areas, all associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the wind farm substation and to the existing Tullabrack 110kV Substation, all ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction including the development of one no. borrow pit, vertical realignment of an existing crest curve on the L6132. This application is seeking a ten year permission and a 35 year operational life from the date of commissioning of the wind farm. The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	Granted - 08/10/2025	Granted	4	23 km

<p>Pl. Ref: 2560520</p> <p>ACP. PL03.500605</p>	<p>Illaunbaun Wind Farm Limited</p>	<p>Illaunbaun Wind Farm</p>	<p>for the development of Illaunbaun Wind Farm in the townlands of Tooreen, Slievenalicka, Illaunbaun, Drumbaun & Lackamore (although no infrastructure will be sited within Lackamore townland), County Clare. The development will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of 5 wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of 150 m. • Construction of associated turbine foundations, crane pad hardstand and assembly areas. • Construction of one permanent 38 kV electrical on-site substation with one control building with welfare facilities, all associated electrical switchgear, security fencing, underground cabling, drainage infrastructure, and all ancillary works. • All associated internal underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the on-site Substation. • Upgrade of existing tracks, roads and provision of new site access roads to facilitate construction & operation of the wind farm. • Two borrow pits. • Three peat repository areas for peat & spoil management. • Construction of one temporary construction compound. • Development of internal site drainage. • Permanent & Temporary tree felling to accommodate the construction & operation. • Signages and • All associated site development works. <p>This application is seeking 10-year planning permission, along with a 35-year operational life for the wind farm from the date of its commissioning. The development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413) Yes x No The planning application is subject to section 34D of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. When a notice is issued in accordance with section 34D(b), the provisions of article 26A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2025 shall apply. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) & Screening for Appropriate Assessment have been prepared in respect of the planning application and will be submitted to the planning authority with the application.</p>	<p>Refused; Appealed</p>	<p>In Planning</p> <p>(Case to be decided by 14-05-2026)</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>1.7 km</p>
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<p>PI Ref: 2660207</p>	<p>Slievenalicka Locally Owned Turbine Ltd.²³</p>	<p>Slievenalicka Wind Turbine</p>	<p>The development will consist of: • Construction of 1 wind turbine with a maximum overall blade tip height of 150m. • Construction of associated turbine foundations, crane pad hardstand and assembly areas. • Construction of one permanent 38 kV electrical on-site substation with one control building with welfare facilities, all associated electrical switchgear, security fencing, underground cabling, drainage infrastructure, and all ancillary works. • All associated internal underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the on-site Substation. • Upgrade of existing tracks, roads and provision of new site access roads to facilitate construction & operation of the wind farm. • Two borrow pits. • One peat repository area for peat & spoil management. • Construction of one temporary construction compound. • Development of internal site drainage. • Permanent & Temporary tree felling to accommodate the construction & operation. • Signages and • All associated site development works. This application is seeking 10-year planning permission, along with a 35-year operational life for the wind farm from the date of its commissioning. The development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413). The planning application is subject to section 34D of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. When a notice is issued in accordance with section 34D(b), the provisions of article 26A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2025 shall apply. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared in respect of the planning application and will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application</p>	<p>Decision due 25/05/2026</p>	<p>Pre-validation</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1.5km</p>
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Pl. Ref	Applicant	Wind Farm	Description	Decision	Status	Turbines No.	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine
ACP Ref: PAX03.323783	Cloonkett Green Energy	Coolkett Wind Farm	Planning permission for Cloonkett Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a permanent 220kV substation and ancillary development	Pre-Planning	Proposed	14	20.12 km
Pl. Ref: 00952 ACP. 123292	Pro Ventum	Moanmore Wind Farm	to erect a wind farm comprising of 7 no. 1800 kw Wind Turbines including 7 no. transformer stations	Granted – 19/11/2001	Existing	7	23.1 km
Pl. Ref: Not Available	Regnum	Dehomad Wind Farm	Not Available	Public Domain	-	6	-

²³ Slievenalicka Wind Turbine (Pl. Ref. 2660207) is considered as a part of the Illaunbaun Wind Farm (Pl. Ref. 2560520, ACP Ref. PL03.500605) for the cumulative impact assessment throughout the EIAR.

2.7 Scoping and Consultation

2.7.1 Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining the content, depth and extent of topics to be covered in the environmental information to be submitted to a competent authority for projects that are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This process is conducted by contacting relevant authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with interest in the specific aspects of the environment with the potential to be affected by the proposal. These organisations are invited to submit comments on the scope of the EIAR and the specific standards of information they require. Comprehensive and timely scoping helps ensure that the EIAR refers to all relevant aspects of the Proposed Project and its potential effects on the environment and provides initial feedback in the early stages of the EIAR preparation, when alterations are still easily incorporated into the design. In this way scoping not only informs the content and scope of the EIAR, but it also provides a feedback mechanism for the proposal design itself.

2.7.2 Scoping Responses

Table 2-7 lists the responses received from the bodies to the scoping document circulated in January 2025 with a follow up in February 2025. Copies of all scoping responses are included in Appendix 2-1 of this EIAR. If further responses are received, the comments of the consultees will be considered in the construction and operation of the Proposed Project in the event of a grant of planning permission. The recommendation of the consultees has informed the project design and scope of assessments undertaken and the contents of the EIAR.

Table 2-7: Scoping List and Responses

Ref	Consultee	Date of Response
1	An Taisce	No Response.
2	Aviation Navigation Ireland	No Response.
3	Bat Conservation Ireland	No Response.
4	Birdwatch Ireland	No Response.
5	Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Water and Energy	No Response.
6	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	12/03/2025
7	Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment	No Response.
8	Department of Defence	20/02/2025
9	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	13/03/2025
10	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	No Response.
11	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	19/02/2025
12	EirGrid	No Response.
13	Failte Ireland	11/02/2025

Ref	Consultee	Date of Response
14	Forest Service	No Response.
15	Geological Survey of Ireland	05/02/2025
16	Health Service Executive	07/03/2025
17	Irish Rail	04/02/2025
18	Inland Fisheries Ireland	No Response.
19	Irish Aviation Authority	29/01/2025
20	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	No Response.
21	Irish Raptor Study Group	No Response.
22	Irish Red Grouse Association - Conservation Trust	No Response.
23	Irish Wildlife Trust	12/03/2025
24	Local County Council (Environment Dept.)	No Response.
25	Local County Council (Roads Dept.)	10/03/2025
26	Local County Council (Heritage Dept.)	No Response.
27	Office of Public Works	17/02/2025
28	Sport Ireland	No Response.
29	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	No Response.
30	The Heritage Council	No Response.
31	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	06/02/2025
32	Uisce Éireann	30/01/2025
33	Waterways Ireland	03/03/2025
34	Shannon airport	02/03/2025

Table 2-8 sets out the detail of Telecommunication consultation responses received. The responses received were fully considered and issues raised where followed up through contact with the respondent where clarification was necessary and addressed throughout the EIAR.

Table 2-8: Telecommunications Scoping and Responses

Ref	Consultee	Date of Response
1	2RN	11/11/2024
2	BAI	08/11/2024
3	Cellnex	04/12/2024
4	Dense air	18/11/2024
5	Eircom Ltd	12/11/2024
6	EirGrid	No Response.
7	Electricity Supply Board	20/12/2024
8	Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited	07/11/2024
9	EOBO Ltd	No Response.
10	FastCom Broadband Limited	No Response.
11	Hibernian towers	No Response.
12	Imagine Networks Services	07/11/2024
13	Ivertec Ltd	18/11/2024
14	JFK Communications Ltd	03/12/2024
15	JS Whizzy Internet Limited	08/11/2024
16	Lackabeha Services Ltd T/A Airwaves Internet	08/11/2024
17	NBI Infrastructure DAC	04/12/2024
18	TETRA Ireland	No Response.
19	Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd	04/12/2024
20	Towercom	27/11/2024
21	Viatel Ireland Ltd	No Response.
22	Virgin media	04/12/2024
23	Vodafone Ireland Ltd	04/12/2024
24	Western Broadband Network	07/11/2024

Table 2-9 below provides a summary of the details received from the consultees. The table also identifies the relevant chapter where the points raised by each of the consultees are addressed.

Table 2.9: Consultee responses and relevant chapters

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
1	2RN	Requested a protocol signed between the developer and 2rn should the Proposed Project go ahead	Chapter 15: Material Assets
4	BAI	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the BAI network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
7	Cellnex	Cellnex cannot disclose information	N/A
9	Dense air	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the Dense air network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
10	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Letter summarising requirement for felling licence if the Proposed Project involves felling/ removal of trees. Note that there must be absolute spatial consistency between the felling licence areas submitted to DAFM (second authority) and all related planning documents submitted to the first authority in respect of the felling area(s).	Chapter 6: Biodiversity
12	Department of Defence	Provided requirements for obstacle lighting.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
13	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	The response outlines the specific details and requirements for the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) that is required as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Proposed Project. Results of the investigations mentioned (survey, excavation, monitoring) must inform the EIA process and be included in the EIAR. NPWS: MKO requested a meeting with the NPWS, which was scheduled for 11 th November 2025, however the NPWS was unable to resource this meeting. MKO subsequently issued the presentation notes prepared for the meeting on 17 th November 2025 to the NPWS detailing how the biodiversity and ornithology assessment within the EIAR would address the matters previously raised for discussion with the NPWS by the Commission during pre-application consultation. In the absence of the availability for a meeting, MKO sought written feedback from the NPWS. The NPWS duly provided written response on 27 th January 2026. The points raised within the response are summarised below and how they will be addressed within the EIAR are outlined.	Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage Chapter 6: Biodiversity Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (Appendix 6-4) Chapter 7: Ornithology

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
		<p>The first point raised was with regard to breeding hen harrier and the survey requirements. A comprehensive suite of surveys of the proposed wind farm and its hinterland have been undertaken, including surveys for hen harrier. The NPWS also outlined that the assessment of impacts on hen harrier should be undertaken at the appropriate scale, in the context of the North West Clare region and the national population.</p> <p>The NPWS outlined that any compensation or enhancement measures should establish a baseline, management objectives, a methodology to deliver the objectives and a methodology to monitor the delivery of the objectives. Additionally, the NPWS provided advice on forest-to-bog restoration to be taken into consideration when developing the BMEP. NPWS also provided advise on addressing any loss of nesting habitat for hen harrier, however, based on the comprehensive suite of survey data available for this site, this is not relevant to the Proposed Project.</p>	
15	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	<p>The Department notes potential effects of the development's construction, especially the connection cables, on the environment and the regional/local road network. Key concerns are raised about placing cables within the public road network, which could significantly restrict the Road Authority's function, add costs, affect road stability (particularly on legacy roads or bog ramparts), and impact future development by using available space. The Department recommends examining alternative technologies Overhead lines / underground cabling (OHL/UGC) and routes other than public roads and potentially connecting closer to the wind farm to reduce road impact.</p> <p>Detailed recommendations for cable placement include minimizing impact on road maintenance, avoiding permanent jointing bays under the road pavement for safety and integrity, avoiding attachment to bridges and culverts, and rationalizing cables into one trench. Recommended conditions for any approval include requiring specific local authority approval for cable routes, complying with standards like the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads, accurately recording cable locations using technology like BIM, and notifying the Roads Authority of cable ownership and control.</p>	Chapter 3: Reasonable Alternatives Chapter 15: Material Assets
16	Eircom Ltd	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the Eircom Ltd network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
18	Electricity Supply Board	The Proposed Project has been reviewed and cleared by Electricity Supply Board.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
19	Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
21	Failte Ireland	Provided copy of most recent Fáilte Ireland 2023 EIAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects	Chapter 5: Population and Human Health
24	Geological Survey of Ireland	Recommend the use of various data sets when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes for development plans and policies.	Chapter 8 Land, Soils and Geology Chapter 9 Hydrology and Hydrogeology
25	Health Service Executive	Provided an Environmental Health Service Submission Report outlining key considerations in relation to potential impacts of the Proposed Project to be assessed in the EIAR	Chapter 4: Description Chapter 5: Population and Human Health Chapter 8: Lands, Soils and Geology Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology Chapter 10: Air Quality and Climate Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration
27	Irish Rail	Clarification provided that the nearest Iarnród Éireann infrastructure is in Ennis approximately 18.5km from the green EIAR boundary, therefore, if the grid connection is within the green EIAR boundary it is remote from the railway network, and they anticipate no impact from the Proposed Project.	Chapter 3 Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives
28	Imagine Networks Services	Imagine Networks Services have no microwave or radio links in the area; hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
30	Irish Aviation Authority	In the event of planning consent being granted, the applicant should be conditioned to contact the Irish Aviation Authority to: (1) agree an aeronautical obstacle warning light scheme for the wind farm development, (2) provide as-constructed coordinates in WGS84 format together with ground and blade tip height elevations at each wind turbine location and (3) notify the Authority of intention to commence crane operations with at least 30 days prior notification of their erection.	Chapter 15 Material Assets
32	Irish Rail	Two main recommendations made by defining 2 main zones as follows: 1. Exclusion zone: wind farm not less than 5 Km from antenna 2. Coordination zone: 5Km<wind farm <30Km: this area, coordination between operators is required to fix any issue and impact on the signal propagation	Chapter 15: Material Assets
36	Irish Wildlife Trust	They do not have the staff capacity to respond to the consultation at the moment but will endeavour to respond if possible.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
37	Ivertec Ltd	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the Ivertec Ltd network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
38	JFK Communications Ltd	JFK Communications Ltd have no infrastructure in the area; hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
39	JS Whizzy Internet Limited	JS Whizzy Internet Limited have no links in the area; hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
40	Lackabeha Services Ltd T/A Airwaves Internet	Lackabeha Services Ltd T/A Airwaves Internet have no infrastructure in the area; hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
43	Local County Council (Roads Dept.)	<p>Outlined the following points they would look for in a planning application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified Haul route for abnormal loads with a traffic plan and auto tracking carried out in any areas of concern. Construction traffic management plan. • Sightline assessment for all entrances. We do not accept speed survey assessments to justify a reduced speed limit but with the new speed limit of 60kph on local roads this reduces the requirement significantly. • Identify the cable route and determine any road closers. Residents effected should be given a point of contact. TTMP to be agreed with Care County Council and reinstatement of road to be agreed with the Area Engineer. • The Municipal District Area Office should be made aware of the haul route and discussions should be had relating to repairs of the roadway immediate to any entrances to the site. A pre during and post inspection will be required with assessment carried out on any water crossings. • Maintenance of the public road from any debris throughout the construction. • Identify the entrances that will be maintained for operations. 	Chapter 15: Material Assets
44	Meteor Mobile Communications Limited	The Proposed Project will have no impact on the Meteor Mobile Communications Limited network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
45	NBI Infrastructure DAC	NBI Infrastructure DAC have no infrastructure within 5km of the Proposed Project, hence will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
46	Office of Public Works	<p>The Office of Public Works underscores that if the development or its access roads require any new or modified culverts or bridges crossing watercourses, these structures require consent from the Commissioners of Public Works. This is a mandatory requirement under Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act of 1945 as amended. Information and application forms for obtaining Section 50 consent are outlined on https://www.qov.ie/en/publication/957aa7-consent-requirements-constructioniteration-of-watercourse-infrastru/</p> <p>The OPW also recommended that a flood risk assessment be carried out with regard to the Proposed Project.</p>	Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology
47	RTÉ/Saorview	Response received to set up a 2m protocol.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
48	Shannon airport	<p>The Authority previously commented on the application when it was submitted in 2021.</p> <p>A key concern is that the turbines may have implications for Air Traffic Control communication, navigation, and surveillance (CNS) systems and aircraft flight paths.</p> <p>The applicant must adhere to regulations like the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) Obstacles to Aircraft in Flight Order, 2005, and consider standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Shannon Airport Authority defines obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS) to ensure airspace safety around the aerodrome.</p> <p>A previous assessment for up to 8 turbines found no penetration of key OLS surfaces. GPS coordinates and Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) data were requested for the 9th turbine.</p> <p>Engagement with Air Nav Ireland – Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) is needed to assess impacts on flight procedures and CNS equipment. The turbines, if built, must be notified to the IAA and included on aeronautical charts. Details on crane use during construction and applying European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) standards for marking and lighting are also required.</p>	Chapter 15: Material Assets
53	Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd	Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd have no links passing through the area, hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
54	Towercom	Towercom have no infrastructure within 5km of the Proposed Project, hence will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
55	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	<p>The response outlines Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) position as a statutory consultee regarding planning applications that may affect the national road network and focuses on upholding official policy and guidelines, particularly the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. A core objective is to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national road network.</p> <p>The response provides guidance for preparing EIARs, advising consultation with relevant authorities, assessing potential significant impacts on the network and junctions, and considering visual and cumulative impacts. It highlights the need for a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) where appropriate, referencing TII's guidelines. Developers are responsible for the cost of any required national road improvements.</p> <p>Specific guidance is given for haul routes, including assessing capacity for abnormal loads and consulting network managers. Cable routing and grid connection proposals are addressed, emphasizing safeguarding future road schemes and preferring routes demonstrating the 'optimal solution' due to potential safety and maintenance issues on national roads. Crossings should ideally be by Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). The response provides general guidance, which is non-exhaustive.</p>	<p>Chapter 3 Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives Chapter 12 Noise and Vibration Chapter 14 Landscape and Visual Chapter 15 Material Assets Appendix 15-2 Traffic Management Plan</p>
56	Uisce Éireann	<p>The response mentions a water abstraction point in the area, approximately 6km to the south of the Proposed Project but, by their initial assessment, indicate that the chance of hydrological/hydrogeological interaction is low.</p> <p>Recommend that analysis consider areas of potential hydrological and hydrogeological pathway and include any all direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the abstraction points. They also recommend addressing potential run off and hydrocarbon during construction, operational and decommissioning phases, and the inclusion of mitigation against contaminants entering groundwater and surface waters via these pathways. The Proposed Project does not indicate the need for a water or wastewater connection. If such a connection is envisaged, the applicant must submit a pre-connection enquiry and secure a confirmation of feasibility before a connection can be facilitated.</p> <p>They also outline the aspects of water and wastewater services which should be considered in the scope of the EIAR where relevant.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology</p>

Ref	Consultee	Points Raised by Consultee	Addressed in Chapter
58	Virgin media	Virgin media have no radio P2P links in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, hence will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
59	Vodafone Ireland Ltd	Vodafone Ireland Ltd does not have any transmission within the area of the Proposed Project, hence will have no impact on their network. Details of a link that passes near to the site boundary have been provided.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
60	Waterways Ireland	No comment as the Proposed Project is not within any Zone of Influence of their waterways.	Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology
61	Western Broadband Network	Western Broadband Network have no infrastructure in the area; hence the Proposed Project will have no impact on their network.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

2.8 Other Consultations

2.8.1 Pre- Planning Meetings

2.8.1.1 An Coimisiún Pleanála

First Pre-Application Meeting - Section 37B

The Applicant engaged with An Coimisiún Pleanála under the provisions of Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as to whether the Proposed Project would meet the thresholds of the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. The Applicant opened consultations with the Commission in February 2025 in relation to a Proposed Project of approximately 9 no. wind turbines with an overall ground to blade tip height of up to 175m and all associated works including, associated hardstands, electrical cabling and site development works with the potential for the wind farm to generate greater than 50 Megawatts (MW) of electricity to the National Grid.

A SID meeting under the provisions of Section 37B was held with the Commission on the 6th March 2025 via MS Teams. Those in attendance were:

On behalf of ACP:

- > Sarah Lynch (Assistant Planning Director, Chair)
- > Donogh O'Donoghue (Senior Planning Inspector)
- > Maeve Flynn (Senior Ecologist)
- > Lauren Murphy (Executive Officer)

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- > Ronan Dunne (MKO)
- > Susan Doran (MKO)
- > Ellen Costello (MKO)
- > Colm Ryan (MKO)
- > William O'Connor (Slieveacurry Ltd)
- > Niall Galvin (Slieveacurry Ltd)
- > Jonathan Benn (Slieveacurry Ltd)

The design team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in the form of a PowerPoint presentation which set out the following information:

- > A High-level overview of the Proposed Project and the subject site.
- > Introduction to the applicant.
- > Overview of planning policy including compliance with local wind energy policy.
- > Provided specific details of the scheme relating to LVIA, Ecology and Aviation.
- > Set out the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be undertaken.
- > Discussed scoping & pre-application/public consultation undertaken to date.
- > Set out the projected project timelines.
- > Relevant Strategic Infrastructure Development criteria as set out in the 7th Schedule of the Act.

Following this presentation, there was further discussion held between the project team and the representatives of ACP. Matters discussed included:

- > Intention by the applicant to seek design flexibility request.

- Issues raised previously within Commission Order and Inspector's Report regarding the Proposed Project and Site to be addressed.
- Potential impacts of the Proposed Wind Farm Site due to the presence of deep peat on the site.
- Recommended engagement with National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS).
- Query regarding public consultations.
- Advised that enhancement areas must be within red line boundary of the planning application.
- Consideration to be given to issues raised by third party submissions during previously refused planning applications.
- Cumulative impacts, nocturnal studies, enhancement plans, and biodiversity studies to be carefully assessed.
- Robust Noise Impact assessment to be undertaken.
- Advised familiarity with RED III proposals in terms of timelines.
- Query regarding Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- Further consultation with TII in relation to Turbine Delivery Route and potential road works advised.

Second Pre-Application Meeting – Section 37B

The Applicant engaged with An Coimisiún Pleanála for a second pre-application meeting under Section 37B of the Planning Act. The second meeting was held on the 21st of October 2025 via Microsoft (MS) Teams. Those in attendance were:

On behalf of ACP:

- Stephen Kay (Assistant Director of Planning)
- Donogh O'Donoghue (Senior Planning Inspector)
- Maeve Flynn (Senior Ecologist)
- Emmet Smyth (Senior Environmental Scientist)
- Lauren Murphy (Admin)

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- Ronan Dunne (MKO)
- Hannah Rice (MKO)
- Ellen Costello (MKO)
- Brandon Taylor (MKO)
- Padraig Cregg (MKO)
- Padraig Desmond (MKO)
- Jonathan Benn (Slieveacurry Ltd)
- Niall Galvin (Slieveacurry Ltd)

The project team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in the form of a PowerPoint presentation which set out the following information:

- An introduction to the Applicant and Project Team.
- A High-level overview of the Proposed Project and the subject site.
- Relevant Strategic Infrastructure Development criteria as set out in the 7th Schedule of the Act.
- RED III and Policy Compliance.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Undertaken to date.
- Completeness Check.
- An update on the scoping, pre-application, and public consultation undertaken to date.
- Set out the projected project timelines.

Following this presentation, there was further discussion held between the project team and the representatives of ACP. Matters discussed included:

- Project evolution and design changes over time.
- Discussion on peat and spoil management having been further reviewed and assessment confirming overall stability.
- Discussion on hen harrier habitat noted the need for measurable targets and scientific support for mitigation.
- Previous refusal reasons addressed via mitigation by design.
- Discussion on NPWS input on peat areas.
- Confirmation that all enhancement measures shall be within red line boundary.
- Annex 1 habitats, peatlands, and marsh fritillary identified as key issues.
- Site history and key issues confirmed to be focus of long-term management.
- All noise elements to be covered, with protocols in place for addressing potential issues.
- Discussion on LVIA considerations such as shadow flicker, and residential amenity via mitigation by design.

SID Determination

A letter received from An Coimisiún Pleanála dated the 19th March 2026 (ABP-321892-25) stated that under Section 37B (4)(A), it is the opinion of the Board that the Proposed Project falls within the scope of the paragraphs 37A(2)(a) and (b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This confirmed that the Proposed Project constitutes SID and therefore the planning application should be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

2.8.1.2 Clare County Council

The prospective applicant and members of the design team met with Clare County Council in relation to the Proposed Project prior to the submission of this planning application. The pre-planning meeting took place on 25th March 2025 via MS Teams and included representatives from Clare County Council, Slieveacurry Ltd. and MKO. The team gave a PowerPoint presentation as an introduction to the site and development proposals.

Those invited and in attendance at the meeting were as follows:

On behalf of CCC:

- Gareth Ruane
- Ellen Carey

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- Ronan Dunne – MKO
- Meabhann Crowe – MKO
- Ellen Costello – MKO
- Brandon Taylor – MKO
- Edel Mulholland - MKO
- William O'Connor (Slieveacurry Ltd)
- Niall Galvin (Slieveacurry Ltd)
- Jonathan Benn (Slieveacurry Ltd)

The project team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in the form of a PowerPoint presentation which set out the following information:

- > A high-level overview of the Proposed Project and the Subject Site.
- > An introduction to the Applicant.
- > Overview of relevant planning policy including compliance with local wind energy policy.
- > Provided specific details of the scheme relating to LVIA, Ecology and Aviation.
- > Set out the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be undertaken.
- > Discussed scoping & pre-application/public consultation undertaken to date.
- > Set out the projected project timelines.

Following this presentation, there was further discussion held between the project team and the representatives of CCC. Matters discussed included:

- > Discussion on sensitive receptors such as dwellings, waterbodies, existing drains, national monuments and ecological constraints.
- > Discussion on designated sites in proximity to the Proposed Project.
- > Addressing of previous refusal reasons.
- > Environmental Impact Assessment Undertaken to date.
- > LVIA assessment undertaken to date.
- > Scoping, pre-application, and public consultation undertaken to date.

2.8.2 Community Engagement

The Community Liaison Strategy for the Proposed Project was based around engaging with the local community in an open, honest and transparent manner with the aim to not only provide clear and understandable information but also to gain feedback to understand the views of the local community. This feedback and information were used to inform the design process. The community consultation effort was led by Slieveacurry Ltd.

In February 2020, A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was appointed and remains as the point of the contact for the Proposed Project and has been engaging with the local community. The purpose of the CLO is to introduce the Proposed Project to the local community, engage and establish a line of dialogue with the local community and facilitate one-to-one consultation meetings, or small group meetings where requested. Contact details for the CLO have been provided, for local residents to get in touch with any queries or comments regarding the design and assessment of the Proposed Project as it progresses. A project website (slieveacurryinfo.com) remains available in order to provide details on the progress of the project, the community consultation effort and provide a method for members of the public to submit queries and comments to the CLO via the online contact form. Community consultation will continue throughout the entire Proposed Project timeline, and the CLO will remain available to interact with the local community.

A public information exhibition (PIE) was held in Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare on 29th September 2020. Due to the Covid 19 restrictions at that time, attendance could only be facilitated by appointment. Those wishing to attend were asked to make an appointment by contacting the CLO via the mobile number and/or email address advertised.

Additional communications took place between March 2021 and July 2022 notifying the community of project updates in the form of a newspaper notice and letter delivered to dwellings identified within 2km of the previous applications site.

Following review of the refusal reasons by MKO, the houses within 2km of the Proposed Project were notified by letter of Slieveacurry Ltd.'s intention to submit a revised proposal in December 2024. The letter invited interested parties to contact the CLO should they wish to discuss the proposal further, and it noted that the applicant would be in touch again in 2025 with details of a PIE. In April 2025, correspondence was circulated notifying the community about the dates and times of a PIE to be held May 29th, in the Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare.

On 29th May 2025, a public information event was held in Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare. The objective of the consultation was to ensure that the views and concerns of all were considered as part of the Proposed Project Design and EIA process. Appendix 2-2 of this EIAR contains a full and detailed Community Engagement Report. The report was prepared to record the consultation carried out with local community in respect of the Proposed Project.

In April 2026, a letter was circulated to the usual mailing list informing them that the planning application for the Proposed Project would be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála within the coming weeks. Enclosed with this letter was a copy of the press notice text which contained the development description of the Proposed Project. It was noted in this letter that the planning notice would appear in the 'Clare Champion'.

Active engagement and consultation with the local community have taken place over the past 6 years. The consultation process has been an extremely valuable exercise and has provided a detailed, and enhanced understanding of the key issues and concerns of the local community, which have ultimately shaped the final project proposal. There is currently on-going consultation with the local community, and it is the intention of the applicant to continue with the consultation for the entire lifespan of the Proposed Project.

The development of the Proposed Project will provide an enduring economic benefit to the communities surrounding the Proposed Project, through the potential community benefit package for residents and community groups, employment during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and through the annual rates payable to the Local Authority.

Please refer to the Community Engagement Report at Appendix 2-2 of the EIAR for further details.

2.9

Cumulative Impact Assessment

The EIA Directive and associated guidance documents state that as well as considering any direct, indirect, secondary, transboundary, short-, medium-, and long-term, permanent, and temporary, positive and negative effects of the project (all of which are considered in the various chapters of this EIAR), the description of likely significant effects should include an assessment of cumulative impacts that may arise. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project. The factors to be considered in relation to cumulative effects include population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, landscape, and cultural heritage as well as the interactions between these factors.

To gather a comprehensive view of cumulative impacts on these environmental considerations and to inform the EIAR process being undertaken by the consenting authority, each relevant chapter within this EIAR includes a cumulative impact assessment where appropriate.

The potential for cumulative impacts arising from other projects has therefore been fully considered within this EIAR.

2.9.1

Methodology for the Cumulative Assessment of Projects

The potential cumulative impact of the Proposed Project and combined with the potential impact of other projects has been carried out with the purpose of identifying what influence the Proposed Project will have on the surrounding environment when considered collectively with approved and existing projects and projects pending a decision from the planning authority projects in the public domain such as those Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) at pre-consultation with ACP, and land-uses in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The cumulative impact assessment of projects has three principle aims:

1. *To establish the range and nature of existing and approved projects within the cumulative impact study area of the Proposed Project.*
2. *To summarise the relevant projects which have a potential to create cumulative impacts.*
3. *To identify the projects that hold the potential for cumulative interaction within the context of the Proposed Project and discard projects that will neither directly or indirectly contribute to cumulative impacts. (Note: this is done by individual experts with respect to their specialist area of expertise.)*

Projects were identified through a search of relevant online planning registers and effects were considered following a review of associated EIARs.

2.9.2

Establishing the Cumulative Long List

To establish a long list of existing, permitted and proposed projects to be included in the cumulative impact assessment, cumulative study areas were established for each individual topic area in the EIAR. Following consultation with the EIAR team on each individual topic, the maximum geographical extent of each cumulative study area and justification for this extent was established and is presented in Table 2-10 below. Each cumulative study area was established with regard for the potential environmental receptors, potential impact pathways, topic specific guidance, best practice and professional judgement.

Table 2-10: Cumulative Study Area and Justification

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
<p>Population & Human Health (including shadow flicker)</p>	<p>Electoral divisions (EDs) where the Proposed Wind Farm Site is located (Annagh, Ballyvaslin, Cloonanaha, Fermoyle and Moy)</p> <p>Shadow Flicker Study Area (10 x Rotor Diameter buffer from Proposed Turbines) – 1.5km</p> <p>250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p> <p>Consideration for the Population & Human Health cumulative extent is also given to the Air Quality, Climate, Water, Noise and Landscape & Visual (i.e. Residential Visual Amenity) Cumulative Study areas.</p>	<p>The Population Study Area encompasses the EDs in which the Site is located, all properties within the Population Study Area have been assessed for cumulative impacts with the Proposed Project.</p> <p>The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) note that shadow flicker effects are unlikely to occur outside of 10 times the rotor diameter of the turbines. For the assessment of cumulative shadow flicker, any other existing, permitted or proposed wind farms are considered where their ten times rotor diameter shadow flicker study area are located within the Shadow Flicker Study Area of 1.5km (ten times the rotor diameter from proposed turbines) for the Proposed Project.</p>

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>10 km from the Site.</p> <p>250m from Proposed Grid Connection site.</p> <p>Consideration for the Biodiversity cumulative extent is also given to the Birds and Hydrology and Hydrogeology Cumulative geographical boundaries.</p>	<p>Using the precautionary approach and given the nature and scale of the Proposed Project, the geographical boundary for terrestrial ecological aspects, i.e. habitats and species, is 10km for cumulative assessment for the Proposed Wind Farm Site, and 250 m from the Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p> <p>Bats are a mobile species which can cover large distances for foraging and roosting over a range of varied habitats. As recommended by Nature Scot (2021) guidance: Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines (Section 4), a 10km cumulative study area is considered for potential cumulative effects on bats.</p>
<p>Birds</p>	<p>25km from the proposed turbines for large infrastructural development, such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments.</p> <p>Consideration for the Birds cumulative extent for the Proposed Grid Connection Site is also given to the Biodiversity cumulative geographical boundaries; i.e., 250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Site. The Proposed Grid Connection Site cumulative boundary is captured within the 25km buffer from the proposed turbines.</p>	<p>NatureScot guidance ‘<i>Assessing the Cumulative Impacts of onshore Wind Energy Developments</i>’ (SNH, 2012; 2018) was consulted while undertaking the cumulative assessment. SNH (2012; 2018) emphasises that its priority is to ‘<i>maintain the conservation status of the species population at the national level.</i>’ However, it is acknowledged that consideration should also be allowed for impacts at the regional level ‘<i>where regional impacts have national implications (for example where a specific region holds the majority of the national population)</i>’. Following the guidance of SNH (2012), the cumulative impact assessment has been carried out at the scale of the importance rating of the receptor. A 25km radius of the</p>

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
		<p>Proposed Turbines was considered a reasonable approximation of the size of a county and a 5km radius of the Proposed Wind Farm Site was considered a reasonable approximation for the local level.</p> <p>Using the precautionary approach the geographical boundary for terrestrial ornithological aspects, i.e. birds, is 250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p>
Land, Soils and Geology	EIAR Site Boundary	As there is no pathway for offsite cumulative impacts for Land, Soils and Geology, the cumulative study area is the EIAR Site Boundary.
Hydrology and Hydrogeology	<p>Proposed Project:</p> <p>WFD Catchment for large infrastructural developments such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments. River Sub Basins for all smaller proposed, permitted or existing plans or projects (i.e. private and commercial type developments).</p>	<p>Regional surface water catchments are used for cumulative impact assessment with regard large infrastructural developments such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments. The potential for cumulative effects for these developments likely exists on a regional catchment scale (i.e. significant works likely existing in several sub-basins). Therefore, other wind-farm developments are considered within the Annagh[Clare]_SC_010 and Inagh [Ennistymon]_SC_010 sub-catchments for cumulative effects.</p> <p>River Sub Basins are used for smaller developments (i.e. private & commercial type developments). These developments are not likely to present a significant cumulative impact risk on a regional catchment scale as any effects would likely be imperceptible as a result of the setback distances and localised nature of the associated works. Given the nature and scale of the proposed works and the lack of hydrological cumulative impact potential beyond the river sub basin scale, the Water cumulative study area is defined by river sub basins in which built infrastructure of the Proposed Project is located.</p>

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
		<p>Due to the narrow nature of the proposed grid connection trench (~0.9m wide), a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative effects on the water environment.</p>
<p>Air Quality</p>	<p>Air Quality Study Area is 1km from Proposed Wind Farm Site.</p> <p>250m from Proposed Grid Connection Site;</p>	<p>Dust deposition impacts can occur for a distance of 250m from works areas, but the majority of deposition occurs within the first 50m from source (Guidance of the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction, IAQM 2024). The geographical boundary for the cumulative dust impact is 250m.</p> <p>In line with the TII Publication Air Quality Assessment of Proposed National Roads – Standard PE-ENV-01107, December 2022, a geographical boundary of 1km was used for cumulative air quality assessment.</p>
<p>Climate</p>	<p>The climate assessment has been considered on a national basis and is not confined to a specific study area.</p>	<p>The climate assessment has considered the cumulative effects of the Proposed Project with other developments on a national basis under the relevant national Sectoral Emissions Ceilings.</p>
<p>Noise & Vibration</p>	<p>The list of wind farms which were initially considered in cumulative assessment extended to 25km of the Proposed Turbines.</p> <p>250m from Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p>	<p>The geographical boundary for the cumulative noise assessment is the area within which noise levels from the proposed, consented and existing wind turbine(s) may exceed 35 dB LA90 at up to 10 m/s wind speed (Institute of Acoustics document Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise).</p> <p>Due to the narrow nature of the proposed 33kV underground cabling trench (~0.9m wide), a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative noise effects.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>25km buffer from the Proposed Wind Farm Site.</p>	<p>Cumulative impacts on setting are more likely to occur at the operational stage of the development (i.e. post-construction). In this regard in order to assess overall</p>

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
	250m from Proposed Grid Connection	<p>cumulative effects on archaeology and cultural heritage the Proposed Project is considered in the context of other developments, in particular other permitted and proposed wind farms within 25km of the Proposed Turbines.</p> <p>Direct effects for the Proposed Project are considered to be confined to within the Site and relate to construction effects.</p> <p>Due to the narrow nature of the proposed 33kV underground cabling trench (~0.9m wide), a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative cultural heritage effects</p>
Landscape & Visual	<p>25km buffer from the Proposed Turbines for Landscape and Visual effects (LVIA Study Area).</p> <p>15km from Proposed Turbines for effects on landscape character (LCA Study Area).</p>	<p>The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) study area has been chosen as 25 km, following the guidance on Appendix 3 of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) which provides that <i>‘For blade tips in excess of 100m, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility radius of 20km would be adequate’</i> (Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), Page 94, Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), Page 152)</p> <p>The LCA Study Area has been chosen as 15 km for effects on Landscape Character Areas. Through experience conducting LVIA for other wind energy development projects, the assessment team determined that no significant effects on landscape character areas are likely to arise beyond distances of 15km from the proposed turbines. Therefore, a LCA Study Area of 15km is deemed appropriate for effects on landscape character in relation to the assessment of effects upon designated Landscape Character Areas.</p>
Material Assets: Traffic & Transport	<p>25km buffer from Proposed Turbines for large infrastructural developments such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments.</p> <p>250m from Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p>	<p>Informed by traffic modelling scenario and the area of influence the Proposed Project has on changing traffic volumes. The potential cumulative traffic effects with the Proposed Project are assessed on the following criteria;</p>

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project status (proposed to operational) ➤ Degree of overlap with the Proposed Project delivery highway network (low to high) ➤ Traffic volumes (low to high) <p>The geographical boundary for the traffic & transport cumulative assessment is defined by the potential for other projects to overlap with the Proposed Project delivery highway network, and so a 25km buffer from turbines and 250m buffer from the proposed underground electrical cabling route is deemed appropriate to capture other plans and projects with the potential for cumulative effects with the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>Material Assets: Telecoms</p>	<p>The list of wind farms and other projects which were initially considered in cumulative assessment extended to 25km from Proposed Turbines.</p> <p>250m from Proposed Grid Connection Site.</p>	<p>The geographical boundary for the telecoms cumulative assessment is defined by the potential for other wind farm projects to interfere with broadcast signals that interact with the Proposed Project.</p>

The maximum extent of each cumulative search buffer was determined by the largest specific cumulative study area buffer (25km from EIAR site boundary), as shown in Table 2-10 above. All EIAR chapters did not use the maximum extent of the largest buffer. In instances where a specific chapter’s cumulative study area was smaller than the cumulative search maximum extent, the cumulative long list was filtered by distance to infrastructure/boundary, creating a chapter specific long list unique to each cumulative study area set out in Table 2-10 above.

Once the cumulative study areas were identified and justified, a search was conducted across various platforms and databases in order to compile a list of projects and ongoing activities in the area. The sources used to establish the cumulative long list are provided in Table 2-11 below. The data was first compiled spatially through a Geographic Information System (GIS). The spatialised data was then exported into a list for further scrutiny and review. This formed the cumulative long list provided in Appendix 2-3.

Table 2-11: Data sources used for long list compilation

Title	Description	Author
<p>Planning Applications</p>	<p>https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9cf2a09799d74d8e9316a3d3a4d3a8de</p>	<p>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>

An Coimisiún Pleanála Cases	https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/map-search	An Coimisiún Pleanála
EIA Portal Points	https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Licensed Facilities	https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/	EPA
Waste Schemes	https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/ & MKO's internal database	EPA & MKO

To allow sufficient time for the cumulative impact assessment to be undertaken for each EIAR topic, the final search and compilation of the cumulative plans and projects list was carried out in March 2026. Therefore, plans and projects that were applied for after March 2026 are not considered in the cumulative impact assessment.

2.9.3 Projects Considered in the Cumulative Impact Assessment

2.9.3.1 Planning Applications & Permissions

A search was conducted using data from Clare County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála's planning portals to search for all planned and/or permitted planning applications within 25km of the Application Site boundary (as listed in Appendix 2-3). Planning applications considered within this boundary include all live/extant permissions available on the various online portals mentioned above. This distance was chosen as it is considered that cumulative impacts would not exist with any development proposed/permitted greater than 25km from the Site.

Expired planning applications were excluded from the cumulative assessment as it is considered that such development has either been constructed and therefore forms part of the existing baseline or they have not been constructed and the planning permission has expired. Invalid or refused planning applications were also excluded from the cumulative impact assessment. Planning applications (including Local Authority and ACP cases) were then categorised by development description into development categories, and any relevant/large-scale developments were highlighted to the EIAR project team for inclusion in the cumulative impact assessment in each individual EIAR chapter.

2.9.3.2 Wind Farm Applications within 25km of the Proposed Turbines

A planning search was carried out to establish proposed, permitted and operational wind energy developments within 25km of the Proposed Turbines. The search was carried out using the relevant local authority and ACP databases in April 2026 for relevant planning applications. In total, 19 no. applications relating to wind energy were identified within 25km of the proposed turbines. These are outlined in greater detail in Table 2-6 above.

In addition to this, wind energy developments at pre-application stage or within the public domain (i.e. public consultation commenced) are also considered and included in the cumulative wind farm list within 25km of Proposed Turbines. These are summarised below:

- Slievecallan Wind Farm (Existing) - 1.6km southeast of the proposed turbine T6

- Booltiagh Wind Farm (Extension) (Existing) - 8.6km southeast of the proposed turbine T8
- Booltiagh I Wind Farm (Existing) - 9.2km southeast of the proposed turbine T7
- Cahermurphy Wind Farm (Existing) - 9.5km southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Letteragh Wind Farm (Existing) - 10.8km southeast of the proposed turbine T8
- Glenmore / Sorrell Wind Farm (Existing) - 11.2km southeast of the proposed turbine T8
- Cahermurphy II Wind Farm (In Planning) - 9.75km southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Cahermurphy West Wind Farm (Proposed) - 9.95km southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Kiltumper Wind Farm (Existing) - 11.6km south of the proposed turbine T7
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm (Existing) - 13.1km southeast of the proposed turbine T6
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm Extension (Existing) - 13.9km southeast of the proposed turbine T6
- Crossmore Wind Farm (Existing) - 18.1km southeast of the proposed turbine T7
- Tullabrack Wind Farm (Existing) - 22km southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Ballykett Wind Farm (Permitted) - 23km southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Illaunbaun Wind Farm (In Planning) - 1.7km from northwest of the proposed turbine T1
- Slievenalicka Locally Owned Turbine (In Planning) – 3km northwest of the proposed turbine T3
- Coolkett Wind Farm (Proposed) - 20.12km from southeast of the proposed turbine T7
- Moanmore Wind Farm (Existing) - 23.1 km from southwest of the proposed turbine T7
- Dehomad Wind Farm (Public Domain) - Indicative site location point is located 14.8km southeast of proposed turbine T7

2.9.3.3 Other Developments/Land uses

The review of the relevant County Council planning registers documented relevant general development planning applications in the vicinity of the Site, the majority of which relate to the provision and/or alteration of one-off rural housing and the provision of agricultural buildings. These applications and land uses have also been taken account in describing the baseline environment and in the relevant assessments.

Furthermore, the cumulative impact assessments carried out in each of the subsequent chapters of this EIAR consider all potential significant cumulative effects arising from all land uses in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. These include ongoing agricultural practices/forestry practices, quarries and extractive industries, intensive production/ processing industries, large infrastructure projects and other EIAR projects.

2.9.3.4 EPA Licenced Activities

EPA licenced activities refer to industrial and waste management operations that require a license from the Environmental Protection Agency under various pieces of environmental legislation. A list of all EPA licenced activities within the cumulative study area is included in Appendix 2-3.

The categories of EPA licenced activities considered as part of the cumulative assessment are as follows:

- Industrial Emissions (IE) Licensing;
- Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) Licensing;
- Waste Licensing; and
- Waste Water Discharge Authorisations.

2.9.3.5 Arterial Drainage Schemes

The Office of Public Works (OPW) carried out several Arterial Drainage Schemes on catchments under the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945. Under section 37 of the 1945 Act, the OPW is required to maintain drainage works in proper repair and effective condition. These drainage works include watercourses, embankments and other structures.

Watercourses are subject to siltation and erosion, among other processes, while embankments are subject to settlement and erosion. There are no arterial drainage schemes or benefited lands within the vicinity of the Site.

2.9.3.6 Commercial Forestry

A review of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Forestry License Viewer shows a number of felling licenses active within the wider area. The forestry subject to these licenses may or may not be felled before the Proposed Project goes to construction stage. Therefore, a search of the active felling licenses will be carried out pre-construction and the Applicant will liaise with forestry contractors to carry out the felling related to the Proposed Project at times that minimise the potential for cumulative effect arising from commercial forestry felling within the same sub-catchments.

2.9.4 Summary

The cumulative impact assessments carried out in each of the subsequent chapters of this EIAR consider all potential significant cumulative effects arising from relevant projects and/or plans and land uses within the cumulative study area and within the vicinity of the Proposed Project.

Overall, the Proposed Project has been designed to avoid and mitigate impacts on the environment, and a suite of mitigation measures is set out within the EIAR. The mitigation measures set out in this EIAR will ensure that significant cumulative effects do not arise during the construction, operational or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project. Additional detail in relation to the potential significant cumulative effects arising and, where appropriate, the specific suite of relevant mitigation measures proposed are set out within each of the relevant chapters of this EIAR.