

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

Crumhach Wind Farm, Co. Sligo

Chapter 2 – Background of the Proposed Project



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Carbon Budgets	The maximum cumulative amount of greenhouse gas emissions that can be released into the atmosphere while limiting global warming to a specified level, between 1.5 and 2 degrees

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act	Ireland's legally binding framework which aims to achieve a climate-neutral economy by 2050, requiring a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
Climate Action Plan	National framework document for measuring, tracking and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adopting climate adaptation measures.
Community Liasion Officer	A person employed to act as a point of contact for the Proposed Project, to engage with the local community and facilitate consultation efforts and meetings where requested.
Cumulative Impact Assessment	Evaluating the combined effects of a proposed project alongside other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions on a specific environment/community.
Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines	Draft guidelines released in December 2019 updating the 2006 standards to balance community concerns with Ireland's 2030 climate goals. Key definitions and requirements include a 4x tip height setback (min 500m) for visual amenity, stricter noise limits (35-43dB(A)), zero-tolerance for shadow flicker, and mandated community consultation/participation
European Green Deal	An EU policy launched in 2019, aiming to cut emissions by at least 50% by 2030, rising towards 55%, while legally binding the 2050 neutrality goal through the European Climate Law.
Kyoto Protocol	An international treaty adopted in December 1997, requiring industrialised nations to reduce GHG emissions based on principle of common but differentiated responsibilities
National Energy Projections	Predictions of future energy use in Ireland under different scenarios and account for factors such as economic growth
National Energy Security Framework	Policy document produced by Irish government to provide an overarching and comprehensive response to Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine.
National Planning Framework	A long-term, 20-year strategy for strategic planning and sustainable development of urban and rural areas to 2040, with the core objectives of securing balanced regional development and a sustainable 'compact growth,' approach to the form and pattern of future development.
Paris Agreement	A legally binding international treaty adopted in 2015 to combat climate change, aiming to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees, preferably 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels
Planning and Development Act 2024	An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development. It precedes the Planning and Development Act 2000 and is acknowledged as a major reform to speed up housing delivery and make the planning system clearer and more efficient.
Renewable Energy Directive	An EU Directive which aims to accelerate the EU's renewable energy transition and promote energy independence

REPowerEU	A European Commission plan launched in May 2022 to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels and to accelerate the green energy transition following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
The Climate Change Advisory Council	An Independent advisory body providing evidence-based advice and recommendations on policy to support Ireland's just transition to a biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable, climate neutral and resilient society.
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992 International Treaty aimed at stabilising atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations to prevent dangerous human-induced climate interference
Wind Energy Development Guidelines	Guidelines released by the Irish government in 2006 to offer advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. The guidelines are intended to ensure a consistency of approach.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ACP	An Coimisiún Pleanála
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CCAC	Climate Change Advisory Council
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
COP	Conference of Parties
CRU	Commission for the Regulation of Utilities
DCEE	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
DoEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DoHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gas

GIS	Geographic Information System
IAA	Irish Aviation Authority
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWEA	Irish Wind Energy Association
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MW	Megawatts
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPO	National Policy Objectives
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
NWRA	Northern and Western Regional Assembly
RED	Renewable Energy Directive
RESS	Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
RPOs	Regional Policy Objectives
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCC	Sligo County Council
SCDP 2024-2030	Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland
SID	Strategic Infrastructure Development
SPA	Special Protection Area
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



WEI	Wind Energy Ireland
WES	Wind Energy Strategy

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the EIAR presents the policies and targets which have been put in place at the various levels of Government including international, national, regional and local in relation to planning, renewable energy and climate change which are relevant to the Proposed Project. The details below set out the need for the Proposed Project which will directly aid Ireland in meeting its national targets and European commitments in relation to climate change and decarbonisation.

This chapter summarises the EIAR scoping exercise that was undertaken, the pre-planning and community consultation undertaken and the Cumulative Impact Assessment process.

This chapter also provides a summary of the planning policy context relevant to the Proposed Project and should be read in conjunction with the Planning Report which accompanies the planning application.

The Proposed Project will be known as the ‘Crumhach Wind Farm’, and 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 to produce electricity.

The proposed renewable energy development will have a potential generating capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW), surpassing the 50MW threshold as set out in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (‘the Planning Act’) and is therefore subject to the requirements of the RED III Directive transposed into Irish Law by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 274 of 2025). The Proposed Project is being brought forward as a new renewable energy development with repowering elements and, is therefore, considered a ‘new wind farm’ within the context of the RED III Directive.

The planning application for the Proposed Project, accompanied by this EIAR and an NIS, will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála (‘ACP’) in accordance with Section 37E of the Planning Act.

For the purposes of this EIAR, the various project components are described and assessed using the following references: ‘Proposed Project’, ‘the Site’, ‘Proposed Wind Farm’, ‘Proposed Turbines’, ‘Proposed Grid Connection Route’, ‘Existing Wind Farm’, and ‘Existing Grid Connection’. Please see Section 1.1.1 of this EIAR for further details. A detailed description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 4 of this EIAR.

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 Alan Clancy MIPI with support from Ciara Griffin of MKO. Alan Clancy is a Senior Planner with MKO with over 10 years of experience in private practice. Alan holds a BA in Geography & History from University of Galway and a Master’s in Planning and Sustainable Development from University College Cork. Alan has experience across a range of sectors including in the commercial, residential, industrial and renewables sectors, Alan’s key strengths and areas of expertise are in development management, provision of planning advice, and project management.

Since joining MKO, Alan has assisted with various projects including Strategic Infrastructure Developments, lodgement and management of Planning Applications, Development Plan Submissions and preparing Development Potential Reports. Alan is a member of the Irish Planning Institute.

Ciara Griffin is a Planner with MKO with over a year and a half of private planning experience. Ciara holds a BA (Hons) in City Planning & Environmental Policy from University College Dublin. Since joining MKO, Ciara has been involved in a range of renewable energy projects including onshore wind and grid infrastructure. Ciara's main responsibilities include preparing planning application documents and reports, preparing inputs for EIAR's and liaising with multidisciplinary team projects.

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, 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 and confidence building of junior members 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 2023, over 81% of Ireland's energy was imported from abroad, higher than the European Union (EU) average of almost 60% (National Energy Security Framework, 2022). 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 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 sets ambitious yet essential targets for renewable energy, including 9GW of onshore wind capacity—with at least 5GW to be delivered by 2030—and an 80% share of renewable electricity by the same year. However, multiple assessments, including the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) Annual Review and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions projections, 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 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.

In the context of the current energy and climate crisis, it is deemed environmentally prudent and a sustainable form of development to utilise a site which already hosts a wind energy development, as well as utilising the existing wind farm infrastructure rather than allowing this infrastructure and the Site to become redundant. The Proposed Project represents an opportunity to utilise existing wind farm infrastructure with the provision of 17 no. new turbines that will result in an increased generating capacity at the Site, providing clean, renewable electricity to the national grid, which will contribute towards achieving further decarbonisation of Ireland’s electricity generation sector.

Please see the accompanying Planning Report and Section 1.5 of Chapter 1: Introduction of this EIAR 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 Report¹ 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 Report² 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 2025³, 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 levels⁴.

“The European State of the Climate Report 2024” produced by WMO and European Union⁵ indicated that:

¹ *Climate Change 2021 ‘The Physical Science Basis’ (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, August 2021)*

² *Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023)*

³ *State of the Global Climate 2024 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2025)*

⁴ *State of the Global Climate 2024 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2025)*

⁵ *The European State of the Climate Report 2024 (World Meteorological Organization and European Union, April 2025)*

- Global average values of surface air and sea surface temperatures have increased significantly since the pre-industrial era, by around 1.3°O 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 Eireann⁶, 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:

- 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, Ireland 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 and 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 GHGs. The framework sets no binding limits on GHG 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 GHGs.

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.

⁶ Annual Climate Statement for 2025 (MET Eireann, January 2026) <https://www.met.ie/annual-climate-statement-for-2025>

In Doha, Qatar, on 8th December 2012, the "Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol" was adopted which moved to extend the Kyoto Protocol's commitments until 2020, and 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 GHGs 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 EU) that have ratified the Convention in a different country, to evaluate its implementation and negotiate new commitments. COP21 was organised by the United Nations (UN) and held, in Paris, 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 Sixth Assessment Report (2021), outlined above, 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 of October 2018 titled 'Global Warming 1.5°C', notes the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global GHG 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 session of the COP of the UNFCCC 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. 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 were supported by 23 EU nations, including Ireland, as well as countries in Latin American, 5 no. Pacific Islands and 2 no. countries in the Caribbean.

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 and the 20th of November 2022. COP27 centred around three major topics:

- Closing the emissions gap to keep the 1.5°C goal 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 COP27 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. It gives key political signals that the phase down of all fossil fuels is happening.
- **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, which 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 decarbonisation, 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 GHG 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 Proposed Project).

The European Climate Law⁷ 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 GHG emissions for EU countries as a whole, mainly by cutting emissions, investing in green technologies and protecting the natural environment. The European Climate Law includes:

- A legal objective for the EU to reach climate neutrality by 2050;
- An ambitious 2030 climate target of at least 55% reduction of net emissions of GHGs 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 GHG budget for 2030-2050 to be published by the European Commission;
- A commitment to negative emissions after 2050;
- The establishment of a European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change, that will provide independent scientific advice;
- Stronger provisions on adaptation to climate change; and
- Strong coherence across EU 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 proposals⁸ to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net GHG 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, will only be achieved through the permitting and construction of renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed Project.

Regulation (EU) 2026/667

Regulation (EU) 2026/667 of the European Parliament and the Council was adopted on the 11th of March 2026. The Regulation amends Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 with regard to the setting of an EU intermediate climate target for 2040.

Considering the scientific advice of the European Scientific Board on Climate Change and a detailed impact assessment, the Regulation sets a legally binding intermediate climate target of a 90% reduction in GHG emissions by 2040, compared to 1990 levels.

⁷ European Climate Law was published in the Official Journal on 9th July 2021 and came into force on 29th July 2021.

⁸ 'Fit for 55': delivering the EU's 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality (July 2021).

The Regulation supports the European Climate Law's objective of climate neutrality by 2050. The Proposed Project by generating and providing renewable energy to the national electricity grid, will support the decarbonisation of the electricity sector, which will support the decarbonisation of other sectors. The Proposed Project by reducing reliance on GHG emitting fossil fuels will support the achievement of a 90% reduction in GHG emissions by 2040 (relative to 1990 levels) and climate neutrality by 2050.

2.2.1.2 Project Compliance with International Climate Policy

Based on a review of key international climate policy documents, 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 will 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 Change 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 a 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's ongoing support and commitment to take *“the necessary action to deliver at least 70% renewable electricity by 2030”*. This target has been updated by subsequent Climate Action Plans.

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 ('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 should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030, relative to a baseline of 2018;
- The role of the Climate Change Advisory Council 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.

Under Section 15 of the Climate Act, public bodies are obliged to, in so far as practical, perform their functions in a manner consistent with the latest Climate Action Plan, the National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030, and other national climate mitigation and adaptation plans. Sligo County Council (SCC), as a public body with consenting functions, must comply with this obligation in determining the subject application.

The Proposed Project will supply approximately 102MW of renewable electricity to the national grid, which represents a significant opportunity to contribute to the 51% reduction in emissions being sought, which is as outlined above as a legally binding requirement. In this regard, the Proposed Project is therefore considered compliant with the relevant policies and objectives set out at both the European (e.g. European Green Deal) and national tiers of governance.

Obligations under the Climate Act and the Planning Act

When exercising its decision-making powers under the Planning Act, ACP is obliged to perform its decision-making function (in so far as practicable) in a manner consistent with:

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

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

The most recent Climate Action Plan (CAP 25), the most recent long term climate action strategy (Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction 2024) and the furtherance of the national climate objective, with which Consenting Authority's decisions must be consistent, all support the development of onshore wind energy in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

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 legal analysis of Section 15 has arisen from a challenge to a decision of ACP to refuse planning permission for a wind farm in County Laois.

The Supreme Court issued a judgment on this matter on 4th February 2026 (Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v An Coimisiún Pleanála [2026] IESC 5) which establishes that consenting authorities must make decisions in a manner 'consistent with' the approved national long term climate action strategy, the approved national long term climate action strategy etc., '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 application of this nature, 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.

Taking these legal duties into account, ACP is required to attribute significant weight to national climate policy and the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure, such as the Proposed Project, even where they materially contravene a local development plan, particularly when the local development plan is out of step with national policy.

At present, there are no mandatory legal requirements that prevent ACP from reaching an outcome, in relation to the Proposed Project, that favours policy goals. The Proposed Project is supported by local, regional and national policy and has been designed in accordance with the latest national guidance and best practice. It is in a favourable area for wind energy development and it has also been demonstrated, in the EIAR and NIS, that the Proposed Project will not give rise to any significant adverse effect on the environment or on the integrity of European Sites.

Having regard to these matters, it is considered that ACP can exercise its evaluative judgement in a manner that delivers an outcome favouring the Proposed Project, which directly contributes to the achievement of national and EU policy goals, in accordance with its statutory duty under Section 15 of the Climate Act.

Carbon Budgets

The first national carbon budget programme proposed by the CCAC, approved by Government and adopted by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022 comprises three successive 5-year carbon budgets⁹. The total emissions allowed under each budget are shown in **Table 2-1** below.

⁹ Climate Change Advisory Council Carbon Budget Technical Report (October 2021)
<https://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/climatechangeadvisorycouncil/Technical%20report%20on%20carbon%20budgets%2025.10.2021.pdf>

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

	2021 – 2025 Carbon Budget 1	2026 – 2030 Carbon Budget 2	2031 – 2035 Provisional Carbon Budget 3
	All Gases		
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 33.5 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 GHG emissions that are permitted in each sector. The Government approved Sectoral Emissions Ceilings on 28 July 2022. The electricity sector is allocated a sectoral ceiling of 40 MtCO₂eq for the first budget (2021-2025) and a sectoral ceiling of 20 MtCO₂eq for the second budget period (2026-2030). In 2024, electricity sector emissions were reported to be 6.3 MtCO₂eq¹⁰.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported in May 2025¹¹ 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.

¹⁰ Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2025 (April, 2025)

<https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications/annualreviewandreport/CCAC-AR2025-Electricity-FINAL.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/07875-EPA-GHG-Projections-Report-FINAL.pdf>, EPA, May 2025

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. Since this report was published, the Climate Act has been enacted and there have been recent progress / future scenario assessments (e.g. EirGrid's '*All Island Generation Capacity Statement 2022 – 2031*' (October 2022)).

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 ('CAP23') 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. CAP23 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. CAP23 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 CAP23 to achieve these targets include to '*accelerate and increase the deployment of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels*' (Section 12.1.4 of CAP23). It is clear from the message and ambition of CAP23 that the drive to deploy renewable energy projects such as the Proposed Project in Ireland are critical to achieving the aims and objectives of CAP23 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 CAP23, 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. CAP23 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 CAP23 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. Carbon budgets 1 and 2 allow for 40.02 MtCO₂eq from the electricity sector up to 2025 and 20 MtCO₂eq from 2026-2030. This means an average of 8 MtCO₂eq per annum. Emissions for the period 2021 were 9.98 MtCO₂eq, which is in exceedance of 8 MtCO₂eq, which means that to keep on track, electricity will now have to achieve annual emissions of c. 7.5 MtCO₂eq from 2022 to 2025. 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 6 GW of onshore wind and up 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 county 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 ('CAP24') builds on CAP23 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 CAP23 (9GW of onshore wind and 80% renewable electricity share).

CAP24 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.

CAP24 acknowledges the urgency and importance of the decarbonising of 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)

CAP24 identifies the alignment of local and national policy as 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 (CAP25) represents the third statutory update to Ireland’s climate roadmap under the Climate Act. Building on the foundations laid by previous plans, CAP25 refines and strengthens the strategies necessary to deliver Ireland’s legally binding carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. It sets out a clear trajectory to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to achieve climate neutrality no later than 2050.

A cornerstone of CAP25 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 (2 GW by 2025; 9 GW by 2030), offshore wind (8 GW by 2030), and solar energy (up to 5 GW by 2025; 8 GW by 2030).

2.2.2.2 Project Compliance with National Climate Policy

The Proposed Project aligns with the national climate policy objectives. The Proposed Project will make a significant contribution to achieving the CAP25 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. As Ireland is not on track to meet the targets for the first and second carbon budget periods, it is imperative that carbon emissions are reduced. Currently, the electricity sector is rapidly approaching the designated sectoral ceiling of 40 MtCO₂eq for the first carbon budget period from 2020 to 2025. The national renewable energy targets and the carbon budgets are integral to the government’s response to the climate crisis.

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

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 23% in 2022¹². 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 package. 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 Directive¹³ (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 42.5%, with an ambition to reach 45% by 2030. The increase was proposed under the publication of REPowerEU plan in May 2022. RED III also introduces specific targets for Member States in the industry, transport, and building (district heating and cooling) sectors.

Under RED III, EU member states must identify areas for the acceleration of renewables where projects will undergo a simplified and fast-track procedure. The deployment of renewables will also be of **"overriding public interest"** in order to limit the number of legal challenges on new renewable energy installations. These measures came in response to REPowerEU which found that permitting is the biggest bottleneck for deploying wind at scale, with approximately 80 GW of wind power capacity stuck in permitting procedures across Europe.

There was an 18-month period to transpose most of the directive's provisions into national law, with a shorter deadline of July 2024 for some of the provisions related to permitting for renewables, in particular Article 16(f) which establishes the legal presumption that the construction and operation of renewable energy development and storage assets are in the

"overriding public interest and serving public health and safety when balancing legal interest in individual cases for the purposes of Article 6(4) and Article 16(1), point (c), of Directive 92/43/EEC [the 'Habitats Directive'], Article 4(7) of Directive 2000/60/EC [the 'Water Framework Directive'] and Article 9(1), point (a), of Directive 2009/147/EC [the 'Birds Directive']".

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20231222-2>

¹³ 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)

On 6 August 2025, the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 ([S.I. No. 274 of 2025](#)) were 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. In this regard, it should be noted that the CCAC stated within their 2024 Annual Review that:

“progress to reduce emissions is not sufficient for Ireland to meet its national and EU climate obligations. Reliance on fossils fuels needs to end, and urgent action is required to ensure that people, places and nature can adapt to the changing climate and prepare for rapidly emerging climate risks. The current rate of policy implementation is too slow and fragmented, and more effective engagement across all segments of policy and society is required to empower sustainable decision-making and to understand and remove barriers to action.”

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.

The Climate and Energy Framework

The 2030 Climate and Energy Framework (adopted by EU leaders in October 2014) represents the current governance system underpinning EU renewable energy policy. The framework defines EU wide renewable energy targets, which builds on the 2020 climate and energy package:

- A binding commitment at EU level of at least 40% domestic Green House Gas reduction by 2030 compared to 1990:

- An EU wide, binding target of at least 27% renewable energy by 2030; and
- An indicative EU level target of at least 27% energy efficiency by 2030.

The European Commission published its proposal for an Effort Sharing Regulation on the allocation of national targets for greenhouse gas emissions for the period 2021-2030 in May 2018. The Effort Sharing legislation forms part of a set of policies and measures on climate change and energy that will help move Europe towards a low-carbon economy and increase its energy security. Under the current Regulation, the national targets will collectively deliver a reduction of around 10% in total EU emissions from the sectors covered by 2020 and of 30% by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

The proposal implements EU commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change (COP21), discussed above in **Section 2.2.1**, and marks an important milestone in the allocation to Member States of a package of climate change targets formally adopted as part of the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework.

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)¹⁴. 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 sources¹⁵.*

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.

¹⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

¹⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/energy-and-green-deal_en

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

2.3.1.2 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.

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 EU Energy Roadmap 2050 and the RePowerEU Plan 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

On 19th June 2020, the updated Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland was published. The Paper which was originally published on 14th May 2014 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.”

The Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland 2015-2030 was updated and republished in 2020 and updated again in January 2021. The updated Paper outlines that:

*‘The 2020 target of 40% RES-E is likely to require a total of 3,500-4,000 MW of onshore renewables generation capacity, compared to the 2,500 MW available at end December 2014, of which wind generation accounted for 2,200MW. **To achieve our target, the average rate of build of onshore wind generation will need to increase to up to 260 MW per year. The current rate of build is about 170 MW per year.**’*

National Energy Security Framework

More recently, the National Energy Security Framework (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 accounted for almost 49% of Ireland's primary energy requirement in 2024 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 Framework 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 Framework highlights that replacing fossil fuels with renewables, including wind energy, will be a focus area of work. The Framework 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 Framework 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.

The Government published an update to this in November 2023 which outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050. The Energy Security Package emphasizes the need to prioritize,

monitor, and regularly review energy security during the transition period. It proposes measures focusing on:

1. *Reduced and Responsive Demand*
2. *Transition to Renewables*
3. *Building More Resilient Systems*
4. *Implementing Robust Risk Governance*

The report details mitigation measures under each area, such as expanding indigenous renewable energy capacity, diversifying fuel sources, and enhancing governance structures. Lessons from European energy supply disruptions and domestic electricity sector challenges inform the strategic approach.

Six key pillars guide the response and recommendations outlined in ‘Energy Security in Ireland to 2030’, which includes a public consultation and external reviews. The Government plans to release follow-up reports every five years, with implementation oversight by the Government’s Energy Security Group.

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.

National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021 – 2030

Ireland’s National Energy and Climate Plan (2021-2030) was produced in July 2024, as a national framework on a ten-year rolling basis, stating EU Member States’ climate and energy objectives, targets, policies and measures to the European Commission. The NECP brings together policies, targets, tools and associated material from across different government bodies, streamlining into 1 document, in accordance with European Union Directives. The 5 main dimensions included within this policy document provide a general overview of policies and measures involving energy and climate in Ireland:

1. *Decarbonisation*
2. *Energy Efficiency*
3. *Energy Security*
4. *Internal Energy Market*
5. *Research, Innovation and Competitiveness*

These dimensions mirror ambitions included within Ireland’s most recent CAP25, and includes projections for the future, based off current performance, helping to identify gaps and areas that Ireland can improve on, which is reflected in the annual update of Ireland’s Climate Action Plan.

Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 – Energy Security Package

Published in 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.”

Independent research undertaken as part of the package, the McCarthy Report¹⁶, provides an analysis of developments in the electricity sector in Ireland. The McCarthy Report makes the following observation in relation to the consenting process:

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/276441/eb496e01-5c01-4594-af09-74342b4ac971.pdf#page=null>

“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 measures most relevant to the Proposed Project is Action 10 which is “*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 RED and RePowerEU.

The Proposed Project will directly support the government's goal of enhancing national energy security by acting as a domestic source of renewable electricity. By supplying clean energy to the national grid, it will contribute to the transition toward a renewables-driven energy system.

2.3.2.2 Project Compliance with the 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 sources¹⁷. 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 2024¹⁸. 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%¹⁹.

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Renewable_energy_2024_infographic.jpg

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

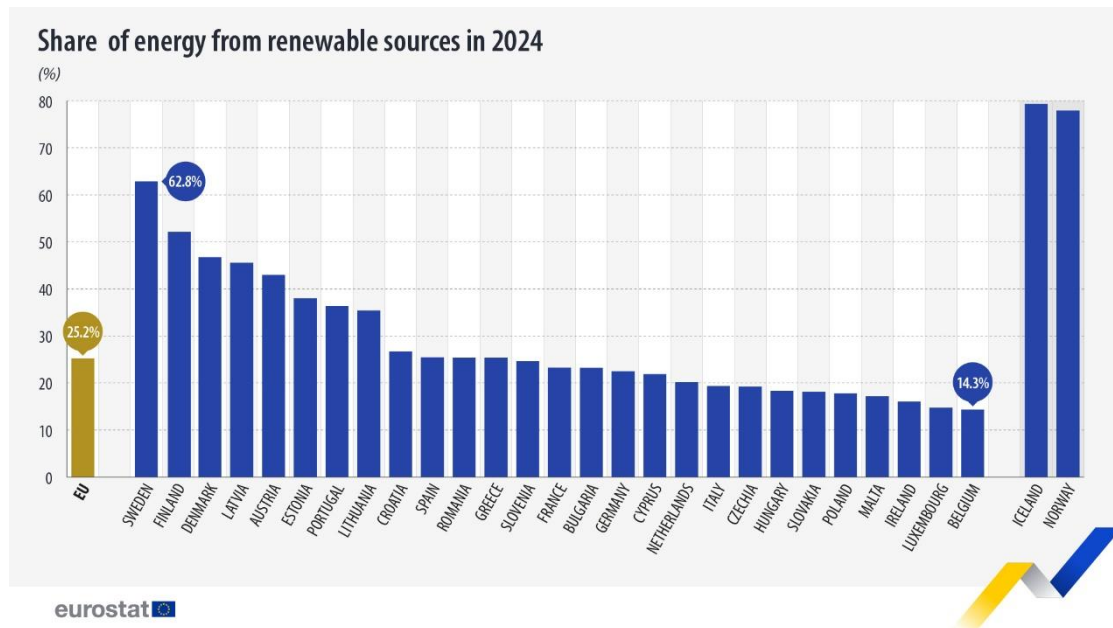


Figure 2-1: Overall share of energy from renewable sources (source: Eurostat)

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 (November 2024)

The National Energy Projections report, published by the SEAI in November 2024, 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 CAP24, Ireland is projected to miss its agreed national and EU 2030 targets for energy efficiency, renewable energy share and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Figure 1.27 of the Report, copied below, clearly illustrates the gap between the current installed wind capacity and the relevant Climate Action Plan (CAP) targets.

Figure 1.27: Ireland's installed wind capacity with 2024 estimates, projections to 2030, CAP targets

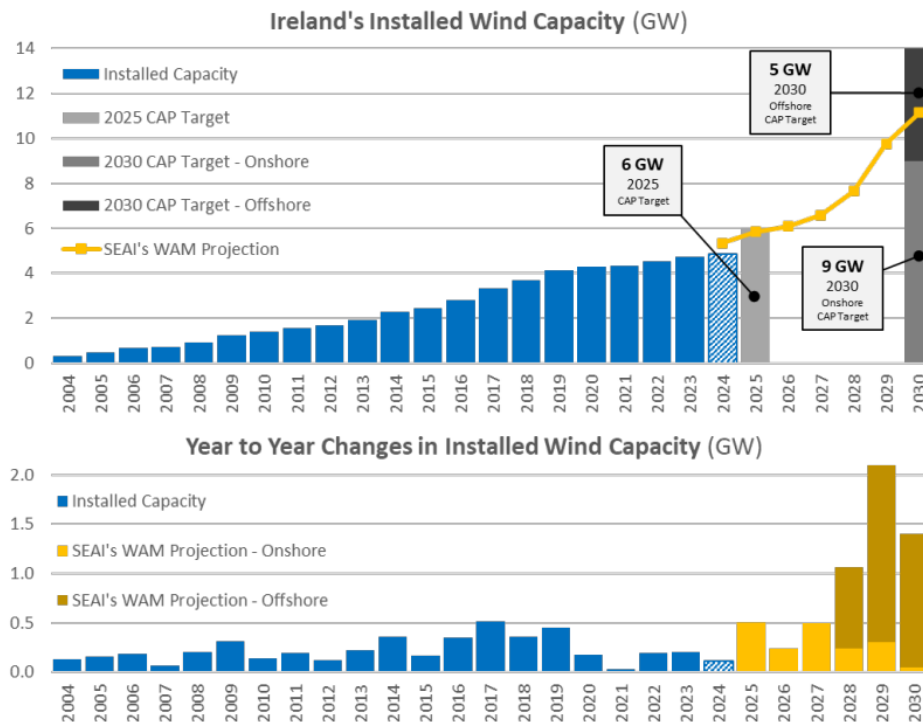


Figure 2-2: Ireland's installed wind capacity with 2024 estimates, projections to 2030, CAP targets

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 scenario modelling considers CAP23 and the SEAI WAM scenario modelling considers CAP24. The SEAI projections under the WAM scenario indicate a total installed capacity of 11.2GW by the end of 2030. The Report goes on to note that

“Over the last 10 years, Ireland has added wind capacity at an average rate of 0.26GW per annum, although this has dropped to a rate of 0.14GW over the last 5 years. To align with the pace of the WAM projections needed to deliver on the 80% RESE target, the roll out of onshore wind capacity needs to return to the rate previously achieved between 2016 and 2019...”

The Report projects GHG emissions under the WEM and WAM scenarios. It notes that since April 2023 there has been a “significant increase in net electricity imports across the interconnectors with the UK” and “electricity net-imports were far higher than other years, and higher than projected in the WEM or WAM scenarios...”. The Report considers the emission ceiling of the first two carbon budget periods – carbon budget 1 (CB1) ceiling 2021-2025 (five year cumulative) (MtCO₂eq) and carbon budget 2 (CB2) ceiling 2026-2030 (five year cumulative) (MtCO₂eq) in both the WEM scenario and WAM scenario. In the WEM scenario, total greenhouse gas emissions exceed CB1 by 9% by 2025. This overshoot means that 13% of the CB2 budget is consumed before the CB2 period begins. The second sectoral ceiling is then breached during 2028, with the exceedance reaching 27% by 2030. Under the WAM scenario the CB1 ceiling is exceeded by 6% and this overshoot means that 9% of the CB2 budget is consumed before the CB2 period begins. In this scenario the CB2 ceiling is exceeded by 17% by 2030.

It is clear from the projections outlined above that unprecedented action is required as soon as possible:

“Where any exceedance occurs, steeper reductions are required to compensate, leading to a larger reduction required by 2030.”

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 4.94GW, which indicates a 4.3% increase from the previous year. Ireland's 2025 CAP target for installed wind capacity is 6GW, and its 2030 CAP targets for onshore and offshore capacity are 9GW and 5GW, respectively. SEAI's projections under the WAM scenario indicate a total installed capacity of 9.8GW 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 0.27GW per annum, although this has dropped to a rate of 0.16GW 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

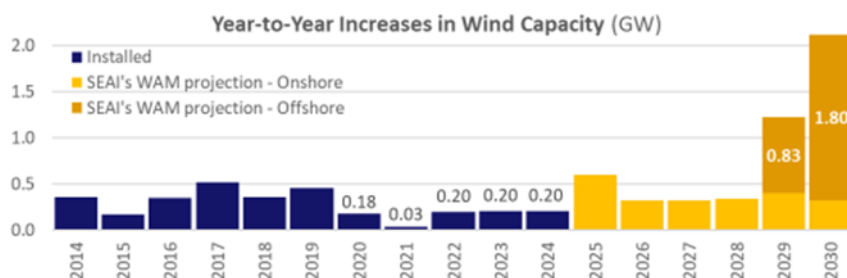


Figure 2-3: Ireland's year-to-year increases in installed wind capacity required to align the pace of the WAM

The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2025

The Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) open their 'Annual Review 2025 – Summary for All' 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, 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 2026 – Electricity

The CCAC published its annual review in May 2026 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:

“Renewable generation capacity reached 7.7 GW by the end of 2025; however, only 0.8 GW of new solar and wind capacity was added, far below the 2 GW needed annually to meet the 2030 Climate Action Plan target of up to 23.6 GW. Targets were also missed for the share of electricity demand met by renewables, with rising data centre demand offsetting gains in renewable generation, and for dispatch-down, which reflects renewable electricity that is wasted due to grid limitations.”

Key observations in relation to Renewable Electricity are outlined below:

- Ireland reached 7.7 GW of renewables generation capacity by the end of 2025, with 5.1 GW from onshore wind, 1.1 GW from grid-scale solar, 0.8 GW from domestic rooftop solar and 0.7 GW from other renewable sources (e.g. hydro).
- Only 0.6 GW of new solar capacity and 0.2 GW of new wind capacity were added in 2025, far less than the 2 GW that needs to be added each year until 2030 to hit Climate Action Plan targets.
- 2025 saw the failure of multiple key Climate Action Plan targets, including both onshore wind and solar capacity, dispatch-down and renewable electricity share of demand. The renewable electricity share of demand has stagnated in recent years due to any added renewable generation capacity being matched by increasing data centre electricity demand.

The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2026

In March 2026 the CCAC published their ‘Annual Review 2026: Our Changing Climate in 2025’ which examines national and global climate data. The CCAC asserts that Ireland’s climate is changing, with data indicating that 2025 was the second-warmest year on record. Key observations made by the CCAC in relation to GHG emissions are outlined below:

- The levels of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere have reached their highest points in recorded history. The record high concentrations are accelerating global warming and turbocharging more extreme weather events, which

continued to have cascading impacts on lives, livelihoods, food systems and ecosystems around the world in 2025.

- The global average concentration of carbon dioxide increased by 3.5 parts per million between 2023 and 2024. This was the biggest annual increase since records began and was driven by the continued burning of fossil fuels and a spike in wildfires. Global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance carbon removals are failing to materialise at the pace and scale needed to keep the Paris Agreement's temperature goal within reach. This underscores the need for sectors to plan for and address the risks of overshooting global temperature goals (e.g. higher warming scenarios exceeding 1.5°C or 2°C).

The CCAC calls attention to the shortcomings in the global effort to reduce GHG emissions, stating that:

“Concentrations of major greenhouses gases – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – have reached their highest ever recorded levels. Global emissions reduction efforts are failing, leading to continued warming and further increasing the likelihood and intensity of extreme events.”

The review by the CCAC provides a stark outlook on Ireland's changing climate, stating that ‘the latest Irish climate change projections indicate further warming in the future’. The CCAC affirms that record high concentrations of GHG emissions in the atmosphere are accelerating global warming and extreme weather events. It is also made apparent that efforts to reduce global GHG emissions are failing and that more action is needed to reduce GHG emissions.

Ireland's Climate Change Assessment (January 2024)

In January 2024, the EPA published Irelands 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 Irelands Future
- Volume 4: Realising the Benefits of Transition and Transformation

The ICCA Synthesis Report states that having peaked in 2001, Irelands 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 us 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 help get us all the way. Ireland's no-regret options are demand 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), while our 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. 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

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 Act 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.

National Planning Framework First Revision (2025)

On the 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 Northern and Western Region, in which the Proposed Project is located, is allocated a target of installing an **additional 1,389 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 Northern and Western 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 this regard, 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.

2.5.2.2 Project Compliance with National Policy

With regard to the above, it is considered that the Proposed Project is in line with and supported by the, 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 Revised 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 17 no. wind turbines, with an estimated electricity generation capacity of 102MW, 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

Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) was established in 2015, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region (Galway, Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo, Donegal, Monaghan, Mayo and Cavan) came into effect in January of 2020. The RSES provides a long-term, strategic development framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Northern and Western Region. The RSES seeks to achieve balanced regional development and full implementation of Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework, as revised in 2025.

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the Project Ireland 2040, including the Revised NPF and the 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 Northern and Western region is characterised by the RSES as having ‘a *unique natural endowment of ample carbon-neutral, energy supplies*’ such as wind. Specifically, the Western Region is stated as being ‘*particularly rich*’ in renewable energy resources dispersed across the region. The RSES acknowledges that the region has a pivotal role in delivering a successful transition to Ireland’s proposed low carbon economy with huge potential for growth in renewables. In order to facilitate the growth of renewables within the region, the RSES notes that the NWRA aims to encourage stakeholders, i.e. industry, commercial etc., to be the first to facilitate new opportunities and concentrate on possibilities to further advance renewable energy generation.

These strategic aims are captured in Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18:

- **RPO 4.16:** *The NWRA shall co-ordinate the identification of potential renewable energy sites of scale in collaboration with Local Authorities and other stakeholders within 3 years of the adoption of the RSES. The identification of such sites (which may extend to include energy storage solutions) will be based on numerous site selection criteria including environmental matters, and potential grid connections.*
- **RPO 4.17:** *To position the region to avail of the emerging global market in renewable energy by stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems, including:*
 - *Stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy;*
 - *Raising awareness and public understanding of renewable energy and encourage market opportunities for the renewable energy industry to promote the development and growth of renewable energy businesses; and*
- **RPO 4.18:** *Support the development of secure, reliable and safe supplies of renewable energy, to maximise their value, maintain the inward investment, support indigenous industry and create jobs.*

As indicated above, there is a clear policy support within the region to identify and capitalise on emerging opportunities associated with the transition to a decarbonised economy such as renewable energy generation.

It should be noted, however, that the existing transmission network within the region is predominantly 110kV infrastructure, with limited higher capacity 220kV and 400kV transmission infrastructure. As such, the RSES endorses the future development and reinforcement of the grid in order to safely facilitate more diverse power flows from surplus regional generation and also to facilitate future growth in electricity demand:

In this regard, the RSES includes the following RPO’s

- **RPO 8.3:** *The Assembly support the necessary integration of the transmission network requirements to allow linkages with renewable energy proposals at all levels to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.*
- **RPO 8.4:** *That reinforcements and new electricity transmission infrastructure are put in place and their provision is supported, to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs. Ensure that development minimises impacts on designated areas.*

The RSES is ultimately supportive of the future growth of renewable energy technology in the region and sets a clear precedent to identify and capitalise on those opportunities associated with the transition to renewable energy generation. In this context, the Proposed Project is consistent with the Strategic Objectives of the RSES through the facilitation of renewable energy generation and electricity infrastructure which is required to enable this transition.

2.5.3.2 Project Compliance with Regional Policy

The RSES for the Northern and Western Region states that the region has a crucial role to play in Ireland transition to a low carbon future. It is considered that the provision of the Proposed Project would facilitate this just transition and is particularly in line with **RPO 4.17** and **4.18** 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 decarbonized 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

The Proposed Project falls across the administrative area of SCC and therefore, is subject to the policies and objectives set out in the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 (SCDP).

2.5.4.1 Sligo County Development Plan 2024 – 2030

The SCDP was adopted by the Elected Members of SCC at the conclusion of the Special Meeting on the 30th September 2024 and came into effect on 11th November 2024. The SCDP is the statutory county development plan in effect for the County and provides the framework against which all planning applications for development in the county are assessed. The policies and objectives set out within the SCDP have maintained strong linkages with the key aims and themes set out within the previous development plan. Climate change is again emphasised as one of the greatest global challenges, with SCC acknowledging that continual action is needed for Sligo to become a low carbon and climate resilient county.

The importance of climate action is outlined at the beginning of ‘Chapter 2: Climate Action’ of the SCDP as it identifies the need for “*climate action as a mandatory objective to be included in development plans*”.

The strategic policies in Chapter 2 are outlined below, which relate to climate action and reducing GHG emissions, which aligns the County with wider European, national and regional objectives;

- **SP-CA-1** – Support the implementation of the government’s climate action policy in accordance with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the national Climate Action Plan 2023, the National Adaptation Framework 2018 and all subsequent relevant updates.
- **SP-CA-2** – Ensure that Sligo County Council’s Climate Adaptation Strategy, Climate Action Plan and County Development Plan are fully aligned.
- **SP-CA-3** – Integrate appropriate climate mitigation and adaptation considerations and measures into all relevant development management and development planning processes.

Chapter 31 of the SCDP outlines the energy and telecommunications policy for the County, which recognises that an efficient and secure energy supply is essential to the future growth and sustainable development of County Sligo:

“Ireland’s energy sector must undergo radical transformation in order to mitigate the effects of climate change by switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This will have a bearing on all aspects of local development, and supportive planning policies are needed during this energy transition. Being rich in renewable energy resources, County Sligo is well-placed to lay solid foundations for a sustainable energy future while boosting investment, business development, job creation, and contributing to greater energy security,”

The SCDP recognises the necessity for ‘a secure and resilient supply of energy’ in order to meet the demand for energy which is set to increase in the coming years. As such, there are a number of policies included in the SCDP which directly support the provision of renewable energy developments and associated grid infrastructure, such as the Proposed Project, as set out in the **Table 2-2** below.

Table 2-2: Sligo County Development Plan Renewable Energy Policies

Policy	Description	Proposed Project Compliance
P-EN-1	Support the sustainable development, upgrading and maintenance of energy generation, transmission, storage and distribution infrastructure, to ensure the security of energy supply and provide for future needs, as well as protection of the landscape, natural, archaeological and built heritage, and residential amenity.	The Proposed Project will contribute positively to the levels of renewable electricity on the national grid. This will aid in ensuring that there is adequate capacity for the growing energy needs of the County.
P-EN-2	Facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources and secure the maximum potential from wind energy resources within County Sligo, including the augmentation, upgrading and improvements to existing wind farms, subject to strict location, siting and design criteria. All such development proposals will be assessed for their potential impact on urban and rural communities, Natura 2000 sites, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes and scenic views, and all other normal planning considerations.	The Proposed Project will constitute the augmentation and upgrading of two existing wind farms, capturing the valuable wind energy resource available within County Sligo. The Proposed Project will support the implementation of Ireland’s Grid Development Strategy by contributing to the establishment of a secure and dependable electricity transmission grid. The Proposed Project has been subject to a rigorous design process informed by comprehensive planning and environmental assessments and surveys, which have collectively concluded that the proposal is in line with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
O-REN-1	Prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy for County Sligo within one year of the publication of the Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy (NWEA) or the revised Methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies (SEAI), as provided	The Proposed Project supports County Sligo’s strategy for renewable energy, helping to reduce the county’s reliance on non-renewable energy sources, towards a just transition.

	for in the Climate Action Plan 2024, whichever occurs first.	
O-LCP-3	Prepare an updated Landscape Character Assessment for County Sligo in conjunction with the forthcoming Renewable Energy Strategy.	The Proposed Project includes a Landscape Character Assessment, indicating the Proposed Project’s visual impact on the surrounding area.

As demonstrated above, the Proposed Project is consistent with the policies and objectives of the SCDP to increase deployment of renewable energy resources in the context of climate mitigation, renewable energy targets, and sustainability as referenced in the preceding sections of this EIAR Chapter.

The Planning Report submitted in support of this application contains a detailed planning assessment of the Proposed Project against all relevant policies and objectives in the SCDP.

At the time of writing, a Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy is not available for County Sligo. As outlined in Renewable Energy Objective O-REN-1 of the SCDP, SCC will prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy in accordance with the forthcoming Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy and the revised Methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies. It is stated that in the interim period, *the Planning Authority will continue to assess all wind energy development proposal using the criteria set out in the DECLG’s Wind Energy Guidelines (2006).*

2.5.4.2 **Sligo County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029**

The Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan, 2024 – 2029 (LACAP) sets out a strong precedent for the Council’s responsibility to ensure the County’s reduction in carbon emissions in line with the Climate Act.

“The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which also frames Ireland’s legally binding climate ambition, requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by Sligo County Council of 51% by 2030, placing the country on a trajectory to achieving climate neutrality by the end of 2050. “

The plan aligns itself with international and national policy regarding climate action, highlighting the Climate Act and Ireland’s legally binding target of a 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. The ‘Mission Statement’ of the Sligo LACAP is defined as follows;

“Sligo County Council will become a leader in Climate Action, by providing leadership through its own activities, by working with communities & businesses to assist them in finding the best ways for them to adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce their GHG emissions, with a focus on the opportunities in the transport & heating related areas, as well as on protecting & enhancing biodiversity.”

Actions within the LACAP have been grouped under six different themes, with related objectives for each set of actions also provided. These themes are listed below:

- Theme 1 – Governance & Leadership
- Theme 2 – Sustainability & Resource Management
- Theme 3 – Built Environment & Energy
- Theme 4 – Community Resilience & Transition
- Theme 5 – Environment and Biodiversity
- Theme 6 – Transport & Mobility

In relation to renewable energy the Sligo LACAP outlines the following policy action within Theme 3, which supports the research and development of renewable energy that is in line with environmental protection requirements:

- **Objective 1:** *Support the key areas identified in the National Climate Action Plan in relation to energy efficiency & emissions reductions (retrofitting & renewable energy)*

As outlined above, SCC are committed to climate action and climate mitigation through the implementation of ‘Climate-Ready Sligo.’ Climate Ready Sligo builds on the climate objectives set out in the SCDP and is supportive of national policies to reduce GHG emissions and reach carbon neutrality.

The Proposed Project is capable of providing the national grid with 102MW of clean, renewable energy, thus contributing to the decarbonisation of the electricity sector and as such, is in alignment with the Sligo LACAP.

2.5.4.3 Compliance with Local Policy Objectives

In summary, the SCDP and associated LACAP fully recognise the importance of tackling climate change through the increased supply of renewable energy. The LACAP outlines the County’s commitment to climate action and the need to meet national objectives regarding a reduction in GHG emissions. SCC seeks to support and facilitate the sustainable provision of a reliable energy supply in the County, with emphasis on increasing energy supplies derived from renewable resources. Furthermore, there are a range of policies in place which support the development of renewable energy.

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, 2006 (DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines)) under Section 28 of the Act. The aim of the DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines was to assist the proper planning of wind power projects in appropriate locations around Ireland. The DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines 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 DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines should be applied practically and do not replace existing national energy, environmental and planning policy. At time of writing, the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines) have not yet been adopted, and the relevant guidelines for the purposes of Section 28 of the Planning Act, as amended, remain to be the DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines. Notwithstanding this, however, due to the timelines associated with the planning process for renewable energy projects and the commitment within the CAP25 to publish new wind energy guidelines for onshore wind in Q1 2025 it is possible that the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines may be adopted during the consideration period for the current

planning application. Without benefit of the revised wind energy development guidelines for onshore wind, it is considered that since noise emissions and shadow flicker are controllable via inbuilt turbine technologies, therefore, the Proposed Wind Farm is capable of compliance with any future guideline limits in this regard.

Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG) published the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines in December 2019. A consultation process in relation to the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines concluded on the 19th of February 2020. A further review of the Draft Guidelines DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines is currently underway by the DoHLGH and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DoECC), particularly in relation to noise limits.

Since the publication of the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines', there have been significant changes in national policy regarding renewable energy targets, giving further impetus to the importance of the further review. The Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines set out that 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.

The Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines 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 DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines 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 Wind Farm has been developed with the provisions of the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines in mind and the inclusion of a standalone community report.

At time of writing the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines 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 the DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines. 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 DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines may be finalised during the consideration period of the planning application for the Proposed Project.

Notwithstanding this, based on the provisions set out in the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines 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 and Chapter 12, respectively.

Furthermore, comprehensive community consultation has also been undertaken (refer to **Appendix 2-2**) and detail of the Proposed Grid Connection Route for the Proposed Project has been provided and assessed as part of this EIAR, however this will be subject to a separate, future 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 (hereafter referred to as the IWEA Guidelines). The IWEA 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 IWEA 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 IWEA 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 Guidelines the aim was to be complementary to the DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines.

IWEA Best Practice Principles in Community Engagement and Community Commitment 2013

IWEA extended its guidance with the publication of the '*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 community engagement 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 this document and associated best practice principles 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 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 from 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 Code of Practice advises 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 SSE Renewables Ireland Ltd. (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 DoHPLG 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 DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines. 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 DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines 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 facilitate the connection of “shovel ready” projects that already have a valid planning permission to the electricity networks.

The principal objective underpinning this approach is to allow projects with a valid planning permission 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 Grid Connection Route has taken account of the “*preferred draft approach*” and accordingly, has been developed with the provisions of the Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines in mind. This grid connection policy will allow for the Proposed Grid Connection Route, should it be permitted under a separate, future application, to connect to the electricity networks under the enduring connection policy regime.

Renewable Energy Support Scheme

CAP25 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 CAP25 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 was ran in 2023 and concluded in September 2023. RESS 4 was ran in 2024 and closed in August of 2024. Of the 43 projects who submitted an Offer Price in respect of the RESS 4 Auction, 27 projects were successful in the auction, and 16 projects were unsuccessful in the auction. The most recent RESS auction was the RESS 5 auction. Submissions for RESS 5 closed in September 2025, and results were announced later the same month. It secured its full target of approximately 1,500 GWh of renewable electricity, delivering over 1,000 MW of additional onshore wind and solar capacity. While significant challenges remain in meeting climate targets, the RESS represents a decisive step forward. It lays the foundation for a more sustainable and cost-effective renewable electricity market, supporting the growth of the green economy, promoting sustainable employment opportunities, and boosting Ireland's energy security as renewables become increasingly competitive.

The Proposed Project is in accordance with the CAP25 and a grant of permission for the onshore wind energy development will allow for the Proposed Project to participate in the future RESS auction and contribute renewable energy generation in achieving Ireland's CAP25 target of 9GW of onshore wind generation by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050, along with any targets beyond this.

2.6 Planning History

This section of the EIAR sets out the relevant planning history within the planning application boundary and also identifies other wind energy development within the wider area (25km from Proposed Turbines).

2.6.1 Planning Applications within the Planning Application Boundary

A planning search was carried out through the national planning application database and ACP's online planning portal in July 2026 for relevant planning applications submitted that fall within the planning application boundary of this application, which are outlined in **Table 2-3** below.

Table 2.3: Planning Applications within the Planning Application Red Line Boundary

Planning Ref. No	Description	Decision
SCC Ref. 97469	the erection of a wind farm including 10 wind turbines (1.5mw/each) with 3.75m wide access road and electrical sub-station on revised site.	Grant by SCC on 11/05/1999
SCC Ref. 03382	alterations to previously permitted development under ref. PL 97/469 involving an amendment to layout of control building, septic tank and percolation area (Bord Na Mona Puraflow Peat Filter System) and revised location of control building (required to house indoor electrical switchgear).	Grant by SCC on 03/09/2003
SCC Ref. 03/619 ACP Pl. Ref. 21.204790	(a) development of a wind farm including 13 no. three bladed wind turbines, with hub height of up to 49 metres and blade height of up to 52 metres, overall tip height of up to 75 metres; two road entrances, turbine and crane hardstands, construction of internal access roads and widening of existing tracks, two refuelling/maintenance areas with concrete surfaces and oil interceptors, single storey control building and associated site works including drainage, electrical and communication cabling (underground), 1 no. lattice-type permanent wind measurement/anemometer mast of 50 metres height and all associated and ancillary works; (b) temporary planning permission of 3 years duration for 2 no. pole type temporary wind measurement/anemometer masts of 40 metres height.	Grant by ACP on 03/03/2004
SCC Ref. 07937	retention of a 30 metre lattice support structure carrying telecommunications equipment chain link perimeter fencing, equipment container and access track as previously granted by An Bord Pleanála under ref no: PL21.129406 (Sligo County Council reg ref: 01/972).	Grant by SCC on 04/12/2007
SCC Ref. 02846	alterations to previously permitted development under PL 97/469 involving an amendment to Condition No. 1(c) of this permission to locate transformers external to the 10 no. permitted turbines.	Grant by SCC on 14/02/2008
SCC Ref. 08961	erection of a temporary 64-metre-high meteorological mast and carrying out of associated site works.	Grant by SCC on 18/03/2009

SCC Ref. 03619	(a) development of a wind farm including 13 no. three bladed wind turbines, with hub height of up to 49 metres and blade height of up to 52 metres, overall tip height of up to 75 metres; two road entrances, turbine and crane hardstands, construction of internal access roads and widening of existing tracks, two refuelling/maintenance areas with concrete surfaces and oil interceptors, single storey control building and associated site works including drainage, electrical and communication cabling (underground), 1 no. lattice-type permanent wind measurement/anemometer mast of 50 metres height and all associated and ancillary works; (b) temporary planning permission of 3 years duration for 2 no. pole type temporary wind measurement/anemometer masts of 40 metres height.	Grant by SCC on 14/04/2009
SCC Ref. 10371	retention of a Control Building of 97sqm with adjacent fenced compound and associated services on a site area of 0.07ha. This application for retention of planning will operate for the duration of the original planning permission granted under PL 03/619.	Grant by SCC on 07/01/2011
SCC Ref. 10388	retention and operation of the existing temporary meteorological mast with associated site works. The temporary mast has a finished height above existing ground level of 49m approximately and consists of a lattice tubular frame fixed to a concrete base. This planning application for retention of the existing temporary meteorological mast as a permanent meteorological mast is to retain & operate the structure for the duration of the original planning permission as issued for the windfarm development Ref: PL03/619 at Dunneill Wind Farm.	Grant by SCC on 20/01/2011
SCC Ref. 12438	retention of an existing 30m high lattice support structure carrying antennas, transmission dishes, associated equipment containers, fencing and associated works (as previously granted under Local Authority Reference PL 07/937) which forms part of their cellular digital and broadband communications network on Coillte Land.	Grant by SCC on 18/03/2013
SCC Ref. 22291	development consisting of a fifteen (15) year continuation of the operational life of the existing wind farm (SCC Reg. Ref. PL03/619 & ABP Pl. Ref. 21.204790, as amended by SCC Reg. Ref PL10/371 and PL10/388) from the date of expiration (March 2024) of the current permissions. No modifications are proposed to the existing windfarm which comprises the following elements: (a) 13 no. existing Vestas V52 850 kilowatt (kW) wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of 75 metres (m) (b) Existing 1 no. onsite 20 kilovolt (kv) electrical substation compound	Grant by SCC on 02/06/2023

	which includes a control building, welfare facilities, associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing, associated underground cabling and a foul waste holding tank (c) Existing 1 no. permanent meteorological mast with a height of 50m and an associated concrete platform/base; (d) All associated existing underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the on-site substation; (e) Existing site access tracks of circa 3.3 kilometres (km) total length, 3 no. car parking spaces and 13 no. turbine hardstands; (f) 2 No. existing gated site entrances from an unnamed third-class public road which dissects the windfarm site into north and south; (g) Existing site drainage; and (h) All existing ancillary infrastructure, associated site fencing and signage. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompanies this application.	
SCC Ref. 2360208	1) The erection of a temporary 100m high lattice type meteorological mast for a period of 5 years which will be fixed to ground anchors by stay wires and will include instruments for measuring local climate conditions and services, 2) The proposed works also include a hardstanding area and all ancillary works.	Grant by SCC on 07/11/2023

2.6.2

Wind Energy Developments within 25km of the Proposed Turbines

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 2.9.2 of this Chapter for further details). The search was carried out using the relevant local authority, ACP's and EIA planning portals in May 2026 for relevant planning applications.

In total, no. 15 applications relating to wind energy were identified within 25km of the proposed turbines, no. 4 of which relate to single wind turbine developments and a further no. 11 of which relate to larger multiple turbine wind farm development. These are outlined in **Table 2-4** below

Table 2-4: Wind energy developments within 25km of the Proposed Project

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
Single/ Domestic Turbines								
SCC Ref. No. 22161	Strokane Single Turbine (Cloonkeelaun)	Sligo	Aerowest Wind Farm Limited	development consisting of the construction of a wind turbine with an operational lifespan of 30 years, from commissioning, with a tip height of approximately 150 metres, site access road (approximately 330m), hardstand areas, underground cabling from the turbine to the existing Black Lough Wind Farm control building (in Cloonkeelaun) and all ancillary site works	Granted by SCC 24/10/2022	Permitted	1	7.1
MCC Ref. No. 11/413 ACP Ref. No. PL16.240083	Gradyjoinery Wind Farm	Mayo	Wind Energy Direct	One electricity generating wind turbine with a hub height up to 85 metres and rotor diameter of up to 100 metres, hardstanding, 240 metres of new internal access road, widening of existing site entrance drainage and site works	Granted by MCC 03/12/2012	Existing	1	24.5
SCC Ref. No. 21113 ACP Ref. No. PL21.310612	Templehouse Single Turbine	Sligo	Natural Forces Renewable Energy Ltd.	development consisting of the construction of one wind turbine up to 5MW with overall tip height of up to 180m; Construct the wind turbine foundation, hard standing and assembly area; Provide a site entrance and an access track within the Site; Construct an on-site 20kV substation and underground electrical cable; Install a 7.9km underground grid connection, which passes through the following townlands: Rathbaun, Templehouse Demesne, Kilbrattan, Portinch, Emlaghmaghtan, Cartron (Percival), Cartron (Phibbs), Lecarrow, Carrowkeel, Cloonkeevy,	Granted by ACP 11/07/2023	Permitted	1	17.1

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
				Ballybrennan, connecting into the existing ESB Substation; and construct all associated site development and ancillary works. A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared with this planning application				
MCC Ref. No. 19/260	Killala Wind Farm Phase 2	Mayo	Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company	25 year permission for a single electricity generating wind turbine with an overall maximum height of up to 125m. The development will also consist of a turbine hardstand, access track of c.394m, internal cable trench of c.1,775m and ancillary site works. The planning application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement	Granted by MCC 15/10/2019	Existing	1	23.1
Large Wind Energy Applications								
SCC Ref. No. 03619 (EOP), ACP Ref. No PL21.204790, SCC Ref. No 22291 (EOD)	Dunneill Wind Farm	Sligo	Brickmount Ltd.	the development of 26MW wind farm comprising 13 no. 2 MW wind turbines with steel towers and composite fibre rotor blades of hub height up to 67 metres, a rotor diameter of up to 80 metres and base to blade-tip height of up to 107 metres, also including wind turbines transformers, turbine hardstands, new access roads, strengthening and widening of existing forestry access roads; drainage; a substation control building with fenced compound for electrical equipment; underground electrical cables linking the turbines with the substation compound; underground communication cables, and all associated site works and ancillary	Granted by SCC 02/06/2023	Existing	13	N/A as the Existing Dunneill Wind Farm constitutes part the Existing Wind Farm that will be decommissioned as part of the Proposed Project.

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
				development. An Environment Impact Statement is submitted with this application. This development is within the townlands of Curraghmarky, Birchgrove, Moanvaun, Garracummer, Cummer More, Cummer Beg				
SCC Ref. No. 97469	Kingsmountain Wind Farm	Sligo	Mr. Guenter Klempt	the erection of a wind farm including 10 wind turbines (1.5mw/each) with 3.75m wide access road and electrical sub-station on revised site	Granted by SCC 11/05/1999	Existing	10	N/A as the Existing Kingsmountain Wind Farm constitutes part the Existing Wind Farm that will be decommissioned as part of the Proposed Project.

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
SCC Ref. No. 1793	Blacklough Wind Farm	Sligo	John Hallinan	a ten year permission for development consisting of: (a) erection of four wind turbines with blade tip height of 124.33m (78.33m hub height, 92m rotor diameter) (b) crane and assembly hardstand areas adjacent to each turbine (c) control room and parking spaces (d) cabling between each turbine (e) widening of existing access road and provision of new sections of access road to serve wind turbines (f) stilling ponds (g) peat reinstatement areas (h) replacement bridge across Gowlan River and realignment of approaches to the bridge (i) use of existing borrow pit and (j) all associated ancillary infrastructure. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been submitted with the application.	Granted by SCC on 03/06/2017	Existing	4	4.2
MCC Ref No. 063861	Carrowleagh 1 Wind Farm	Mayo	Joseph Martin & Michael Loftus	Construct a 29.9MW wind farm consisting of 13 no. Enercon E-70 2.3MW turbines with a 64 metre hub height, rotor diameter of 71 metres, 4.5 metre access roads to each turbine in addition to upgrade of existing roads hard standings at 20kV substation building and temporary contractors compound	Granted by MCC 14/11/2007	Existing	13	7.0
SCC Ref. No. 10/235	Cloonkeelaun Wind Farm (Carrowleagh Extension)	Sligo	Powercon Wind Energy Ltd.	erection of up to 3 no. wind turbines with 64 metre hub heights, rotor diameter 71m, 4.5m access roads, upgrading of existing roads, hard standings and all associated infrastructure	Granted by SCC on 02/12/2010	Existing	3	6.7

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
				forming an extension to the permitted Carrowleagh Wind Farm. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)				
SCC Ref. No. 15/466, 15343	Cloonkeelaun Wind Farm	Sligo	Tapbury Management Ltd.	construction of two (2) wind turbines, each with a tip height of up to 124.33 metres, site access roads, hardstanding areas, underground cabling and all ancillary site works located (to the northwest and adjacent to the existing Carrowleagh Wind Farm) An EIS will be submitted with the application	Granted by SCC on 21/01/2017	Existing	3	6.7
MCC Ref. No. 11/495, ACP Ref. No. PL16.241592, ACP Ref. No. PA16.317560	Firlough Wind Farm	Mayo	John Duffy & Others	Windfarm of 21 wind turbines, each turbine with a hub height of 85m and rotor blades of 35.5m in length with a total power output capacity of 48.3 megawatts. The development will also include the upgrading of c. 9.9km of existing site tracks and the construction of c.350m of new site tracks, hard standing areas, electrical control building, compound and also to erect 2 no. anemometry masts and install underground cabling. In addition, the development will include the carrying out of temporary site works and ancillary works to serve the developments.	Granted by ACP 19/11/2024	Existing	13	7.7
SCC Ref. No. 10/514, ACP Ref. No. PL16.241506	Bunnyconnellan Wind Farm	Mayo	Claire Duncan & Others	27.6MW wind farm comprising 12 no. 2.3MW wind turbines, with steel towers and composite fibre rotor blades, of hub height up to 63 metres, a rotor diameter of up to 71 metres and base to blade tip height up to 99.55m. A substation control building with fenced	Granted by ACP 13/12/2013	Existing	12	12.5

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
				compound containing electrical equipment, wind turbine transformers, turbine hardstands, new access tracks, strengthening and widening of existing turbury tracks on site, drainage works, new entrance with realignment improvements for site access from regional road no.294, underground electrical cables linking the turbines with substation, undergrounded communication cables, all further associated site works and related ancillary development				
MCC Ref. No. 17/619	Killala Wind Farm Phase 1	Mayo	Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company	10 year planning permission for 5 turbine wind farm. Proposed Development will be located in the townlands of Magherabrack, Mullafarry, Tawnaghmore Lower, Meelick and Tawnaghmore Upper, Killala, approx. 1.3km south of Killala. Development is an updated application to the consented 5 turbine wind farm P09/780. Proposal is for a wind energy development comprising 5 electricity generating wind turbines, each with a rotor diameter not exceeding 103.2m, a hub height not exceeding 73.5m and a blade tip height of not exceeding 126m. the development will include a meteorological mast not exceeding 82m in height, internal underground electrical cabling, a substation building, an external underground grid connection cable and ducting to the existing 110kv tawnaghmore	Granted by MCC 15/02/2018	Existing	5	23.3

Pl. Ref.	Wind Farm	County	Applicant	Description	Decision	Status	No. of Turbines	Approx. Distance to Nearest Turbine (km)
				substation, associated grid substation works, associated site access roads and ancillary site works including upgrades to existing site access, a temporary construction compound and haulage route works. the max output capacity of the wind farm will be up to 18mw and has an intended operation life of 25 years.				
SCC Ref No. 02/816, 22401, ACP Ref. No 21.203388	Lackan Wind Farm	Sligo	Lackan Wind Energy Ltd.	construction of 3 no. wind turbines, 60 metre hub height and 80 metre rotor diameter, access trackways, 4.5 metres in width, a substation building and associated site development works (planning ref. PL 02/816)	Granted by SCC 28/10/2003	Existing	3	14.1
ACP Ref. No. PC21.317477	Clooncunny Wind Farm	Sligo	RWE Renewables Ireland Ltd	Proposed development of 8 wind turbines, grid connection and all associated site works.	Pre-Application	Proposed	8	14.6

2.7 Scoping and Consultation

2.7.1 Scoping

Under guidelines set out by the European Commission relating to Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), 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.

As part of the constraints mapping process, which is detailed in Chapter 3 of this EIAR, telecommunications operators, were contacted in January 2021 and May 2024 to determine the presence of telecommunications links or aviation assets traversing or located in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm. Following this exercise in May 2024, an EIAR scoping document, providing details of the Proposed Project, was prepared by MKO and circulated in September 2024 and consultees who had yet to respond were contacted again in October 2024.

The scoping document provided details of the Proposed Project and set out the scope of work for the EIAR. Consultees were invited to contribute to the EIAR by suggesting baseline data, survey techniques and potential impacts that should be considered as part of the assessment process and in the preparation of the EIAR.

2.7.2 Scoping Responses

The bodies engaged with at scoping stage are set out below in **Table 2-5**. Further to this, responses received from bodies in relation to the scoping document circulated are set out in **Table 2-6** below.

Copies of all scoping responses received are included in **Appendix 2-1** of this EIAR. If further responses are received, the comments of the consultees will be considered, where applicable, in the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Project in the event of a grant of planning permission. The recommendations of the consultees have informed the scope of the assessments undertaken and the contents of the EIAR.

Table 2-5: Scoping List and Responses

Consultee	Date of Response
2RN	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
An Taisce	No response received.
Aviation Navigation Ireland	No response received.
Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)	Response received 10 th of May 2024 in relation to telecommunications and on 6 th of September 2024.
Bat Conservation Ireland	Response received on the 7 th October 2024.

Birdwatch Ireland	No response received.
Border Region Local Authority Waters Programme	No response received.
Butterfly Conservation Ireland	No response received.
Cellnex	No response received.
Commission for Communications Regulation	No response received.
Coimisiún na Meán	No response received.
Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Water and Energy	No response received.
ComReg	Response received 9 th May 2024.
Dense air	No response received.
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Response received on the 11 th October 2024.
Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	Response received on the 9 th October 2024.
Department of Defence	Responses received on the 6 th September 2024 and the 7 th October 2024.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Response received on the 9 th September 2024.
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media	No response received.
Department of Transport	Response received on the 18 th September 2024.
Eircom Ltd	Response received on the 14 th May 2024.
Eirgrid	No response received.
Electricity Supply Board	No response received.
Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
EOBO Ltd	No response received.
EPA	No response received.
Faite Ireland	Response received on the 18 th September 2024.
FastCom Boradband Limited	No response received.
Geological Survey of Ireland	See response from DECC.
Hibernian Towers	No response received.
HSE – Environmental Health Service	Response received on the 10 th October 2024.
Irish Rail	Response received on the 13 th May in relation to Telecommunications

Irish Rail	No response received
Imagine Networks Services	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
Inland Fisheries Ireland	No response received.
Ireland West Knock Airport	No response received.
Irish Aviation Authority	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.
Irish Aviation Authority (Telecommunications)	No response received in relation to telecommunications.
Irish Peatland Conservation Council	No response received.
Irish Raptor Study Group	No response received.
Irish Red Grouse Association – Conservation Trust	No response received.
Irish Wildlife Trust	Response received on the 9 th September 2024.
Ivertec Ltd	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
JFK Communications Ltd	No response received.
JS Whizzy Internet Limited	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
Lackabeha Services Ltd T/A Airwaves Internet	No response received.
Meteor Mobile Communications Limited	No response received.
Motorola	Response received 17 th June 2024
Northern & Western Regional Assembly	No response received.
Office of Public Works	Response received on the 4 th October 2024.
RTÉ/Saorview	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
Sligo Airport	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.
Sligo County Council: Environment	No response received.
Sligo County Council: Planning	Response received on the 27 th September 2024.
Sligo County Council: Roads	No response received.
Sligo County Council: Heritage	No response received.
Sport Ireland	No response received.
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	No response received.
TETRA Ireland	Response received on the 23 rd October

TETRA	No response received in relation to telecommunications.
The Heritage Council	No response received.
Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
Towercom	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	Response received on the 25 th September 2024.
Uisce Éireann	Response received on the 12 th November 2024.
Uisce Éireann (Telecommunications)	No response received in relation to telecommunications.
Viatel Ireland Ltd	No response received.
Virgin Media	Response received 28 th May 2024
Vodafone Ireland Ltd	Response received on the 10 th May 2024 and the 6 th September
Waterways Ireland	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.
Western Broadband Network	No response received.

Table 2-6: Summary of responses received from Consultees

Consultee	Date of Response	Response Summary	Addressed in Chapter
2RN	Response received on 10 th May 2024.	Requested co-ordinates of existing and proposed turbines as well as dimensions if they are known. Questioned whether the repowered sites turbines where to remain the same size as existing turbines. 2 no. off air links passing through the Proposed Wind Farm were identified. Ideally no part of the turbine would enter the areas where links cross. However, there is a risk of interference to broadcast services posed by the proposed site and it is requested that a protocol be signed between the developer and 2rn should it go ahead	Chapter 15: Material Assets
BAI	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.	BAI does not perform an in-depth analysis of the effect of wind turbines or electrical sub stations on FM networks. States that the proposed substation is not located close to any existing or planned FM transmission sites. States that they are not aware of any issues from existing windfarms or electrical sub stations into existing FM networks.	N/A
Bat Conservation Ireland	Response received on the 7 th October 2024.	Bat Conservation Ireland is a small organisation, with limited resources and does not have the capacity to get involved in planning issues.	N/A
ComReg	Response received 9 th May 2024	ComReg attached a list of organisations and contacts which may be relevant to the scoping request.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Response received on the 11 th October 2024.	The Activity does not fall within the remit of the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations under the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and therefore, once relevant environmental and planning regulations are met, DAFM has no comment at this stage of the consultation process.	N/A
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	Response received on the 9 th October 2024.	With the current plan, although it is on the margins of the Site boundary, there may be potential impacts on the integrity of the Current Geological Site (CGS), should this site not be assessed as a constraint. Ideally, the Site should not be damaged, or integrity impacted or reduced in any manner due to any proposed construction practices. Appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place to minimize or mitigate potential impacts.	Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology

		The Landslide Susceptibility map indicates variable landslide susceptibility within the renewable energy development site boundary, including areas of ‘Moderately High’ to ‘High’ susceptibility. Should development go ahead, Geological Survey Ireland would appreciate a copy of reports detailing any site investigations carried out.	
Department of Defence	Response received on the 6 th September 2024, further response on the 7 th October 2024.	The Department of Defence does not provide observations or advice in the scoping process, except where the relevant parties have been directed by a planning authority to seek the Department’s views. Following on from consultation with the Irish Air Corps, the Department makes the following observations: ➤ All turbines should be illuminated by Type C, Medium intensity, Fixed Red obstacle lighting with a minimum output of 2,000 candela to be visible in all directions of azimuth and to be operational H24/7 days a week. ➤ Obstacle lighting should be incandescent or, if LED or other types are used, of a type visible to Night Vision equipment. Obstacle lighting used must emit light at the near Infra-Red (IR) range of the electromagnetic spectrum, specifically at or near 850 nanometres (nm) of wavelength. Light intensity to be of similar value to that emitted in the visible spectrum of light. It is stated that any Irish Air Corps (IAC) requirements are separate to Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) requirement. Request was made to remain informed on any progress relating to this proposed development.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Response received on the 9 th September 2024.	Automated email response: Receipt acknowledged of pre planning request. The normal target turnaround for pre-planning and other general consultations is six weeks from date of receipt. In relation to general consultations from public bodies under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 to 2011, the Department endeavours to meet deadline dates, where requested.	Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage

Department of Transport	Response received on the 18 th September 2024.	The Department of Transport has the following comments in relation to the consultation request relating to the Scoping Report for the Proposed Project: It should be noted that the Department considers the construction involved in providing this development and especially, the connection cables to the national grid, may have effects on both the environment and the Regional and Local Road network. The Department of Transport provided design considerations for the placement of cables in the public road. The Department of Transport provided a list of events which may arise as well as items to be considered if the placement of cables in one or more trenches within the extents of the public road network is proposed. Suggested various alternative options for the grid connection which should be considered. Provided a list of conditions that should be applied in the case of a grant of permission.	Chapter 3: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project Appendix 4-7 Crumhach Wind Farm 110KV Grid Construction - Construction Methodology Chapter 15: Material Assets
Eircom	Response received on the 14 th May 2024, and further correspondence on the 13 th June 2024.	Highlighted 2 transmission links within the proposed area that would be at risk. Requested a buffer of 100m radius away from this transmission path when placing turbines. Included email for where new development analysis requests should be sent. Clarified the setback distance is 100m from the transmission path to the turbine outer blade tip to avoid interference.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Enet Telecommunications	Response received on the 10 th May 2024 and 6 th September 2024.	Stated that Enet have 3 links in the area: TC Ballina/Cignal Dunowla, Cignal Dunowla / SCP0192 - Dromore West Central National School and Cignal Dunowla / SCP0188 - Cartron Community Centre, which all require a 50m setback distance.	Chapter 15: Material Assets

Failete Ireland	Response received on the 18 th September 2024.	Sent a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Guidelines for the Treatment of Tourism in an EIA, which provides guidance for those conducting Environmental Impact Assessment and compiling an EIAR, or those assessing EIAR's, where the project involves tourism or may have an impact on tourism.	Chapter 5: Population and Human Health Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage Chapter 13: Landscape & Visual
Health Service Executive (HSE)	Response received on 3 rd October 2024	The report from the HSE reports on the Environmental Health impacts of the proposed development. A list of recommended subjects to be included and assessed in the EIAR is suggested. They also provide a specific list of facilities that they consider should be used to identify the nearest sensitive receptors and to assess potential impacts on those facilities. Broad guidelines for completion of the EIAR were given.	Chapter 5: Population and Human Health Chapter 10: Air Quality Chapter 12: Noise & Vibration Chapter 13: Landscape & Visual Chapter 15: Material Assets
Imagine Network Services	Response received 10 th May 2024	Imagine have equipment on a mast located within the Proposed Project Site, there is also one microwave link affected. A setback of minimum 50m is requested from the centre path.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Irish Aviation Authority	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.	States that the development appears to be approximately 18km Southwest of Sligo Airport and 30km North of Ireland West Airport, as such, it is recommended that the developer engage directly with Sligo Airport and Ireland West Airport and the air navigation service provider Air Nav Ireland to make them aware of the proposal and ensure appropriate screening from an aviation safety perspective. States that in the event of a grant of planning permission, the Applicant should be conditioned to contact the IAA to: 1) agree an aeronautical obstacle warning light scheme for the wind turbine development, 2) provide as-constructed coordinates in WGS84 format together with ground and tip height elevations at each wind turbine location and	Chapter 15: Material Assets

		3) notify the Authority of intention to commence crane operations with at least 30 days prior notification of their erection.	
Irish Rail	Response received on the 13 th May 2024, further correspondence on the 15 th May 2024.	Informed that the proposed site lies within the GSM-R (Mobile Network for Railways) coordination zone. Gives two recommendations by defining 2 main zones: exclusion zone (5km from antenna), and coordination zone, any wind farm between 5-30km requires coordination between operators to fix any issue and impact on the signal propagation. Further correspondence indicated railway sections within the 30km zone, with location points for train radio towers, generator rooms and other railway sections.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Irish Wildlife Trust	Response received on the 9 th September 2024.	Informed that they do not have the staff capacity to respond to consultation at the time of email.	N/A
Ivertec Ltd	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.	Informed that they have no equipment in operation in the location of the Proposed Wind Farm, or within 5km of the Site.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
JS Whizzy Internet Limited	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.	Confirmed that they have no links in the area.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Motorola	Response received on the 17 th June 2024	No impact from the Proposed Wind Farm is anticipated.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Office of Public Works	Response received on 4 th October 2023.	The Office of Public Works states that it is not responsible for any channels within the study area, which falls under the remit of this office to maintain under the 1945 Arterial Drainage Act. The EIAR Site Boundary follows the path of the N59 National Primary Road and passes through the Dunmorran Drainage District. This is a maintainable channel that falls under the remit of the local authority to maintain. Information on these locations can be found at https://www.floodinfo.ie/map/drainage_map/.	Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology Chapter 15: Material Assets

		The office has no record of flooding or past flood events adjacent to the study area. It is recommended to carry out a review of historical flood risk. The office would recommend that no flooding should occur during or after construction of the proposed project. They also state that no bridges over watercourses can be altered or constructed without the consent of the Commissioners. If this proposed development requires construction of or alteration to a bridge over a watercourse, Section 50 approval will be required in advance from the Commissioners of Public Works. They also stated that that a grant of Planning Permission by a planning authority for a development which contains bridges or culverts does not confer Section 50 consent on the applicant, nor does it absolve the applicant from the requirement to obtain such consent from the Commissioners.	
Sligo Airport	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.	Stated that the Proposed Project does not appear to have any effect on the operations of Sligo Airport, requested to contact the IAA for confirmation/observations	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Sligo County Council – Planning	Response received on the 26th September 2024.	Sligo County Council Planning Department gave an overview of their thoughts and inputs for the Proposed Wind Farm sites under numerous headings. Below is an overview of comments by Sligo County Council Planning. ➤ They note the rationale behind the proposed location. ➤ They believe that a Waste Management Plan should be included for both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Wind Farm. ➤ Query if any proposed firefighting measures that may be associated with the proposed battery storage facility and impacts to air quality should be included in the report. ➤ The EIAR must take the <i>Sligo County Council Noise Action Plan for Sligo County and City 2018</i> into account.	Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project Chapter 3: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives Chapter 4: Description of Proposed Project Chapter 5: Population & Human Health Chapter 15: Material Assets

		➤ Assessment should consider cumulative impacts of the Proposed Wind Farm on the landscape with attention paid to the <i>Landscape Characterisation Map of the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023</i>. ➤ Applicant should engage with Sligo County Council Road Department ➤ A list of sections in planning policy documents relevant to the Proposed Windfarm is identified. ➤ Any forthcoming EIAR should outline clear proposals in relation to public consultation initiatives Conclusion: Sligo County Council will continue to provide input to the statutory planning process for this project as provided for under the planning legislation.	
TETRA Ireland	Response received on the 23 rd October 2024.	Anticipate no impact from the development as proposed. Requests that the scoping document be issued to Eir.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Three Ireland	Response received on the 6 th September 2024.	Details of 2 possible affected links given, which are already considered within EIAR. Link 16976 and Link 90470. Coordinates of each given.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Towercom	Response received on the 10 th May 2024.	No links in the area.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	Response received on the 25 th September 2024.	Offered general guidance on the preparation of an EIAR, where a proposed development may affect the national road network. Provided design considerations and associated guidance for the placement of cables in the public road. Provided a list of events which may arise as well as items to be considered if the placement of cables in one or more trenches within the extents of the public road network is proposed. Suggested various alternative options for the grid connection which should be considered.	Chapter 3: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project Appendix 4-7: Crumhach Wind Farm 110KV Grid Construction – Construction Methodology Chapter 15: Material Assets

		It was identified that grid connection and cable routing proposals should be developed to safeguard proposed road schemes as TII will not be responsible for costs associated with future relocation of cable routing where proposals are catered for in an area of a proposed national road scheme (e.g. N59 Corhawnagh to Crockacullion Scheme). In that regard, consideration should be given to routing options, use of existing crossings, depth of cable laying, etc. They identified that in terms of impacts on the existing national road network, grid connection proposals indicated in Section 1.1 of your EIAR Scoping Report documentation outline the use of existing cable connections from Kingsmountain and Dunneill Wind Farms to the existing Cunghill 110kV substation and a new cable connection to the existing Srananagh 220kV substation to connect the Proposed Project to the National Grid. It was identified that cable routing should avoid all impacts to existing TII infrastructure such as traffic counters, weather stations, etc. and works required to such infrastructure shall only be undertaken in consultation with and subject to the agreement of TII, any costs attributable shall be borne by the applicant/developer. The developer should also be aware that separate approvals may be required for works traversing the national road network.	
Uisce Éireann	Response received on the 12 th November 2024.	Stated that the proposed development is in the locality of Lough Eskey, where Uisce Éireann operates an abstraction point that serves the Lough Eskey regional water supply. It is noted that the proposed development is approximately 600 meters to the south of this facility. The proposed development cannot give rise to any deterioration of Lough Eskey water source. Care must be taken to avoid interaction with and any impact to, this body of water and its catchment, particularly at the South easterly extent of the proposed boundary, where the potential risk of catchment interaction is greatest. Potential impacts on any water source(s) in proximity to the Proposed Project and having hydrological connectivity with the development site at construction and operational phases should be assessed and mitigations proposed for any potential impacts.	Chapter 5: Population & Human Health Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology Chapter 15: Material Assets

		The proposed cabling route to the Srananagh 220kV substation will potentially have interactions with Uisce Éireann’s infrastructure within the public roads(s). Prior to any planning application submission, the applicant is required to submit a diversion enquiry to Uisce Éireann and receive a Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) letter from Diversions Dept, that will form part of the formal planning application lodgement documentation. In addition to the specific items outlined above Uisce Éireann gave a list of broad aspects relating to Water Services which should be considered in the scope of the EIAR,	
Vodafone Ireland	Response received on the 10 th May 2024. A separate response received on the 6 th of September 2024	Stated that there are two Vodafone links passing through the proposed area. A clearance of 30m from the first Fresnel zone is desired. Stated that there are four microwave links that pass through the EIAR site boundary. A clearance of 30m from the first Fresnel zone is desired.	Chapter 15: Material Assets
Waterways Ireland	Response received on 6 th September 2024.	Proposed Wind Farm is not within any Zone of Influence of their waterways so no comment was provided.	N/A

2.7.3 Other Consultation

2.7.3.1 Pre-Planning Meetings

2.7.3.1.1 An Coimisiún Pleanála

The Applicant engaged with ACP under the provisions of Section 37B of the Act, as to whether the Proposed Project would meet the thresholds of the Seventh Schedule of the Act. The Applicant issued a request to open consultations with ACP in August 2024 in relation to the Proposed Project.

First Pre-Application Meeting (Section 37B)

Members of the Project Team and the Applicant met with representatives from ACP in accordance with Section 37B of the Act via Microsoft (MS) Teams on the 25th November 2024. Attendees were as follows

On behalf of ACP:

- Ellen Moss – Scribe,
- Heidi Thorsdalen – Inspector,
- Una Crosse - Assistant Director of Planning.

On behalf of the Agent and Applicant:

- Caroline Donnelly – SSE Lead Consents Strategy Manager,
- Garry Brides – SSE Project Manager,
- Alan Clancy – MKO Planning,
- Ellen Costello – MKO Environment,
- Brandon Taylor – MKO Environment,
- Susan Doran – MKO Environment,
- Ciara Griffin – MKO Planning.

The project team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in 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 and Ecology,
- Discussed scoping and pre-application/public consultation undertaken to date,
- Set out the scope of the EIAR to be undertaken,
- Set out the projected project timelines.

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

- Existing wind farm developments at the Proposed Project site and their existing permitted timescales,
- Extent of repowering and its relation to the proposed layout of the development,
- Landownership for the Site,
- Distance to residential receptors and noise baseline studies,
- Forestry felling at the Proposed Project Site.

Second Pre-Application Meeting (Section 37B)

A second pre-application meeting was conducted on 2nd December 2025 with representatives from ACP in accordance with Section 37B of the Act via Microsoft (MS) Teams. Attendees were as follows

On behalf of ACP:

- Ellen Moss – Scribe,
- Una Crosse – Assistant Director of Planning,
- Maeve Flynn – Senior Director of Planning,
- Finbarr Quigley – Senior Environmental Scientist,
- Heidi Thorsdalen – Inspector.

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- Gary Brides – SSE Project Manager,
- Caroline Donnelly – SSE Lead Consents Strategy Manager,
- Helen Burman-Roy – SSE Environmental Manager,
- Ellen Costello – MKO Environment,
- Brandon Taylor – MKO Environment,
- Edel Mulholland – MKO Environment,
- Alan Clancy – MKO Planning,
- Rachel Minogue – MKO Ecology,
- Juliane Kohlstruck – MKO Ecology,
- Susan Doyle – MKO Ornithology.

The main reason for this meeting was to discuss updates and refinements to the project design and scope since the first SID meeting, to address the implications of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 274 of 2025). These Regulations, published on 12th August 2025, transpose several key aspects of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) into national law, including the immediate introduction of “Completeness Checks” following application lodgement.

Discussions also focused on whether the Proposed Project should be classified as a new development or repowering development. The Project Team noted that the proposal includes new elements beyond the Existing Wind Farm. Additional matters which were discussed between the Project Team and the representatives of ACP included:

- Grid Connection and Existing Substation,
- Turbine Delivery Route,
- Baseline Environment
- Ornithology,
- Ecology,
- Hydrology and Geotechnical Matters,
- Noise,
- Geology,
- Reiterations,
- Landscape and Cultural Heritage,
- Next steps in Application.

SID Determination

On the 20th of February 2026, MKO, on behalf of the Applicant, sought to close the consultation process with ACP. On the 24th March 2026, ACP wrote to the applicant and confirmed that consultation was closed and that the Proposed Project was considered to be strategic infrastructure

within the meaning of Section 37A and such any application for approval of the Proposed Project should be made directly to ACP.

A copy of the SID determination letter is included as an appendix to the planning application form submitted with this application.

Design Flexibility Meeting – Section 32CC

On the 2nd December 2025 a further meeting was held with ACP via MS Teams, under Section 32CC of the Planning Act in order to discuss design flexibility elements required for the Proposed Project.

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

On behalf of ACP:

- Ellen Moss – Scribe,
- Una Cross – Assistant Director of Planning,
- Heidi Thorsdalen – Inspector.

On behalf of the Agent and the Applicant:

- Caroline Donnelly – SSE Lead Consents Strategy Manager,
- Ellen Costello – MKO Environment,
- Brandon Taylor – MKO Environment,
- Edel Mulholland – MKO Environment,
- Alan Clancy – MKO Planning.

The project team outlined the details of the Proposed Project that would not be confirmed at the time of the application for permission and would need to avail of design flexibility provisions, which were as follows:

- Turbine total tip height,
- Turbine rotor diameter,
- Turbine hub height.

The parameters within which the turbine specifications will fall were set out as follows:

- Turbine total tip height of 176.6m – 180m,
- Turbine rotor diameter of 133.2m – 150m,
- Turbine hub height of 105m – 110m.

It was outlined in the meeting that the design flexibility requirement arises as the exact make and model of the turbine cannot be confirmed prior to making the application as this will be dictated by a competitive tender process of the various turbines on the market at the time of procurement and construction, which necessitates the requirement for associated unconfirmed details to be included in the application.

Opinion on Design Flexibility

An Opinion of ACP under section 37CD of the Act was issued to the Applicant on the 24th March 2026, confirming that an application for permission could be made before certain details of the Proposed Project are confirmed, which in the case of this planning application relates to the turbine dimensions.

A copy of the Opinion on Design Flexibility letter is included with this application.

2.7.3.1.2 *Sligo County Council*

Members of the project team and the Applicant met with representatives from SCC at SCC's offices in Co. Sligo on the 25th of February 2026. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a high-level overview of the Proposed Project. Attendees were as follows:

On behalf of SCC:

- Paul O'Rourke – Senior Engineer,
- Bernard Scott – Senior Engineer - Regional Design Office,
- Frank Moylan – Senior Planner,
- Emer Concannon – Director of Services - Placemaking & Ballymote-Tubbercurry Municipal District.

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- Conor Joy - SSE - External Relations Manager,
- Brian McMenamin - SSE – Project Manager,
- Seamus Herron - SSE – Land Manager,
- Zara Morgan - SSE – Civil Engineer,
- Caroline Donnelly – SSE - Lead Consents Strategy Manager,
- Alan Clancy – MKO Planning.

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,
- Discussed scoping and pre-application/public consultation undertaken to date,
- Set out the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be undertaken,
- Set out the projected project timelines.

Following on from the presentation discussions centred around the following matters:

- The Turbine Delivery Route and the Proposed Grid Connection Route,
- Works in relation to the 'Sligo Way' project,
- The use of existing infrastructure for the Proposed Project and whether or not the project would be considered a repowering project or a new development by ACP,
- Potential visual impact of the Proposed Project.

This meeting with SCC was part of a wider series of wider engagements with the local authority dating back to early 2024, which included:

- A virtual meeting held on the 23rd of January 2024 with the SCC Management Team and the Applicant, which focused on SSE Renewables Ireland's footprint in County Sligo, matters

pertaining to the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 and during which the Proposed Project was noted at a high level,

- A virtual meeting held with the SCC Management Team on 10th of December 2024 and the Applicant during which an overview of the Proposed Project was provided,
- An in-person meeting with representatives from SCC, including their roads department and the Applicant, on 5th of March 2025, during which an overview of the Proposed Project was provided with a focus on matters pertaining to grid connection and turbine delivery routes,
- An in-person briefing regarding the Proposed Project with local councillors from the Ballymote-Tubbercurry Municipal District and the Applicant which took place on 24th March 2025.

2.7.3.1.3 Other Pre-Planning Meetings

Consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)

Members of the Project Team, including Environmental Scientists, Ecologists and Ornithologists met with the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) on the 10th February 2026 to discuss the Proposed Project. The main topics discussed in the meeting including the following:

- An overview of the Proposed Project,
- Ecological Surveys which have been undertaken to date and their findings,
- Ornithology surveys which have been undertaken to date and their findings,
- The Key Ecological Receptors identified at the Site,
- Proposed plans for habitat enhancement and management measures.

The discussion on the Proposed Project primarily related to the classification of peatland habitats and the use of Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC) to assess habitat loss directly and in surrounding areas. In addition to this, discussion centred around peatland enhancement areas, habitat management plans, impacts of the Proposed Project on designated sites and construction methodologies for the construction of floating roads in peatland/upland areas.

2.8 Community Consultation

The Applicant has a long-standing presence in West Sligo through the Kingsmountain and Dunneill Wind Farms. In addition, since 2004, the Applicant has also operated a voluntary community fund in the area, with the Kingsmountain and Dunneill Community Fund contributing over €650,000 to local groups during that time.

Against this background, SSE Renewables Ireland undertook a structured programme of pre-planning consultation and engagement for the Proposed Project, delivered across three phases:

- Phase 1: Introducing the Project,
- Phase 2: Pre-Application Public Consultation,
- Phase 3: Ongoing Availability and Presence.

The stakeholder engagement strategy focused on engaging with the local community in an open, honest and transparent manner. The aim was to provide clear and accessible information while also seeking feedback to better understand local views. This process was led by the Applicant.

Overall, feedback across the three phases of engagement has been largely positive, with consultation contributing constructively to the development of the project. The overall positive sentiment towards the project is considered to reflect the Applicant's established presence in West Sligo, its track record in developing and operating onshore wind projects, and the long-standing delivery of community benefit funding in the area.

Where concerns were raised in relation to the Proposed Project, these were addressed through responsive and transparent engagement, including the provision of information, follow-up correspondence and direct meetings with stakeholders where appropriate.

The consultation has also supported meaningful engagement with a broad range of stakeholders and strengthened the Applicant's existing relationships in the area.

Engagement with the local community began in early 2024, with the appointment of a Community Liaison Officer in March 2024, and included regular issuing of letters and newsletters, two public consultation events held on the 23rd and 24th of July 2025, a virtual consultation room and a series of meetings with local and regional stakeholders. Engagement for the Proposed Project remains ongoing and will continue throughout the full project lifecycle.

The development of the Proposed Project will also provide an economic benefit to the surrounding area, including through community benefit funding, employment during construction and operation, and annual commercial rates payable to the local authority.

Further details regarding community consultation are provided in the Community Engagement Report at **Appendix 2-2** of this EIAR.

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 the description of likely significant effects should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to a proposed development or project. The factors to be considered in relation to cumulative effects include population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air quality, climate material assets, landscape, cultural heritage, and major accidents/vulnerability to natural disasters, 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 impact arising from other projects has therefore been fully considered within this EIAR.

2.9.1

Methodology for the Cumulative Impact Assessment of Projects

The potential cumulative impact of the Proposed Project 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 proposed and existing projects, projects pending a decision from the planning authority, projects in the public domain such as SID projects at pre-consultation with ACP, and land-uses in the vicinity of the Proposed Project site location.

The cumulative impact assessment of projects has two 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 identify the projects that hold the potential for cumulative interaction within the context of the Proposed Project and discard projects that will neither directly nor*

indirectly contribute to cumulative impacts. (Note: this is done by individual competent 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 EIAR's.

2.9.2 Projects Considered in the Cumulative Impact Assessment

2.9.2.1 Planning Applications & Permissions

A search was undertaken of the planning portals maintained by Sligo County Council, Mayo County Council and ACP to search for all planned and/or permitted planning applications within 25km of the Application Site boundary. 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 Proposed Turbines and 1km from the Proposed Grid Connection Route.

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.

2.9.2.2 Environmental Protection Agency Licenced Activities

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) licensed activities refer to industrial and waste management operations that require a license from the EPA 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.

2.9.2.3 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.

2.9.2.4 Licenced Forestry

Forestry licences are regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). These licences are legally required for a range of forestry activities to ensure that forestry operations are

environmentally sustainable, comply with national and EU laws, and consider biodiversity, landscape, and water protection.

Commercial forestry is a land-use within the cumulative study area. Afforestation, clear fell and thinning licences in the vicinity of the Site have been reviewed and taken into account where required in the cumulative impact assessment in each individual EIAR chapter.

For the purposes of this project, the Applicant commits that the location of any replanting (alternative afforestation) associated with the project will be outside the hydrological catchment within which the Proposed Project is located. On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be no cumulative effects associated with the replanting of forestry. Therefore, forestry replanting is not considered further in the impact assessment chapters of the EIAR.

In addition, the Applicant commits to not commencing the project until both a felling and afforestation licence(s) is in place and, therefore, this ensures the afforested lands are identified, assessed and licenced appropriately by the relevant consenting authority.

Further details in relation to the consideration forestry replanting is included in Section 4.3.2.12 of the EIAR.

2.10

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 2-7** 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.

2.10.1

Cumulative Study Area

Table 2-7 below details the cumulative assessment study areas for each EIAR discipline, relative to the Proposed Project, which are considered in this EIAR. Following consultation with the EIAR team on each individual topic, the maximum geographical extent where there is potential for in combination effects/cumulative impact, and justification for this extent was established and is presented below.

The maximum extent of each cumulative search buffer was determined by the largest specific cumulative study area buffer (25km from EIAR Site Boundary). 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 2-7**.

Table 2-7: Cumulative Study Area

Individual Topic	Maximum Extent	Justification
Population & Human Health (including shadow flicker)	Electoral divisions (EDs) where the Proposed Wind Farm is located (Dromore, Templeboy South/Mullagheruse). Shadow Flicker Study Area (10xRD buffer from proposed turbines). 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, in their relevant EIAR chapters.	The Proposed Wind Farm Population Study Area encompasses the EDs in which the Proposed Wind Farm is located, all properties within the Population Study Area have been assessed for cumulative impacts with the Proposed Wind Farm. The DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines 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 1.63km (ten times the rotor diameter from proposed turbines) for the Proposed Wind Farm. As there are no permitted or proposed wind farms within the 1.63km Shadow Flicker Study Area (nearest wind farm is proposed Black Lough Wind Farm located approximately 4.2km to the north of the proposed turbines) there is no potential for cumulative shadow flicker effects.
	Proposed Grid Connection Route Study Area for Population (250m).	For the Proposed Grid Connection Route, the Study Area for Population is identified as 250m from the proposed underground electrical cabling route. Due to the nature of the works associated with the Proposed Grid Connection Route, cumulative impacts on Population & Human Health are unlikely to occur with any project outside this Study Area.
Biodiversity – Flora & Fauna, Bats (excluding birds)	10km from the Proposed Wind Farm. Consideration for the Biodiversity cumulative extent is also given to the Bats and Water Cumulative geographical boundaries, which are outlined below.	A 10km buffer of the Site is used as is recommended for the desktop study and cumulative assessment by NatureScot Guidelines 2021 in relation to bats (Section 4). This extent is considered more than adequate to assess potential for cumulative effects on other terrestrial ecological receptors.

	250m from the Proposed Grid Connection underground electrical cabling route.	The geographical boundary for terrestrial ecological aspects, i.e. habitats and fauna (excluding bats and birds), is 250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Route.
	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).	Regional surface water catchments are used for cumulative impact assessment with regards to 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). Regionally the Proposed Wind Farm is located in the Sligo Bay WFD catchment within Hydrometric Area 35. Therefore, other wind-farm developments are considered within the Sligo Bay Catchment for cumulative effects. 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 the Proposed Wind Farm is located. The majority of the Proposed Wind Farm is mapped within the Dunmoran sub-catchment (Dunmoran_SC_010). Six Turbines in the west of the Proposed Wind Farm are located in the Easky sub-catchment (Easky_SC_010). Within the Easky sub-catchment, the Proposed Wind Farm is mapped in 3 no. WFD river sub-basins: the Buncrowey_010 WFD river sub-basin, the Easky_020 and the Easky_030 WFD river sub-basin. Within the Dunmoran sub-catchment, the

		Proposed Wind Farm is located in the Dunneill_010, Lugdoon stream_010 and the Doonbeakin_010 WFD river sub-basin Due to the narrow nature of the Proposed Grid Connection Route trench a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative effects on the water environment.
	The cumulative study area for Bats is 10km.	Bats are a mobile species which can cover large distances for foraging and roosting over a range of varied habitats. As recommended by NatureScot 2021 (Section 4), a 10km cumulative study area is considered for potential cumulative effects on bats.
Birds	25km from the proposed turbines for large infrastructural development, such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments.	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 proposed turbines was considered a reasonable approximation of the size of a county and a 25km radius of the proposed turbines was considered a reasonable approximation for the local level.
	Consideration for the Birds cumulative extent for the Proposed Grid Connection Route is also given to the Biodiversity cumulative geographical boundaries; i.e., 250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Route.	Using the precautionary approach the geographical boundary for terrestrial ornithological aspects, i.e. birds, is 250m from the Proposed Grid Connection Route.
Land, Soils and Geology	EIAR Site Boundary for both the Proposed Wind Farm and the Proposed Grid Connection Route.	As there is no pathway for offsite cumulative impacts for Land, Soils and Geology, the cumulative study area is the EIAR Site Boundary.

Hydrology & Hydrogeology	Proposed Wind Farm: 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).	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). Regionally, the Site is located in the WFD Sligo Bay surface water catchment within Hydrometric Area No. 35 of the North Western River Basin District. The cumulative Water Study Area for the Proposed Wind Farm is the Easky River, Dunneill River and Lugdoon Stream catchments.
	Proposed Grid Connection Route: 250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route;	The cumulative Water Study Area for the Proposed Grid Connection Route is Easky River, Dunneill River, Buncrowney River, Doonbeakin River, Lugdoon Stream, Kilrusheighter Stream, Doonflin Stream, Dunmorán River, Barnabrack Stream, Ballysodare River, Owenmore River and Unshin River. Due to the narrow nature of the proposed grid connection trench, a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative effects on the water environment.
Air Quality	Air Quality Study Area is 1km from Proposed Wind Farm.	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.
	250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route; the Proposed Grid Connection Route cumulative boundary is captured within the 25km buffer from the proposed turbines	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.

Climate	The climate assessment has been considered on a national basis and is not confined to a specific study area.	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.
Noise & Vibration	The list of wind farms which were initially considered in cumulative assessment extended to 25km of the Proposed Turbines.	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). As the nearest proposed, permitted or existing wind turbine is approximately 4.2 km from the proposed turbines, there is no potential for cumulative noise effects.
	250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route;	Due to the narrow nature of the Proposed Grid Connection Route trench, a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative noise effects.
Cultural Heritage	20km buffer from the Proposed Wind Farm.	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 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 20km of the proposed turbines. Direct effects for the Proposed Project are considered to be confined to within the Site and relate to construction effects.
	250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route;	Due to the narrow nature of the Proposed Grid Connection Route trench (~0.6m wide), a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative cultural heritage effects

Landscape & Visual	20km buffer from the proposed turbines for Landscape and Visual effects (LVIA Study Area). 15km from Proposed Wind Farm turbines for effects on landscape character (LCA Study Area).	The LVIA study area has been chosen as 20 kilometres, following the guidance on Appendix 3 of the DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines which provides that ‘For blade tips in excess of 100m, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility radius of 20km would be adequate’ (DoEHLG 2006 Guidelines), Page 94, Draft DoHPLG 2019 Guidelines, Page 152) The LCA Study Area has been chosen as 15 kilometres 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.
Material Assets: Traffic & Transport	25km buffer from proposed turbines for large infrastructural developments such as wind farms, energy and public transport developments. Following that, the proposed transport route for each project is considered. 250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route;	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 Grid Connection Route is deemed appropriate to capture other plans and projects with the potential for cumulative effects with the Proposed Project.
Material Assets: Telecoms, Aviation & Other Built Services	The list of wind farms and other projects which were initially considered in cumulative assessment extended to 25km from Proposed Wind Farm turbines.	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.
	250m from Proposed Grid Connection Route;	Due to the narrow nature of the Proposed Grid Connection Route trench, a 250m buffer zone is an appropriate scale when considering potential cumulative.

To gather a comprehensive view of cumulative impacts within the cumulative study area and to inform the EIA process being undertaken by the consenting authority, each relevant chapter within the EIAR addresses the potential for cumulative effects where appropriate and within the context of their identified cumulative study area. A long list of projects considered (i.e. the largest cumulative study boundary of 25km list) across all disciplines in their cumulative impact assessment is included in **Appendix 2-3**.

There is one potential wind farm development referenced in the cumulative long list (ACP Ref. No. PC21.317477) and included in **Table 2-4** of this chapter, that is currently at pre-application stage. Information available on this project (i.e., approximate turbine locations and tip height) is limited, however there is sufficient information available to allow for this proposed wind farms to be considered in the cumulative impact assessment as relevant.

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 2-8** 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 2-8: Data sources used for long list compilation

Title	Description	Author
Planning Applications	https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9cf2a09799d74d8e9316a3d3a4d3a8de	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
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 May 2026. Therefore, plans and projects that were applied for after May of 2026 are not considered in the cumulative impact assessment.

2.10.1.1 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 land uses within the cumulative study area. Existing land uses within the cumulative study area includes renewable energy, forestry and third party / private peat extraction/ turf cutting practices. 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 permitted and existing wind farms in the area, solar farms, energy storage, ongoing

agricultural practices/forestry practices, quarries and extractive industries, intensive production/processing industries, large infrastructure projects and other EIAR projects.

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.