

**Chief Executive
Kilkenny County Council
County Hall
John Street
Kilkenny R95 A39T**

cc. Deirdre Breen, Planning Department

28th September 2026

**Notification of a direct application to An Coimisiún Pleanála in respect of a Strategic Infrastructure Development
Proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, County Kilkenny.**

Dear Sir,

Following pre-application consultations between Ecopower Developments Limited (EDL) and An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission) in relation to a proposed windfarm in North County Kilkenny – to be called Gathabawn Windfarm, the Commission served notice that it is of the opinion that the proposed development would be Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) and therefore any application for planning permission for the development must be made directly to the Commission, under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (Pre-Application ABP Ref. 313780-22).

I herein notify Kilkenny County Council that the planning application for Gathabawn Windfarm is now ready for submission directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. The Commission has instructed that copies of the Planning Application be lodged with Kilkenny County Council. I attach

- 2 No. hard copies and 5 No. electronic copies on USB of the complete Planning Application
- 1 No. electronic copy on the USB of Site Boundary DWG file
- Copy of the Newspaper Notices of the Planning Application – Kilkenny People and Irish Independent.

The Commission advises that the Planning Application documents are made available at the offices of Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny, for public inspection free of charge, or purchased on payment of a specified fee (which fee shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making such copy) during public opening hours **commencing on 7th October 2026**. The Commission also advises that the application documentation should remain available for public inspection during the currency of the application.



Submissions or observations may be made only to An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1; or via the An Coimisiún Pleanála website www.pleanala.ie, relating to:-

- The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development;
- The likely effects on the environment of the proposed development;
- The likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European site, if carried out.

Submissions/observations must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies) and must be sent in writing directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála or online (www.pleanala.ie) not later than **5.30pm. on the 25th November 2026**. **The application documents may also be viewed/downloaded on the following website: www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie**

You are advised that the Commission may in respect of an application for permission/approval, decide to:-

- Grant permission with or without conditions, or
- Grant permission with specified modifications, with or without conditions, or
- Grant permission in part, with or without conditions, or
- Refuse permission.

1. SCHEDULE OF SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS TO KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Copies of the complete Planning Application comprising;

2 No. paper copies and 5 No. electronic copies of the Application Documents including

- Cover Letter to An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Completed Application Form
- Applicants Completeness Checklist
- Applicants Planning Statement
- Community Report
- Notification from Ecopower Developments Limited to Kilkenny County Council
- Newspaper Notice Kilkenny People dated 25.09.2026
- Newspaper Notice Irish Independent dated 24.09.2026
- Site Notice and Site Notices placement location Map (12 No. locations)
- Schedule of Prescribed bodies to whom notification of the making of the application has been sent and the Notification Letters
- EIA Portal Confirmation Notice. EIA Portal Identification Number 2026147

2 No. paper copies and 5 No. electronic copies of the Planning Drawings

2 No. paper copies and 5 No. electronic copies of the EIA Report comprising

- EIA Report with relevant Figures and Appendices
- Non-Technical Summary of the EIA Report

2 No. paper copies and 5 No. electronic copies of the Environmental Management Plan

2 No. paper copies and 5 No. electronic copies of the AA Report (Natura Impact Statement) including Figures and Appendices

Electronic Copies on USB also include the Site Boundary dwg. and shp.file

Note: Required number of copies of the Application agreed with Helen Doherty Kilkenny County Council by phone 23rd September 2026.

Notice to Kilkenny County Council of SID Planning Application for Gathabawn Windfarm County Kilkenny



1.1 Site Notices

Ten Site Notices have been erected in respect of the Gathabawn Windfarm Application at appropriate locations, including on or near the site entrances, on the public road near the two Control Buildings and at other conspicuous locations along the public road so as to be easily visible and legible by persons outside the lands using the public road. **Two additional Site Notices** have been placed at Parksgrove and Moatpark townland in relation to the Candidate Gathabawn Grid Connection for public information only.

The Applicant will regularly monitor these notices to ensure they remain in place and are not defaced or rendered illegible. Should any notices be removed or damaged, the Applicant will promptly replace them to maintain visibility and compliance. **Site Notice Location Map in the Drawings Pack.**

1.2 Prescribed Bodies Notified

For your information, on the instruction of An Coimisiún Pleanála, the following Prescribed Bodies have also been notified of the submission of this planning application and a copy of the complete Planning Application has been furnished for their examination. The Prescribed Bodies notified are

- Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Dept of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Dept of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Dept of Rural and Community Development
- Laois County Council
- Southern Regional Assembly
- EirGrid
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Water
- Irish Aviation Authority
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- An Taisce
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Fáilte Ireland
- The Heritage Council
- Office of Public Works

2. RENEWABLE ENERGY DESIGNATION POLICY STATEMENT

The Proposed Development is a RED III development comprising ‘renewable energy plant’ for the purposes of the Renewable Energy Directive (Directive EU 2023/2413). S.I. No. 274/2025 - European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025, which was subsequently followed by an amending regulation S.I No. 426 of 2025.

As a RED III development, this Planning Application is subject to a Completeness Check under section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.



2.1 Purpose of the Proposal

The purpose of Gathabawn Windfarm is to generate electricity without greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore it is a positive in the context of climate action. Along with the advantage of being renewable and sustainable, producing electricity in this way using a local source of fuel i.e. the wind, improves security of electricity supply in the country.

3. THE GATHABAWN WINDFARM PROPOSAL

Gathabawn Windfarm is being proposed by Ecopower Developments Limited, part of the Ecopower Group, an Irish windfarm and electricity supply company group, established in 1996 and managed from offices in Kilkenny. www.ecopower.ie

3.1 Locational Context

Gathabawn Windfarm is proposed for an agricultural area on the northern portion of the Slieveardagh Hills in North County Kilkenny. Cullahill Mountain is further to the north and northwest in County Laois. The windfarm is being proposed for the townlands of Coolnacrutta, Glashare, Ballylehaun, Gorteennamuck, Rathlogan, Ballyring Upper, Ballyring Lower and Tentore. The windfarm site is agricultural land.

The nearest settlements are Gathabawn village, located 1km southeast, Lisdowney located 3km northeast and Cullahill, Co. Laois 3km northwest, of the nearest turbines. Ballyragget is 6km northeast, Freshford is 4km to the south and Johnstown is 6km to the southwest, of the nearest turbine.

3.2 Summary Description

The proposed Gathabawn Windfarm development will comprise the following elements;

- **Twelve (12) wind turbines with a rotor diameter of 136m.** Two hub heights are proposed – 82m for Turbine T6, T7 & T9, and 102m for all other turbines, thus giving an uppermost tip height of 150m for T6, T7 & T9, and 170m for all other turbines. Construction of 12 No. turbine foundations and adjacent hardstandings;
- **Site roads of 8km in total length**, comprising 6.7km in length of new roads and the upgrading and widening of 1.3km of existing private farm tracks;
- **Two (2) electrical Control Buildings** - one in the Ballylehaun area and one in the Ballyring area. The buildings measure 20m x 10m, with a height of 7m and contain electrical and communications equipment, along with a storage room, canteen and welfare facilities;
- **Underground electrical cabling** linking the wind turbines together into a turbine ‘string’ and ultimately connect these strings to the two Control Buildings;
- **One (1) 30m lattice tower mast and one (1) LiDAR unit** for measuring on-site meteorological conditions;
- **Seven (7) site entrances** from the public road, comprising both existing and newly created entrances;
- Temporary works to facilitate the transport of the large components to the turbine locations. These works comprise temporary access roads; some minor public road widening; temporary hardstanding areas; and temporary widening of existing field entrances off the public road;
- Installation of an integrated drainage system to manage surface water run-off during all phases of the proposed development;



- **All associated infrastructure**, services and ancillary site works including excavation, earthworks, temporary and permanent overburden storage berms; temporary and permanent fencing; and hedgerow and tree removal, reinstatement and enhancement;
- Two (2) temporary construction compounds and two (2) on-site temporary borrow pits;
- **Creation of Biodiversity Areas** for the protection, enhancement and creation of habitats to serve as a functioning high level biodiversity resource for local flora and fauna communities.

The Applicant is seeking a period of 10-years during which Gathabawn Windfarm can be constructed and an operational duration of 35-years from the date of commissioning of the windfarm.

3.3 Grid Connection Point

The grid connection point for the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, has not yet being confirmed by Eirgrid but is likely to be the Eirgrid Ballyragget Substation, at Moatpark townland circa 6km to the east of the proposed windfarm site. The grid connection works are not included as part of this planning application but are assessed in the environmental documents submitted, so that the whole development impact and be understood.

3.4 Haul Route for Construction Traffic

The turbines will be delivered from the port of entry using the motorway network as far as Portlaoise. From the Portlaoise M7/N77 interchange, the turbines will be transported down the N77, straight through Abbeyleix and Durrow towns, onto the R639 and straight through Cullahill village before turning left off the R639, onto the L58141 at Coolnacrutta townland. No works or activities are required in Abbeyleix, Durrow or Cullahill to facilitate the movement of the turbine components.

3.5 Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund, Community Website, CLO appointment

The Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund which will be established once the windfarm is operational, is estimated to be circa €300,000 to be distributed annually, over the lifetime of the windfarm. The Fund will be managed locally and distributed to near neighbours and to local community organisations. The Fund will be distributed in line the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 'Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles Handbook'.

A community website was set up prior to submission of this planning application - www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) has been appointed for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the windfarm. Email contact details for the CLO are on the community website contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie

3.6 Commercial Rates to the Kilkenny Local Authority Area

The expected contribution of commercial rates to the local authority area of County Kilkenny is circa €800,000 per annum.



4. POLICY CONTEXT

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 is supportive of climate action and development of renewable resources including wind energy, in suitable locations in the County. The proposed development location is identified as a suitable location for a large wind energy development in the Wind Energy Development Strategy for the County. The developer has also identified the site as **suitable for the development of a windfarm due to elevation and scale, absence of EU Designated Sites, prospect of achieving an adequate separation distance from the nearest houses and national grid connection possibilities.**

The Proposed Gathabawn Windfarm Project will contribute positively to the increasing imperative to ameliorate climate change by generating electricity without polluting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. **The Gathabawn turbines are predicted to generate 150 million kilowatt hours of renewable electricity every year,** which will be transported to the electricity grid in the area. The generation of this amount of electricity will **offset 38,250 tonnes of CO₂e per annum** that would otherwise be emitted if the electricity generated by the Gathabawn turbines, was instead generated by gas, coal and oil. **There will be enough electricity generated to supply circa 33,237 homes.**

The proposed development of Gathabawn Windfarm of **c.54MW installed capacity** is compatible with European and National Policy on the de-carbonisation of the electricity sector as part of Climate Action imperatives. The proposal is also compatible with European and National policy to develop indigenous, renewable sources of electricity generation in the context of security of supply independent of gas supply, particularly from Russia and other fossil fuel suppliers outside of the EU area.

5. CONCLUSION

I trust that the Planning Application documentation is sufficient for your consideration of the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm development. Should you have any queries in relation to any details of the planning application, please do not hesitate to contact me at philk@ecopower.ie

Yours sincerely

Philomena Kenealy, Director Ecopower Developments Limited
Gathabawn Windfarm Project Manager