

Appendix to Chapter 3: The Scoping Consultations

Appendix 3.6: Community Liaison & Consultation Strategy

The data and descriptions in this appendix have informed the cumulative evaluations in the EIA Main Report.

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A3.6.1 Community Liaison Strategy (CLS)

A3.6.1.1 Introduction to CLS

The aim of community consultation is to engage in active consultation and dialogue with the local communities throughout each stage of the project from EIA scoping, final project design, EIA preparation and planning, to the construction and operational stage. This is done through making publically available full, clear and comprehensive information about the project during these key stages. Resources are allocated to receive, record, investigate, respond to and address queries and complaints arising.

During this liaison, all the elements of the project and the possible implications/outcomes are presented. As well as providing information, the promotor will work to understand the requirements of the local community at an early stage, to enable these needs to be considered in the final design of the project (to the greatest extent possible). Also, feedback as to how the promotor can mitigate adverse impacts and accentuate positive impacts, on the local community, is also welcomed and facilitated. Changes can be implemented through environmental management plans, implementation of best practices measures, compensation and making adjustments to the project.

A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is appointed by the promotor who can be contacted by phone or email. This contact person responds quickly and openly to requests for information and clarifications, as well as making themselves available (or the promotor) for one to one meetings to discuss specific details.

Guidance

The following guidance documents are used;

- 1) Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland - Guidelines for Community Engagement: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (December 2016)
- 2) Good Neighbour IWEA Best Practice Principles in Community Engagement & Community Commitment: Irish Wind Energy Association (March 2013).
- 3) Wind Energy Guidelines: Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006). (Appendix 2)
- 4) The Monaghan Model - Best Practice Community Consultations Monaghan Community Forum (2005).

A3.6.2 Consultation Strategy

During EIAR scoping certain prescribed bodies, the local authorities, relevant public bodies and NGOs, with expertise in protecting the environment, are contacted. The contact list includes bodies with interest/expertise in the protection of human health, public safety, roads, animals, birds, ecology, water, soils, built heritage, air and climate. These bodies are furnished with a detailed Scoping Document wherein all the elements of the project and the possible implications/outcomes are presented. Responses and views are required within 6 weeks. The final design and mitigation measures are not decided, until these consultations are completed.

During the same period, consultation with the local communities also takes place and, similar to the public bodies, any changes that are suggested and that can reasonably be made to the proposed design, mitigation measures and environmental management, will be incorporated into the final proposal.

A3.6.2.1 Identification of Local Community

The local communities that are consulted include;

- 1) Landowners on whose lands all built elements and wayleaves are located
- 2) Landowners whose lands are adjacent to the works areas
- 3) Residents in the hinterland of the project

A3.6.2.2 Consultation Tools and Events

Timing

Communication started at the initial design stage with the project landowners and extended to the surrounding community at the EIAR scoping stage. Communication with these groups, through the promotor's staff working on the ground and through the designated CLO, will continue throughout the project.

Resources

The resources that are used to make contact with the local communities are;

- 1) Personal contact from the promotor's staff with landowners of the project lands and landowners of adjoining lands.
- 2) Website which will be actively managed. The website will be maintained during the lifetime of the project. During the planning application stage this website will be a single internet gateway for the local communities to interface with the designated CLO for the project. The website will host a detailed description of the project, the project promoters and contact details and invitation to Contact Us. Responses to all contact are made within 48 hours.
- 3) The written scoping document which was supplied to all public and NGO bodies inviting submissions, will be supplied to any member of the public who requests same through personal contact or through the website.
- 4) An education outreach programme for schools, active retirement groups and other interested bodies will be arranged for any group who requests same through personal contact or through the website.

Public Exhibitions

Prior to the planning application being lodged public exhibitions are held in the nearest population center that has a suitable public space that is large enough and accessible. The public exhibition is advertised in the local community - in shops, community centers, public houses, church bulletins, local paper and by invitation

to community representatives. At the event maps, plans and illustrations are plentifully used and prominently displayed and project information leaflets, in an understandable format, are available. The event is adequately staffed from the promoter's organisations and environmental report's team, who know all the details of the project and will know what changes are possible.

A3.6.2.3 Feedback

The promoter is committed to providing feedback and solutions (if possible) to all those who engaged with the consultation process in the local community. A line of communication is kept open with the promoter through the CLO.

A3.6.3 Provision of information during planning

There will be up to date information provided on the dedicated projected website including;

- 1) the progress of the application through the planning process,
- 2) the planning authority submission process and deadlines,
- 3) any request for further information from the planning authority and responses to same,
- 4) planning decisions,
- 5) appeals process.

The website can also be used as a point of contact to discuss matters arising during the planning process with a view to addressing the issues that are of concern to local communities.

A3.6.4 Community Consultation Post-planning

Web Portal

The web portal continues to provide up to date information on progress towards construction, the construction stage and the operational stage.

During these stages there is an acknowledgment of all communications, made through the website, within 48 hours.

Construction Stage

All instances of planned disruption through construction e.g. particular high volume of traffic on a given day, are announced in advance on the website.

All queries and complaints about construction works are followed up and resolved as appropriate.

Operational Stage

The website will be continued throughout the operational lifetime of the project on the dedicated Upperchurch Windfarm website. Contact details will be kept up to date and all communications will be acknowledged in a timely manner. All queries and complaints will be followed up and resolved as appropriate.

All instances of planned disruption through operation & maintenance works e.g. traffic restrictions will be announced on the project website, in advance.