

1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) introduces the proposed Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm (the Proposed Development) and provides details of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Project Team and the structure of the report. It sets out the broad context and defines the key terms of reference used in the environmental assessment of the Development. The Proposed Development is subject to an EIA, under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU¹ as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU² (EIA Directive) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the 'PDA') as it contains 3 wind turbines, and with a total output of up to 6.9 MW.

The EIAR has been prepared by Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited, on behalf of Dreenacreenig West Wind Farm Limited, to accompany a planning application for the Development. This EIAR takes into account the Development as a whole, including all relevant ancillary and subsidiary elements of the overall project, and all direct and indirect effects, and cumulative impacts and interactions.

In addition to the identification, description and assessment of the Development, this EIAR identifies, describes and assesses the Project, cumulatively with any other existing and permitted developments, projects that are pending a decision from the planning authority and other known projects which are in the advanced stages of being prepared to be submitted for planning and have the potential for in cumulative effects, namely the Milane Wind Farm and Lahanaght Wind Farm.

This EIAR includes the conclusions of the competent and qualified experts as to the significance of any environmental effects, to assist the competent authority to comply with Article 8a of the EIA Directive as amended.

This chapter is supported by Figures and the following Appendices in Volume III:

- **Appendix 1.1:** Author Qualifications
- **Appendix 1.2:** Community Consultation Report
- **Appendix 1.3:** Scoping Responses
- **Appendix 1.4:** Glossary of Common Acronyms
- **Appendix 1.5:** Cumulative Wind Farms

¹ The European Council Directive 2011/92/EU. Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/92/oj> [Accessed 08/05/2025]

² The European Council Directive 2014/52/EU. Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0052> [Accessed 08/05/2025]

Additionally, **Appendix 17.1** contains a summary of all mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR.

1.1 KEY DEFINED TERMS

To provide clarity in the EIAR, the following defined terms will be used throughout.

Table 1.1: Defined Terms used throughout the EIAR

Term	Definition
The Site	Refers to all land that falls within the Proposed Derreenacrinnig Wind Farm Site Boundary as shown on Figure 2.2 .
The Redline Boundary	Refers to the Proposed Development Boundary. It is the boundary line of all works to be completed as part of the Project.
The Baseline	Refers to the existing lands and their characteristics.
The Proposed Development	Refers to all elements of the Proposed Development as described in the planning application public notices for Derreenacrinnig Wind Farm, the details of which are set out within Chapter 2: Project Description . These elements include the wind turbines, all site infrastructure, the Grid Connection Route, and all permanent works required along the Turbine Delivery Route within the Redline Boundary.
The Project	Refers to the Development as contained in the Redline Boundary and the works along the Turbine Delivery Route which is outside the Redline Boundary and landholding boundary.
Survey Areas	Refers to areas within which surveys are undertaken. These are specifically defined within each technical section.
EIAR Study Areas	Refers to areas which are considered as part of the assessment process. These are specific and defined within each discipline chapter in the EIAR.
The Commission	Refers to An Coimisiún Pleanála.
The Developer	Dreenacrinnig West Wind Farm Limited.
EIA Regulations	The European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) transpose the requirements of the 2014 EIA Directive into the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (As Amended).

Term	Definition
The EIA Directive	Refers to the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU.
The 2014 EIA Directive	Refers to EIA Directive 2014/52/EU which amends the EIA Directive.
Scoping	This is the process to identify key environmental issues, and to determine which elements of the Development are likely to cause significant environmental impacts and to identify elements that can be removed from the assessment.
The Electrical Substation	Refers to the onsite substation -the proposed Derreenacrinnig
The Construction Haul Routes	Refers to the proposed routes from local quarries and suppliers to the Site.
The Turbine Delivery Route	Refers to the proposed turbine delivery route from Ringaskiddy Port to the Site.
Grid Connection	Refers to the proposed route of connecting to the national grid.
Wind Farm Internal Cabling	Refers to the electrical cables connecting the turbines to the on-site substation.
Temporary Construction Compound	Refers to the compound to be developed and used by the appointed contractor(s) for the purposes of constructing the wind farm which will be reinstated to the agricultural land use following completion of construction.
Turbine Hardstand	Refers to the hardstand next to the turbine location used by cranes for erection of turbine hub, nacelles, and rotor blades.
Turbine Foundation	Refers to turbine concrete base located under ground level and used to support the turbine.
Decommissioning	Refers to the end of the operational life of the wind farm when turbines are dismantled and taken off site for recycling. The turbine foundations and the site roads will be left <i>in-situ</i> and allowed to revegetate through natural succession. The underground cabling will be removed while the ducting will remain <i>in-situ</i> . The substation building will be left <i>in-situ</i> .
Reinstatement	Reinstatement means restoring the habitat in the areas of the Site where infrastructure was developed.
The Council	Refers to Cork County Council.

1.2 THE APPLICANT

The Applicant seeking planning permission is Dreenareenig West Wind Farm Limited. The Applicant is an Irish owned renewable energy company.

1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site, as defined in **Table 1.1**, comprises an area of 104 hectares, and ranges in elevation from 200 m to 402 m. The site of the proposed wind farm is currently grazed by cattle and sheep. There is a commercial forestry to the north of the Site, with the remaining land comprising agricultural of varied productivity and open mountain heath.

The existing environment at the Site consists of; completed civil works, including turbine hardstands, substation hardstand, compound hardstand, and internal site tracks. The hardstands are constructed to accommodate heavy machinery and the storage of turbine components, while the existing site tracks will accommodate movement across the Site and vehicles during the operational period. The use of this existing infrastructure greatly reduces the additional land take required, reducing ground disturbance and impacts on surrounding habitats.

The Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm site is located in an elevated position (402 m) at Derreenacrinnig West, approx. 11.5 km east of Bantry, 5.8 km north of Drimoleague and approx. 11.6 km east of Dunmanway. Derreenacrinnig West forms part of a ridge trending west from Nowen Hill (530 m) toward Mullaghmesha (494 m).

The total Wind Farm site area is approximately 82 hectares and ranges in elevation from 200 m to 402 m OD (Malin Head). The Site can be located on Discovery Series Map No. 85 at the approximate grid co-ordinates E 111,310 N 52,180.

The wind farm site extends from the local road at Castledonovan on the southern slopes of Derreenacrinnig West, over the ridge to include the upper northern slopes of the hill. The southern slopes are relatively steep with extensive areas of exposed rock. Agricultural tracks provide access to the southern areas of the Site. There is a difference of approx. 200 m between the lower elevations of the Site and the ridge line. The south-eastern site boundary is formed for a large part by a tributary of the Ilen, flowing southwest. The northern slopes of the hill, are partly under forestry, accessed from the local road to the west. Within this forestry area, there is an area previously used for the extraction of rock, presumably associated with forestry road construction.

The Wind Farm and Grid Connection route is set out at **Figure 2.2: Site Location Map**. The proposed wind farm site is not covered by any nature conservation designation. There is no designated area within 5km of the proposed site. Carriganass Castle pNHA, code 002099, is the closest designated area, approximately 7 km to the north west of the proposed Derreenacrinnig West site. This pNHA is a nursery roost for the Daubenton's bat.

A full description of the Development is provided in **Chapter 2: Project Description**.

This EIAR accompanies the planning application for Development which will be submitted to West Cork County Council as the competent planning authority.

1.4 SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Planning Permission is being sought by the Developer for the construction of 3 No. Wind Turbines, an on-site substation, and all ancillary works (Derreenacrinnig West), works along the Turbine Delivery Route (Derreenacrinnig West, Derreenacrinnig East and Castledonovan), and the construction of a Grid Connection between the consented Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm substation and the 110 kV substation in Ballylicky, (Derreenacrinnig West, Barnagowlane West, Glanareagh, Gortnacowly, Ards Beg, Ardrah, Laharanshermeen, Maulraha, Maulikeeve, Derryarkane, Cappanaboul, Skahanagh, Gortroe, Shandrum Beg, Shandrum More, Dromloughlin, Ballylicky, Crossoge).

The Development will consist of the following main components:

- Construction of 3 No. wind turbines with an overall ground to blade tip height of 119.3 m with a rotor diameter of 82 m and a hub height of 78.3 m.
- Construction of 1 no. permanent 20 kV Electrical Substation, all associated electrical plant and equipment, all associated underground cabling, and all ancillary structures and works.
- Construction of one Temporary Construction Compound with associated temporary site offices, parking areas and security fencing.
- Upgrade and reuse of existing hardstands.
- Upgrade and reuse of existing internal site access roads.
- Provision of Biodiversity Enhancement Area
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the wind farm substation.
- Construction of approximately 10.75 km of 20 kV overhead line (OHL) Grid Connection, the OHL to be constructed consists of c. 157 wood poles (ranging from 9 m to 15 m above ground) supporting electrical conductor lines and ancillary structures and equipment.

- Installation of approximately 3.3 km of underground cable ducting Grid Connection and associated electrical cabling, and all other ancillary works including joint bays, culverts, marker posts and all associated developments.
- Haul Route works along the L-8767, L-4711, and L-8765.

A 10-year planning permission and 40-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm is being sought.

However, part of the substation and all of the Grid Connection will be handed over to ESB networks to own and operate. As part of the national grid infrastructure, their life can extend beyond the life of the wind farm. Accordingly, permission is sought for the Grid Connection and substation in perpetuity.

1.5 PLANNING HISTORY

1.5.1 Planning History and Background to the Project Proposals

A planning application was submitted by George O'Mahony for a 10-year planning permission for development of a wind farm comprising seven number wind turbines with a hub height of 55 metres and a rotor diameter of 52 metres, an electrical compound, substation building, four number car parking spaces, associated site roads and site works. A decision to grant planning permission was made in October 2011 by Cork County Council (CCC) under Planning Reg. Ref. 10/857 subject to 29 conditions.

The decision was appealed by third parties to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) who subsequently upheld the grant of planning permission on 5th December 2012, subject to 16 conditions under ACP reference PL88.239767. The planning permission for the consented Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm was implemented, and work commenced on site on the 28th August 2017. All pre-commencement conditions relating to the wind farm were discharged. Civil works at the wind farm site were subsequently constructed but not fully completed.

1.5.1.1 The Grid Connection

Following the grant of planning permission, the wind farm developer received a connection offer from ESB Networks (ESBN) in 2014. This connection was accepted as a non-contestable offer which means that the wind farm developers agreed that the grid connection works would be carried out by ESBN. ESBN subsequently commenced works on the grid connection which was intended to be part overhead line [OHL] and part

underground cable [UGC]. Works related to the grid connection commenced in October 2017.

Prior to the construction of the grid connection, ESNB carried out an Exempted Development Screening Study of the proposed grid connection, to determine whether or not it would fall within the planning exemptions available for such development. The determination at that time was that it did fall within the relevant planning exemptions and works commenced on that basis. During the construction works CCC issued a Warning Letter in May 2018 to ESNB in relation to the planning status of the grid connection works. Without prejudice to its position, ESNB agreed to pause the grid connection works and to apply for planning permission for the works that had not yet commenced and to apply for substitute consent for the works that had already been completed.

1.5.1.2 Planning Application Reference 19/0010

A planning application for the construction of the unbuilt section of the grid connection was submitted to CCC in January 2019 under planning application reference 19/0010. That planning application was for the *“installation of approximately 3.2km of underground cable ducting and associated electrical cabling, approximately 1.2km of overhead line ...The works, which will take place at separate locations along the 14km grid connection route, are required to complete the grid connection from Derreenacrinnig West Windfarm to the ESB Ballylickey substation.”*

1.5.1.3 Planning Appeal Reference ACP 305790-19 - (appeal of CCC 19/10)

Planning application CCC Reference 19/10 was appealed by a Third Party to ACP under planning appeal reference ACP/305790-19. The decision of CCC to grant planning permission was upheld by ACP on the 2nd June 2020, subject to eight conditions.

1.5.1.4 Application for Substitute Consent ACP Reference SU04.305609 - (planning application for works that had not been completed)

An application for Substitute Consent under Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 [as amended] was submitted by ESNB to regularise the planning status for the partially built grid connection to connect the already consented Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm to the existing Ballylickey substation in Co. Cork. This had been preceded by an application to seek Leave to Apply for Substitute Consent (ACP Reference LS04.302837), this was granted in May 2019. The substitute consent application submitted to ACP sought to retain 5 sections of the partially constructed grid connection which consists of c. 9.7km of OHL as shown on Drawing No. 4636-PL-GCR-100.

The remedial EIAR (rEIAR) included an evaluation of the existing grid connection route and was assessed in combination with the wind farm and that part of the grid connection which has not yet been constructed and which was the subject of a separate application for planning permission to CCC under planning reference 19/10. ACP granted substitute consent on the 9th June 2020 under case reference SU04.305609, subject to two conditions.

1.5.1.5 ACP Consideration of Files References 305790-19 and 305609

Both files were considered by ACP by the same inspector and determined by the Commission at the same time as they were clearly inter-connected to each other.....*“the submissions on this file and the Inspector’s report were considered at a Board meeting held on 02/06/2020. At this meeting, the Board also considered this case in conjunction with case reference ABP-305790-19...(extract from Board Direction)..”, as they both related to a linear development.*

The Inspector’s report had completed an EIA of both developments and was satisfied that the EIAR/rEIAR was prepared by competent experts and was in general agreement with its conclusions. The Inspector concluded in paragraph 7.14.1 “1 Having regard to the nature and scale of the development, to the environmental information available in connection with the current application, including the EIAR and other information provided by the developer and the submission from the planning authority, it is concluded that the development which is the subject of the current application is not likely to have had significant effects on the environment, either directly or indirectly or cumulatively with other developments including the permitted windfarm at Derreenacrinnig West and the completion of the grid connection to it.”

1.5.1.6 Judicial Review

The decision to grant substitute consent and the decision to grant planning permission by ACP were challenged by a third party by way of Judicial Review [JR] under Section 50 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. That challenge was upheld by the High Court [2020] 548 JR].

Whilst various grounds were cited in the challenge, the core grounds of the JR centred on the fact that the substitute consent procedure was in breach of European Law and that Ireland had failed to correctly transpose the requirements of Directive 2011/92/EU as amended. A core ground of the challenge was that the decision to grant substitute consent

was premised on an earlier decision to grant leave to apply for substitute consent which took place without public participation. These grounds had been cited in previous unrelated cases before ACP. This resulted in legislative changes in December 2020 to the Planning and Development Act 2000. The JR was in the Courts system at the time the legislation was amended.

In March 2021, the High Court issued an Order quashing both decisions related to the grid connection issued by ACP in June 2020. In December 2020, amended planning legislation was adopted by the Oireachtas in relation to the substitute consent process, in order to provide for increased public participation. Specifically, it provides for public participation in Seeking Leave to Apply for Substitute Consent.

1.5.1.7 Planning Application Reference 21/737 (Appeal Reference 315059-22)

A further planning application was lodged under planning application reference 21/737 for the removal of the existing Overhead Line and the erection of a new grid connection comprising the construction of 10.8 km of 20 kV OHL, consisting of 158 wood poles with supporting lines and ancillary structures and 4km of underground cable along the public road corridor.

The Planning Application was subject to a third-party appeal. An Coimisiún Pleanála refused planning permission for the grid connection on the 16th September 2024 on the basis that the planning permission for the wind farm had expired.

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.6.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Requirement and National Legislation

European Union Directive 2011/92/EU (“the EIA Directive”) requires that, before consent is given for certain public and private projects, an assessment of the effects on the environment is undertaken by the relevant competent authority. The EIA Directive has been transposed into Irish legislation, for the purposes of this EIA Development, by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (“the Planning Acts”) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (“the Planning Regulations”).

Section 171A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) defines an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as ‘a process—

(a) consisting of—

(i) *the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report by the applicant in accordance with this Act and regulations made thereunder,*

(ii) the carrying out of consultations in accordance with this Act and regulations made thereunder,

(iii) the examination by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, of— (I) the information contained in the environmental impact assessment report, (II) any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the applicant in accordance with section 172(1D) and (1E), and (III) any relevant information received through the consultations carried out pursuant to subparagraph (ii),

(iv) the reasoned conclusion by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, on the significant effects on the environment of the proposed development, taking into account the results of the examination carried out pursuant to subparagraph (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination, and

(v) the integration of the reasoned conclusion of the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, into the decision on the proposed development, and

(b) which includes—

(i) an examination, analysis and evaluation, carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in accordance with this Part and regulations made thereunder, that identifies, describes and assesses, in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following: (I) population and human health; (II) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive; (III) land, soil, water, air and climate; (IV) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; (V) the interaction between the factors mentioned in clauses (I) to (IV), and

(ii) as regards the factors mentioned in subparagraph (i)(I) to (V), such examination, analysis and evaluation of the expected direct and indirect significant effects on the environment derived from the vulnerability of the proposed development to risks of major accidents or disasters, or both major accidents and disasters, that are relevant to that development.

Section 172(1)(a)(ii)(I) requires projects of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning Regulations to be subject to an EIA where:

“(l) such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part.”

Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning Regulations includes the following classes of EIA Development:

Class 3(i) *“Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms) with more than 5 turbines or having a total output greater than 5 megawatts.”*

The Development comes within the scope of Class 3(i).

1.6.2 Directive 2014/52/EU

The EIA Directive (2011/92/EU) was amended by the 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU).

On 1st September 2018, the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government published updated guidelines for planning authorities and An Coimisiún Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments. The publication of the Guidelines coincides with the coming into operation on 1st September 2018 of the provisions of the European Union (Planning and Development) (EIA) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018), which were signed by the Minister on 26th July 2018. These Regulations transpose the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU, amending previous Directive 2011/52/EU, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive) into planning law.

Accordingly, this EIAR complies with the European Union (Planning and Development) (EIA) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018). To the extent relevant and necessary, regard has been given to the existing provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, (as amended) insofar as they transpose the EIA Directive. Article 5 of the EIA Directive as amended provides where an EIA is required, the developer shall prepare and submit an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The information to be provided by the developer shall include at least:

- (a) a description of the Development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the Development*
- (b) a description of the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment*
- (c) a description of the features of the Development and/or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment*

- (d) *a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the Development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the Development on the environment*
- (e) *a non-technical summary of the information referred to in points (a) to (d) and*
- (f) *any additional information specified in Annex IV relevant to the specific characteristics of a particular Development or type of Development and to the environmental features likely to be affected.*

The EIAR provides information on the receiving environment and assesses the likely significant effects of the Development and proposes mitigation measures to avoid or reduce these effects. The function of the EIAR is to provide information to allow the competent authority to reach a reasoned conclusion on the effects of a development and inform subsequent decisions, such as planning. All elements of the Development (including the grid connection and turbine delivery route) have been assessed as part of this EIAR.

1.6.2.1 EIA Definition

Article 1(2)(g) of the EIA Directive as amended defines EIA as a process consisting of:

- “(i) the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report by the developer, as referred to in Article 5(1) and (2);*
- (ii) the carrying out of consultations as referred to in Article 6 and, where relevant, Article 7;*
- (iii) the examination by the competent authority of the information presented in the environmental impact assessment report and any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer in accordance with Article 5(3), and any relevant information received through the consultations under Articles 6 and 7;*
- (iv) the reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the significant effects of the project on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in point (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination; and*
- (v) the integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any of the decisions referred to in Article 8a”.*

1.6.2.2 Factors of the Environment

The EIA Directive as amended requires the EIA to identify, describe and assess, in an appropriate manner and in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of a project on the following factors:

- (a) population and human health

- (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives
- (c) land, soil, water, air and climate
- (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape
- (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a) to (d)

The effects referred to above shall include the expected effects deriving from the vulnerability of the Project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters that are relevant to the Project concerned.

The implementations of the EIA Directive as amended in the EIAR can be seen in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2: Outline of respective chapters relating to the requirements of the EIA Directive as amended

The EIA Directive	Chapter	Title
<i>(a) population and human health</i>	5	Population and Human Health
<i>(b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives</i>	6	Biodiversity
	10	Noise
	15	Shadow Flicker
<i>(c) land, soil, water, air and climate</i>	2	Project Description
	6	Biodiversity
	7	Soils and Geology
	8	Hydrology and Hydrogeology
	9	Air and Climate
	13	Material Assets & Other Issues
<i>(d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape</i>	13	Material Assets & Other Issues
	14	Cultural Heritage
	12	Landscape and Visual Amenity
<i>(e) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a) to (d)</i>	16	Major Accidents and Natural Disasters
	17	Interactions of the Foregoing

1.6.2.3 Major Accidents and Disasters

A wind farm is not a recognised source of chemical pollution. Should a major accident or natural disaster occur, the potential sources of pollution onsite during both the construction and operational phases are limited. Sources of chemical pollution with the potential to cause significant environmental pollution and associated negative effects on health include bulk

storage of hydrocarbons or chemicals and storage of wastes. Spills and leaks can occur if they are not mitigated against which may cause negative effects to human health, if contamination of food or water occurs. The occurrence of such spills and leaks is unlikely as bunding and safe storage practices will be complied with. The Site is not regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances Regulations i.e., SEVESO sites and so there is no potential effect from this source. All SEVESO sites are located approximately 40km or more from the Development.

There is limited potential for significant natural disasters to occur at the Site. Ireland is a geologically stable country with a mild temperate climate. The potential natural disasters that may occur are therefore limited to peat-slide, flooding, and fire.

This is discussed in further detail in **Chapter 16: Major Accidents and Natural Disasters**.

1.6.2.4 Alternatives to Development

Article 5(1)(d) of the EIA Directive requires that the EIAR include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the Development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the Development on the environment.

In addition, Annex IV, paragraph 2 provides that the EIAR include “*A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.*”.

This is addressed in **Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered** of this EIAR.

1.6.2.5 National Guidance

The following documents have been referred to in the preparation of this EIAR:

- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, EPA, May 2022
- The 2014 EIA Directive Circular PL 05/2018
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Coimisiún Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment’ (August 2018)

1.6.2.6 *European Guidance*

- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, European Commission, 2017

1.6.2.7 *Competent Experts and Quality of the EIAR*

Article 5(3) of the 2014 EIA Directive states that, in order to ensure the completeness and quality of the EIAR, the Applicant shall ensure (a) the EIAR is prepared by competent experts; (b) the competent authority shall ensure that it has, or has access to, sufficient expertise to examine the EIAR, and (c) where necessary, the competent authority shall seek from the Applicant any supplementary information, in accordance with Annex IV (the information to be contained in the EIAR), which is directly relevant to reaching the reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the Development on the environment.

The EIA Directive Consultation states that:

“It is not proposed to define the terms ‘competent experts’ or ‘sufficient expertise’ in legislation given the broad and diverse range of EIA topics and the different areas of specialist expertise.

It is proposed that the competency of experts preparing an EIAR should be a matter for each competent authority, having regard to the diverse range of EIA topics and areas of specialist expertise.

Guidance will address the issue of ‘expertise’ in both the preparation and assessment of EIARs.

It would be good practice for the EIAR to state who prepared each element of the EIAR and list the qualifications and experience of each such person to assist the competent authority satisfy itself as to the competency of the experts who prepared the EIAR. The level of expertise required for each element of the EIAR would depend on the nature and importance of that element vis-à-vis the size, nature and location of the project and the receiving environment and the likely significant impact on that environment”.

Article 94(e) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires the following information to be provided in an EIAR:

“(e) a list of the experts who contributed to the preparation of the report, identifying for each such expert—

(i) the part or parts of the report which he or she is responsible for or to which he or she contributed,

(ii) his or her competence and experience, including relevant qualifications, if any, in relation to such parts, and

(iii) such additional information in relation to his or her expertise that the person or persons preparing the EIAR consider demonstrates the expert's competence in the preparation of the report and ensures its completeness and quality.”

The Developer considers that each of the experts involved in the preparation of this EIAR is competent, having regard to the task he or she has performed, taking account of the scope of the study for which he or she undertook the work, the person(s) possesses sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work. The competencies of the experts involved in the EIAR preparation are outlined in **Appendix 1.1, Author Qualifications**.

This EIAR has been prepared by Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited (JOD), Consulting Engineers, Finisklin Business Park, Sligo, F91 RHH9, on behalf of the Developer. JOD are one of the longest established and most reputable multi-disciplinary engineering consultancies in Ireland. Established in 1950, it has grown to be the largest engineering consultancy in the north-west of Ireland. JOD have been an established presence in the Renewable Energy Wind Farm Sector since 1998. To date, the company has a portfolio of projects extending to over 2,500 MW of power in Ireland and Northern Ireland and is a recognised market leader in the area of Wind Energy development. This portfolio will equate, when completed, to an investment of €3 billion in the Wind Energy Sector. Additionally, JOD has attained certificates in line with industry standards as follows:

- ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System
- ISO 14001:2015 – Environmental Management System
- ISO 45001:2018 – Occupational Health and Safety Management System

Possession of these certificates is evidence that JOD, have developed, maintained and implemented systems in quality, safety and environmental related matters and are therefore competent experts.

This project has been completed in line with JOD's Integrated Management System which is based on the current versions of ISO 9001 (Quality Management System), ISO 14001 (Environment Management System) and ISO 45001 (Safety Management System). JOD are fully certified and accredited to ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 for the provision of project management, environmental, civil and structural consulting engineering services.

JOD have developed a Quality Policy Statement, an Environmental Policy Statement and a Safety Health and Welfare Policy Statement. It is a stated objective in our Quality Policy Statement that:

"...Jennings O'Donovan and Partners Limited is committed to complying with the requirements of the quality management system and to continually improve its effectiveness..."

JOD staff are degree qualified in their respective specialist fields and have developed their competence through both experience on the job and through training. Each team member has developed the following:

- Sufficient knowledge of the specific tasks to be undertaken and the risks which may arise
- Sufficient experience and ability to carry out their duties in relation to the Project and to take appropriate actions required under the EIA Directive

Specialist consultancies have been employed to complete some of the EIAR Chapters. Each Chapter of the EIAR includes a Statement of Authority regarding the competency of the author and relevant qualifications.

1.7 NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

The extent of the challenge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with our International and EU obligations is well understood by Government and is reflected in the National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (2014) and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts 2015 to 2021.

Both the policy position and legal framework are key elements of the effort to progress the national low carbon transition agenda.

In 2015 the National Policy Statement on climate change made a commitment to transform Ireland into a Low Carbon Economy by the year 2050.

The Government quantified this as:

- An aggregate reduction in CO₂ emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and
- In parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.

1.7.1 Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP2025) was published in April 2025 and is the latest assessment and measurement of what has been achieved over the past year, building on actions taken in 2024. It sets out what need to be done in 2025, so Ireland is prepared to take on the challenges of our second carbon budget period 2026-2030.

Ireland's Progress to date:

- in 2023 emissions reduced by nearly 7%
- emissions in the first half of 2024 were down over 17%
- compared with the same period in 2023, emissions in the first half of 2024 reduced by 3.5%
- Irish wind farms generated nearly 40% of Ireland's total electricity demand in the first half of 2024
- over the past year, emissions in agriculture have reduced by over 4%
- in the built environment, emissions have decreased by 21% since 2018
- in transport, emissions increased by 0.3% in 2023

CAP25 re-affirms the previous commitment to increasing the share of renewable electricity to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030. Overall, the share of renewable electricity generation in Ireland increased from 38.6% to 40.7% from 2022 to 2023. The figure for 2024 will likely be between 40% and the interim, end of year target of 50% set out in CAP25.

The targets are:

- onshore wind, 2 GWs by 2025 and 9 GWs by 2030
- offshore wind, at least 8 GWs by 2030
- solar, up to 5 GW by 2025 and 8 GW by 2030

These targets are unchanged for the previous two years. CAP25 states

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

The Climate Action Plan 2025

Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 outlines the country's roadmap to achieving its climate objectives. It's the third statutory update to the plan since the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law, committing Ireland to

reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 51% by 2030 (relative to 2018 levels) and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

CAP25 sets an 80% target for renewable electricity production by 2030, including 9GW from onshore wind. The plan emphasizes removing barriers to renewable development, such as streamlining regulations and strengthening the grid. This commitment is vital for decarbonizing Ireland's electricity network and underscores the government's 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency.

1.7.2 The Renewable Energy Directive 2018 and 2023

The first Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) (RED I) provided the framework for the promotion of energy from renewable resources across the EU. The second Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU (RED II) entered into force in December 2018.

In 2023, the European Union (EU) adopted an amendment of the Renewable Energy Directive (EU/2023/2413), which is referred to as "RED III".

The regulations set the parameters for the establishment of future Renewable Electricity Support Schemes (RESS), and build on the existing regime, which was created by the European Union (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2014 (as amended) (the "2014 Regulations").

The RED III sets an 80% target for electricity production from renewable sources by 2030. Ireland is facing significant challenges in efforts to meet these targets, alongside its commitment to transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. Ireland did not meet its 2020 target for renewable energy and is falling behind in the longer-term movement away from fossil fuels.

RED III raises the share of renewable energy in the European Union's overall energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030, with an additional 2.5% indicative top-up to allow the target of 45% to be achieved. RED III required Member States to transpose provisions aimed at speeding up the permitting processes for renewable energy projects by 1 July 2024.

Ireland has not implemented the provisions, and the EU has issued a formal notice against Ireland. RED III provides for streamlined and speedier permitting procedures for renewable energy projects. It also provides for a presumption that certain renewable energy projects are of overriding public interest and serving public health and safety.

1.7.3 White Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland

A Government White Paper entitled '*Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030*' was published in December 2015 by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources³. This Paper provides a complete energy update and a framework to guide policy up to 2030. The Paper builds upon the White Paper published in 2007 and takes into account the changes that have taken place in the energy sector since 2007.

The policy framework sets out a vision for a low carbon future that maintains Ireland's competitiveness and ensures a supply of affordable energy.

The Development is critical to helping Ireland meet the targets and commitments set by international, EU and national frameworks outlined above, as well as addressing the country's over-dependence on unsustainable imported fossil fuels. The need for the Proposed Development is driven by the following factors:

- A requirement to diversify Ireland's energy sources, to achieve International, EU, and national renewable energy targets.
- A desire to avoid significant fines from the EU (the EU Renewables Directive).
- A legal commitment under the Kyoto protocol from Ireland to limit greenhouse gas emissions.
- A requirement to increase Ireland's national energy security as set out in the Energy White Paper.
- Provision of cost-effective power production for Ireland which would deliver local benefits.
- Increase energy price stability in Ireland by reducing an over-reliance on imported gas and exposure to international market price and supply fluctuations.

The Development will also offer opportunities such as:

- Provision of clean energy whilst minimising environmental impacts.
- Contributing to renewable energy targets which will continue to drive down the overall cost of energy with benefits to the Irish consumer.

The Project will create additional jobs and will encourage continued investment in the renewable industry in Ireland. Wind Energy Ireland (WEI), Ireland's largest renewable energy organisation, in its annual Wind Energy Report for 2023 noted that Ireland's wind

³ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/77389/e5aa9f25-da81-43eb-804d-57309615681e.pdf#page=null> [Accessed 8th October 2024]

energy share of electricity demand in 2023 was 35% compared to 34% in 2022. The Proposed Development will help achieve the 80% of electricity generated from the renewable energy target set by Red III.

The total installed capacity of the Republic of Ireland's wind farms is now 4,375 MW⁴; this is approximately enough to power 2.2 million Irish homes annually.

Chapter 4: Planning Policy of the EIAR relates to the Planning Policy Context and presents a full description of the international and national renewable energy policy context for Development. **Chapter 9: Air & Climate** addresses Climate Change, including Ireland's current status with regard to meeting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

1.8 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1.8.1 Public Information Day (PID)

The PID was held in the Drimoleague community centre on the 9th of October 2024. An invitation was distributed to all homes within 2 km of the Site, all TDs, Senators and Cllrs in the relevant area. This public information day featured information about the Project, the environmental surveys completed to date, photomontages illustrating the visual impact of the turbines from local viewpoints, details of the Project timeline and general information on wind energy. In total, the public information day was attended by c. 50 people. Further information on the PID can be found in **Appendix 1.2 – Community Consultation Report**.

1.9 INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN A DECISION TO GRANT

Article 8a (1) of the 2014 EIA Directive states:

“The decision to grant development consent shall incorporate at least the following information:

(a) the reasoned conclusion referred to in Article 1(2)(g)(iv);

(b) any environmental conditions attached to the decision, a description of any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset significant adverse effects on the environment as well as, where appropriate, monitoring measures”.

To assist the local authority with this requirement, the EIAR includes a summary at the end of each chapter of all proposed mitigation and monitoring measures outlined within the technical assessments.

⁴<https://windenergyireland.com/images/files/20221026windenergyirelandoireachtasmembersbriefing.pdf> [Accessed 8th October 2024].

1.10 EIAR STRUCTURE

This EIAR uses the grouped structure method to describe the existing environment, the potential impacts of the Development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures. Background information relating to the Development, Scoping and consultation undertaken and a description of the Development are presented in separate sections. Please note that the Irish Transverse Mercator coordinate system is used in the EIAR document.

The layout of this EIAR is arranged in four volumes, I-IV.

Volume I: This volume includes the opening **Non-Technical Summary (NTS)**. It is a condensed and easily comprehensible version of the EIAR document. The NTS is presented in a similar format to the main EIAR document and comprises descriptions of the Development, the receiving environment, impacts, mitigation measures and interactions presented in a grouped format. It is a standalone document.

Volume II: This volume contains the **Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)**. The EIAR is presented using the grouped structure method and describes the existing environment, the potential impacts of the Development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures. Background information relating to the Development, Scoping and consultation undertaken and a description of the Development are presented in separate Chapters.

The chapters in this **Volume II: EIAR** are as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Project Description
- Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered
- Chapter 4: Policy
- Chapter 5: Population and Human Health
- Chapter 6: Biodiversity
- Chapter 7: Land and Soils
- Chapter 8: Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Chapter 9: Air and Climate
- Chapter 10: Noise
- Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport
- Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Chapter 13: Material Assets and Other Issues
- Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker

- Chapter 16: Major Accidents and Natural Disasters
- Chapter 17: Interactions of the Foregoing

Volume III: Appendices

The Appendices referred to in each chapter of the EIAR are compiled separately in Volume III. They are also numbered sequentially for each chapter in which they are principally referred.

Volume IV: Landscape and Visual Booklet

1.11 EIAR PREPARATION

1.11.1 Project Team

JOD had overall responsibility for the coordination of the EIAR with input from other independent specialist consultants where necessary as required by the EIA Directive and Regulations. Recital (33) of EIA Directive states the following in relation to the persons responsible for preparing the environmental impact assessment reports:

“Experts involved in the preparation of environmental impact assessment reports should be qualified and competent. Sufficient expertise, in the relevant field of the project concerned, is required for the purpose of its examination by the competent authorities in order to ensure that the information provided by the developer is complete and of a high level of quality.”

In compliance with this requirement, and in line with emerging best practice, including with the 2018 EIA Guidelines for Planning Authorities, **Table 1.3** provides the names of the professionals who have prepared each element of the EIAR. It also lists their qualifications and relevant experience, demonstrating that the EIAR has been prepared by competent experts. Further details on the qualifications of each lead author can be found in **Appendix 1.1** and in the Statement of Authority in each individual technical assessment chapter.

Table 1.3: EIAR Preparation Details

EIA Chapter	Contributor & Qualifications	Years of Experience
Chapter 1: Introduction	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc. Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16

EIA Chapter	Contributor & Qualifications	Years of Experience
	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
Chapter 2: Project Description	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc. Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
	Mr. David Kiely, BSc., MSc, Director, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	42
Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc, Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
Chapter 4: Planning Policy Context	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc. Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
Chapter 5: Population and Human Health	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc. AIEEMA, Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
Chapter 6: Biodiversity	Mr. Pat Doherty, MSc., BSc., CIEEM, Director, Doherty Environmental Services	16
Chapter 7: Land and Soils	Mr. Dan Keohane, BSc, MSc, Director Keohane Geological & Environmental Consultancy	25
Chapter 8: Hydrology and Hydrogeology	Mr. Dan Keohane, BSc, MSc, Director Keohane Geological & Environmental Consultancy	25
Chapter 9: Air and Climate	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1

EIA Chapter	Contributor & Qualifications	Years of Experience
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc., Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
Chapter 10: Noise	Mr. Brendan O'Reilly, MPhil., Director, Noise & Vibration Consultants Limited	40
Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Mr. David Kiely, BSc., MSc, Director, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	42
Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity	Mr. Richard Barker, MLA, BA Env. PG Dip For MILI, Director, Macro Works Limited	21
Chapter 13: Material Assets	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Ms. Breena Coyle, BSc., MSc., Senior Planner and Environmental Consultant, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	16
Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage	Mr. Tony Cummins, BA., MA., Senior Archaeologist, John Cronin & Associates	28
Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker	Ms. Kathlyn Feeney, Graduate Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
Chapter 16: Major Accidents	Ms. Angelika Thiel, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	5
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Mr. David Kiely, BSc., MSc, Director, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	42
Chapter 17: Interactions of the Foregoing	Ms. Amy McLaughlin, BSc., Environmental Scientist, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Mr. Evan Concar, BSc., MSc, Environmental Scientist & Planner, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	1
	Mr. David Kiely, BSc., MSc, Director, Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited	42

1.11.2 Chapter Structure

Each technical assessment included in the EIAR has followed the same general format:

- Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria: A description of the methods used in baseline surveys and in the assessment of the significance of effects
- Baseline Description: A description of the Site's existing baseline, based on the results of surveys, desk information and consultations, and a summary of any information required for the assessment, that could not be obtained. It also includes an outline of the likely evolution of the Baseline without the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.
- Assessment of Potential Environmental Effects: A description of how the Baseline environment could potentially be affected for the Development including a summary of the measures taken during the design of the Development to minimise effects
- Mitigation Measures and Residual Effects - A description of measures recommended that will be implemented to reduce and/or off-set potential negative effects and a summary of the assessed level significance of the effects of the Development and/or the Development after mitigation measures have been implemented
- Cumulative Effects: A description identifying the potential for effects of the Development to combine with those from other existing, pending and/or permitted developments to affect resources
- Statement of Significance of effects

The significance of effects resulting from the Development will be determined through consideration of a combination of the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the predicted level of change from the Baseline state. Environmental sensitivity can be categorised by several aspects including factors such as; the transformation of natural landscapes, the protection afforded to, and presence of, European sites, rare or endangered species, land use and fisheries.

Sensitivity of classification of the receiving environment can vary between the different technical areas of assessment e.g., ecology, hydrology, population and human health and visual. In general, this EIAR largely follows the principles and terminology of the 2022, EPA 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' in relation to the identification of significant effects. Where a technical assessment has adopted an alternative to this process, such as following technical guidance bespoke to that topic, such assessment criteria are made clear in that chapter. **Table 1.4** highlights the general framework for the assessment of significance of effects.

Table 1.4: Impact Classification Terminology (EPA Guidelines, 2022)

Impact Characteristic	Term	Description
Quality	Positive	A change which improves the quality of the environment
	Neutral	No effects or effects that are imperceptible within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error
	Negative	A change which reduces the quality of the environment
Significance	Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences
	Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences
	Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
	Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
	Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment
	Very significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
	Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Extent & Context	Extent	Describe the size of the area, number of sites and the proportion of a population affected by an effect
	Context	Describe whether the extent, duration, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions
Probability	Likely	Effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented
	Unlikely	Effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented
Duration and Frequency	Momentary	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
	Brief	Effects lasting less than a day
	Temporary	Effects lasting less than a year
	Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years
	Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
	Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
	Permanent	Effect lasting over sixty years
	Reversible	Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration

Impact Characteristic	Term	Description
Type	Frequency	Describe how often the effect will occur, (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)
	Indirect	Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the Project, often produced away from the Project site or because of a complex pathway
	Cumulative	The addition of many minor or significant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects.
	'Do Nothing'	The environment as it would be in the future should the subject project not be carried out
	'Worst Case'	The effects arising from a project in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail
	Indeterminable	When the full consequences of a change in the environment cannot be described
	Irreversible	When the character, distinctiveness, diversity, or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost
	Residual	Degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect
Synergistic	Where the resultant effect is of greater significance than the sum of its constituents	

1.11.3 Significance Criteria

The significance of the potential effects of the Development have been classified by taking into account the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of the potential effect on them, combined with the likelihood of an impact occurring as defined in **Table 1.5**.

Table 1.5: Rating of Significant Environmental Impacts (EPA Guidelines, 2022)

Description of Impact					
Character/Magnitude/Duration/Probability/Consequences					
Magnitude of Significance /Sensitivity		Negligible	Low	Medium	High
	Extremely High	Not Significant	Profound/ Very Significant	Profound	Profound
	Very High	Not Significant	Moderate	Significant	Profound/ Very Significant
	High	Not Significant	Slight	Significant/ Moderate	Very Significant
	Medium	Not Significant/ Imperceptible	Slight	Moderate	Significant/ Moderate
	Low	Imperceptible	Slight/ Not Significant	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
	Negligible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

1.11.3.1 Mitigation Measures and Residual Effects

There are three established strategies for impact mitigation - avoidance, reduction, and remedy. The efficacy of each is directly dependent on the stage in the design process at which environmental considerations are taken into account, (i.e., impact avoidance can only be considered at the earliest stage, while remedy may be the only option available for projects where avoidance and reduction were not possible).

The EIA coordinator has engaged with stakeholders, which has provided the benefit of developing and refining mitigation through an iterative process rather than 'adding on' such measures at the end of the Project. Mitigation measures have been prioritised and embedded into the design phase of the Development to avoid, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects. These are referred to within this EIAR as 'embedded mitigation'.

Relevant mitigation measures are discussed within each technical Chapter of this EIAR. **Chapter 17: Interactions of the Foregoing** provides a summary of mitigation measures for all technical assessments.

1.11.3.2 Cumulative Effects

The potential cumulative impact of the Project has been assessed in line with Annex IV of the EIA Directive as amended which provides that the EIAR must contain a description of the likely significant effects of the Project on the environment resulting from the cumulation

of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources.

The assessment of the Project in combination with other projects considers the range and nature of existing projects within the cumulative impact study area of the Project, as far as practically possible. For the purposes of this EIAR, a radius of 20km for larger scaled projects for cumulative impact assessment. This study area is derived from the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006)⁵ and Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019⁶.

All of the relevant projects with potential to create cumulative impacts have been included in **Chapter 2: Project Description - Appendix 2.2** and detailed cumulative impact assessments are included in each relevant section of the EIAR.

The geographic extent of the cumulative assessment is considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the following:

- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022).
- Guidance on the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (European Union 2017) (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU); and
- Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions (European Commission 1999).

All existing and approved large-scale projects and large-scale projects in the public domain pre planning or pending a decision from a planning authority within 20km of the Development were considered for potential Cumulative Assessment in all other chapters of this EIAR. This measurement was taken from the outermost turbines of the Development. A 20km distance was considered appropriate due to the size and extent of the proposed wind farm and the nature of the potential effects as detailed throughout the EIAR.

The material for the cumulative assessment was gathered through a search of relevant County Councils' Online Planning Registers, the An Coimisiún Pleanála website and a google earth map search (the last check was carried out 8th May 2025). Relevant EIA documents, planning application details and planning drawings were reviewed, which

⁵ Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f449e-wind-energy-development-guidelines-2006/> [Accessed 8th October 2024]

⁶ Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2019) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9d0f66-draft-revised-wind-energy-development-guidelines-december-2019/> [Accessed 8th October 2024]

served to identify the locations of existing and approved projects and projects pending a decision from a planning authority, their activities and their environmental impacts.

The relevance of the projects was considered on a case-by-case basis in each chapter as necessary depending on the interaction and likelihood of in combination impacts.

1.11.3.3 Statement of Significance of Effects

The statement of significance outlines the conclusion of each technical assessment in order to provide a final overall conclusion as to the likely significant effects of the Project of the Project under the terms of the EIA Directive and Planning Development Act 2000 and Planning Regulations 2001.

1.12 SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

The Scoping and consultation process was carried out in accordance with the EIA Directive, Planning Development Act 2000, Planning Regulations 2001 and in accordance with the Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022).

The EIA Directive Circular notes that:

“It is a requirement of the EIA process to consult with statutory consultees and to take into account any submissions made by these consultees. Such submissions may contain expert specialist opinions on topics to be assessed in the EIA process...”

A Scoping exercise was carried out in December 2024. **Table 1.6** documents individuals and organisations that have been consulted as part of the EIA process. The purpose of this consultation process was to provide a focus for the EIA by identifying the key issues of relevance. As such, the consultation process informs the various organisations of the Development, thereby providing an opportunity to submit comments and to offer information relevant to the preparation of this EIAR. Responses can be found in **Volume III, Appendix 1.3 Scoping Responses**.

Table 1.6: Organisations Consulted

No.	Consultee Organisation	Response	Implications for the EIA/Design	EIAR Chapter/Section where comments have been addressed
Local Councils				
1.	Cork County Council	A Pre-Planning meeting was held with Cork County Council on	N/A	N/A
Agriculture				
2.	Department of Agriculture	Response received on 03/01/2025.	All Items considered during the design process.	Chapters 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13
Telecommunications				
3.	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland	Response received on 06/12/2024.	No impact on the design.	Chapter 13
4.	RTÉ	Response received on 06/12/2024.	No impact on the design.	Chapter 13
5.	Tetra	Response received 12/12/2024.	No impact on the design.	Chapter 13
6.	Virgin Media Television	Response received 06/12/2024.	N/A	N/A
7.	ESB Telecoms Ltd	No response received.	N/A	N/A
8.	Three	No response received.	N/A	N/A
9.	Vodafone	No response received.	N/A	N/A
10.	ENET	No response received.	N/A	N/A

No.	Consultee Organisation	Response	Implications for the EIA/Design	EIAR Chapter/Section where comments have been addressed
Aviation				
11.	Cork Airport	Acknowledgement of scoping receipt 05/12/2024.	No impact on the design	N/A
12.	IAA	Scoping response received 06/12/2024.	All items considered during the design process.	Chapter 13
13.	Kerry Airport	No response received.	N/A	N/A
14.	Rowa Pharmaceuticals Limited	No response received.	N/A	N/A
15.	Air Nav Ireland	No response received.	N/A	N/A
Ecology				
16.	Bat Conservation Ireland	Acknowledgement of scoping receipt 11/12/2024.	N/A	Chapter 6
17.	An Taisce	No response received.	N/A	N/A
18.	Birdwatch Ireland	No response received.	N/A	N/A
19.	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	No response received.	N/A	N/A
20.	Irish Wildlife Trust	No response received.	N/A	N/A
Soils and Water				

No.	Consultee Organisation	Response	Implications for the EIA/Design	EIAR Chapter/Section where comments have been addressed
21.	Geological Survey Ireland	Response received 16/12/2024.	All items considered during the design process and construction methodology.	Chapters 7, 8, 13 and 14
22.	Inland Fisheries	No response received.	N/A	N/A
23.	Uisce Eireann	Response Received 16/12/2024.	No impact on the design	N/A
Other				
24.	Health Service Executive	Acknowledgement of scoping receipt 05/12/2024.	N/A	N/A
25.	Department of Transport	No response received.	N/A	N/A
26.	Department of Defence	Response received 12/12/2024.	All items considered during the design process.	Chapter 13
27.	Commission for Communications Regulation	No response received.	N/A	N/A
28.	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)	Response received 23/12/2024.	All items considered in the design of access to Site.	Chapter 11
29.	Environmental Protection Agency	No response received.	N/A	N/A

No.	Consultee Organisation	Response	Implications for the EIA/Design	EIAR Chapter/Section where comments have been addressed
30.	Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage/DAU (Development Application Unit)	Response received 23/12/2024.	All items considered during the design process and construction methodology.	Chapter 6 and 14
31.	Department of the Environment, climate and Communications	No response received.	N/A	N/A
32.	Fáilte Ireland	No response received.	N/A	N/A
33.	Department of Tourism	No response received.	N/A	N/A
34.	OPW (Office of Public Works)	Response received 13/02/2025.	N/A	N/A
35.	The Heritage Council	No response received.	N/A	N/A
36.	Tetra Ireland	Response received 12/12/2024.	No impact on the design	N/A

1.13 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

A copy of the EIAR can be viewed during office opening hours at the following address:

1. The Offices of Cork County Council, Ground Floor, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork, T12 R2NC.
2. The Offices of Cork County Council, Norton House, Gortnacloghy, Skibbereen, Co. Cork, P81 AT28.

The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours.

1.14 GLOSSARY OF COMMON ACRONYMS

The common acronyms used throughout this EIAR are contained in Volume III: **Appendix 1.4.**