

Oweninny Wind Farm

Oweninny Power Ltd.

Environmental Impact Statement

Chapter 1

Introduction

June 2013

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1.1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1.1
1.2 SCOPE	1.2
1.2.1 Site History	1.3
1.2.2 Proposed development	1.4
1.3 METHODOLOGY	1.5
1.3.1 Format	1.5
1.3.2 Presentation	1.6
1.3.3 Contributors	1.7
1.4 SCOPING AND CONSULTATION	1.8
1.4.1 Scoping	1.8
1.4.2 Consultation	1.8
1.5 Consultation Meeting with National Parks and Wildlife Service	1.26
1.6 Consultation with Telecommunication and Signal Providers	1.29
1.7 Public Consultation	1.33
1.7.1 Crossmolina Public Consultation Event	1.35
1.7.2 Bangor Erris Public Consultation Event	1.36

List of Tables

<i>Table 1-1: Oweninny wind farm project townlands</i>	1.2
<i>Table 1-2: Issues raised by key consultees</i>	1.10
<i>Table 1-3: Issues raised by National Parks and Wildlife Service</i>	1.26
<i>Table 1-4: List of Mobile/Signal Communication Companies</i>	1.30
<i>Table 1-5: List of Mobile/Signal Communication Companies Information provided</i>	1.31
<i>Table 1-6: Public Consultation events</i>	1.34
<i>Table 1-7: Public Consultation Event Advertisement</i>	1.34

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Oweninny Site Location Map	1.37
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Bord na Móna and ESB have historically both been involved in industrial scale activity at Bellacorick County Mayo, the location of the proposed Oweninny wind farm development. Bord na Móna was involved in industrial scale peat production operations at the Oweninny site for half a century feeding the nearby ESB power generation station at Bellacorick. Peat production commenced in the 1950s and peat deliveries ceased in 2005. The power station has also ceased operation and has been fully decommissioned.

The country's first commercial wind farm was established at the site at Bellacorick in Co. Mayo in 1992 and in 2003 planning permission was granted for 180 wind turbines on the site. However, the construction of this 180 turbine wind farm was evidently not progressed due primarily to grid connection issues. There have been significant advances in wind energy technology design and efficiency since the grant of the permission for 180 turbines. A new design with a new layout configuration that will optimise wind energy capture, employing the latest wind turbine technology while at the same time minimising the potential for environmental impact, has now been developed reflecting technological changes. This new proposed development is equivalent to the development granted permission by An Bord Pleanála in 2003 and differs primarily only in terms of the number of turbines (decreased from 180 to 112) and turbine size (overall dimension from foundation to blade tip increased from 100 metres (m) to 176 m). These changes are to accommodate what are now essentially industry standard turbine models and reflect the technological advances that continue to occur in wind turbine design. This optimised layout will have a total installed capacity of approximately 370 Megawatts (MW).

Additionally, a Visitor Centre will also be developed providing insight into the history of power generation, peat production, wind energy development, bog rehabilitation and the social history of the area.

A joint venture company, Oweninny Power Limited, between Bord na Móna Energy Limited a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bord na Móna plc and ESB Wind Development Limited, which is a wholly-owned independent subsidiary company of Electricity Supply Board (ESB), has been established to develop the wind farm. The development will be called Oweninny Wind Farm after the river that flows around the boundary of part of the site.

The project has received Grid Connection Offers from EirGrid for 371 MW. Of this, 172 MW of the project has been assigned connection capacity on the existing 110 kV grid at Bellacorick substation. This connection capacity is scheduled to be available at the end of 2015. The remaining capacity is not scheduled to be available until after EirGrid carries out further works to provide network capacity in the area.

When operational, the farm will generate enough electricity to supply the needs of approximately 185,000 homes.

The option exists to proceed with the planning approved 180 turbine wind farm and substantial works under the existing permission (Reference PL 16.131260 - Register Reference Number 01/2542) for this will commence in 2013 to keep this option open. If the new proposed layout of 112 wind turbines is granted permission then the new design

will replace the existing planning approved design resulting in a reduced number of larger more efficient turbines on the site. Under either option it would be possible to proceed with the initial phase or phases of this project, with completion within the next three to four years.

The peat harvesting activities on the site were operated in accordance with the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Licence granted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This licence is in the process of being surrendered by Bord na Móna.

Following consultation with An Bord Pleanála the proposed project has been deemed to be strategic infrastructure within the meaning of paragraph 37A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The application for planning permission is therefore being made directly to An Bord Pleanála in accordance with Section 37E of the Act.

1.2 SCOPE

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared to accompany the application by Oweninny Power Limited for full planning permission to develop Oweninny Wind Farm.

The proposed wind farm site is located in North Mayo, west of Crossmolina and east of Bangor Erris, just north of the N59 road - see Figure 1-1 . The site comprises some 50 km² and was formerly utilised for peat harvesting by Bord na Móna to provide fuel for the Bellacorick peat fired power station which has now been decommissioned. The site lands are owned by Bord na Móna and comprise cutover and cutaway bog land, (see Table 1-1).

The total installed capacity is expected to be approximately 370 MW.

The site is situated in the townlands indicated in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Oweninny wind farm project townlands

Townland Name	Proposed turbine numbers	Other structures
Bellacorick	No turbine[L2]	N/A
Corvoderry	72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 84, 85, 86, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104, 105, 107, 109	Access Tracks, Sub-Station (part), Contractors Compound x1, Peat disposal area (part)
Croaghau West	47, 56, 57, 58, 59, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 83, 92, 93	Access Tracks, Met Mast x1, Batching Plant, O&M Building, Sub-station x1, Sub-station (part), Contractors Compound x1, Overhead Line, U/G Cable
Doobehy	No turbine[L3]	N/A
Dooleeg More	No turbine[L4]	Board Gais Pipeline Existing
Formoyle	No turbine[L5]	N/A
Kilsallagh	81, 88, 89, 90	Access Tracks, Contractors Compound (1), Site entrance no 2, Board Gais Pipeline Existing

Townland Name	Proposed turbine numbers	Other structures
Knockmoyle	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12	Access Tracks, Met Mast x1, Access to Cluddaun WF
Laghtanvack	8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 37, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46	Access Tracks, Met Mast x2, Borrow Pit, Gravel Storage Area (part)
Moneynierin	97, 102, 103, 108, 111, 112	Access Tracks, Met mast (1), Board Gais Pipeline Existing, Site entrance no 1 & 3, Contractors compounds x2, Gravel storage area x1, Visitor Centre & parking (part)
Shanvodinnaun	16, 17, 26, 31, 32, 38, 44, 48, 49, 50, 60, 61, 62, 63, 75, 78	Access Tracks, Met Mast x1, Sub Station x1, Contractors compounds x1, Gravel storage area (part)
Shanvolahan	106, 110	Access tracks
Sheskin	19	Access Tracks, Board Gais Pipeline Existing
Srahnakilly	11, 18, 20, 21, 22, 28, 36, 40, 54, 55, 65, 66, 80, 82, 91	Access Tracks, Met Mast x1, Sub-Station x1, Contractor Area x1, Overhead Line, U/G Cable
Tawnaghmore	27, 33, 34, 35, 39, 51, 52, 53, 64, 79, 87	Access Tracks, Met mast (1), Board Gais Pipeline Existing

N/A = No structure

The wind farm development will comprise 112 wind turbines, which will be used to harness the natural energy of the wind to generate electricity.

1.2.1 Site History

Bord na Móna has been involved in peat production operations at the site since the 1950s. Milled peat production ceased on the site in September 2003 and peat deliveries to the ESB power station at Bellacorick ceased in 2005. As part of the conditions of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) operational licence for the site, a bog rehabilitation programme was developed to enhance post-peat-harvesting recovery of parts of the site and ensure minimum residual impact on the environment. The bog remnant and bog rehabilitation areas will not be significantly affected by the proposed wind farm development and the overall site development will be carried out in a manner that integrates with the bog rehabilitation programme.

The country's first commercial wind farm was established at the site at Bellacorick in Co. Mayo in 1992. It comprises 21 wind turbines with a total installed capacity of 6.45 MW, and produces enough electricity to supply approximately 3,500 households. This existing wind farm, if still in operation, will be replaced during the final phase of the proposed new development at Oweninny.

In 2003 planning permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála for 180 wind turbines on

the site (An Bord Pleanála Reference PL 16.131260 – Mayo County Council Register Reference Number 01/2542).

This followed a third-party appeal of Mayo County Council's decision to grant permission (01/2542). The nature of the permission granted was such that the permission remains in place. It is evidently some time since the grant of that planning permission and, for reasons beyond the control of the developers, the project has been unable to commence. The delay in advancing this, and other similar projects, arose originally from the moratorium in respect of processing grid connection applications by wind farm developers for connections to the National Grid and subsequently from the new approach adopted for processing grid connection applications by renewable energy projects.

Wind energy technology has advanced significantly in terms of design and efficiency since the grant of original permission. The site is now in receipt of Grid Connection Offers from EirGrid for 370.9 MW. Connection offers for 172 MW have been accepted and this 172 MW has been assigned connection to the local 110 kV grid. The upgrade works on the local 110 kV network required to facilitate this connection are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2015.

The new Oweninny planning application is essentially equivalent in terms of installed capacity to the development granted permission by An Bord Pleanála in 2003 and differs from the development permitted primarily in terms of the number of turbines (decreased from 180 to 112) and turbine size (overall dimension from foundation level to blade tip increased from 100 metres (m) to 176 m). These changes are to accommodate what are now essentially industry standard turbine models and reflect the technological advances that continue to occur in wind turbine design.

1.2.2 Proposed development

The proposed development will comprise 112 wind turbines. It includes wind turbine transformers and crane hardstands at each turbine, construction of 85 kilometres of new access tracks, four electrical substations containing control buildings and substation, underground electrical cables linking the turbines with the control buildings, underground communication cables, eight permanent meteorological masts, two 110 kV overhead lines linking the substations to the existing transformer station at Bellacorick, an Operation and Maintenance facility and all related site works and ancillary development including batching plant and borrow pits. In addition a purpose built Visitor Interpretative Centre will be developed providing insight to the history of power generation, peat production, wind energy development, the bog rehabilitation programme, ecological interests and the social history of the area.

The EIS has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations. These give effect to Council Directive 85/337/EEC and Council Directive 97/11/EC amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

The provisions of the above Regulations stipulate those projects that must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The project falls within the scope of Article 24, First Schedule, Part II, Clause 3 (i), both being a wind farm with more than 5 turbines and being a wind farm having a total output greater than 5 Megawatts (MW).

The proposal also falls within the scope of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006, as amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment)

Act 2010. The threshold for developments of this type is a wind farm with more than 25 turbines or having a total output greater than 50 MW.

The rated electrical output of the Wind Farm will be approximately 370 MW. The exact output cannot be specified at this stage. In accordance with procurement regulations that apply to the joint venture development company a competitive procurement process will be undertaken to select turbines for the project. Outputs of wind turbines are particular to the design of individual manufacturers and it is thus not possible in an open international competition to specify the exact output without prejudice or favour to one manufacturer. The overall rating may thus ultimately be marginally more or less than cited. However, throughout the EIA process, consideration of significant environmental impacts of the proposed development is based on the largest size of development foreseen. The choice of turbine model will not affect the assessment of impacts outlined herein.

The EIA considers the construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farm.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Format

The EIS is presented in the grouped-format structure with each category (Human Beings, Noise, etc.) being considered under the separate headings: Description of Existing Environment; Impact of the Development; Mitigation (where appropriate); and Conclusions (where appropriate).

The EIS has been completed with broad reference to the following guidance documents produced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements, (EPA, 2002).
- Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements, (EPA 2003).

The order of presentation has been adjusted to aid comprehension.

The EIA process anticipates the effect on the environment caused by the development. The procedure commences by establishing the scope of the study by reference to the nature of the project and its location. On completion of this stage, an EIS is prepared as part of the application for development consent. The competent authority (An Bord Pleanála) examines the EIS and consults with authorities likely to be concerned by a particular proposal by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities. An opportunity is provided to the general public to observations and objections to the proposed development through the process.

Using this approach, the EIS provides the competent authorities and the public with a comprehensive understanding of the project, the existing environment, the impacts and the mitigation measures proposed.

Attention has been paid throughout the EIS to the Wind Farm Planning Guidelines for planning authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in 2006. These are designed to ensure consistency of approach to wind energy developments throughout the country and to provide clarity to prospective developers and local communities.

Where appropriate, the EIS uses applicable information and data from the EIS that

accompanied the previous application for planning permission at the site. Such information and data has been adapted to reflect developments in the interim, notably the DoEHLG's Wind Farm Planning Guidelines.

As both the Bellacorick Iron Flush Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and the Lough Dahybaun cSAC are within the site boundary and as there are other designated areas within 15 km of the site a separate appropriate assessment under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive has been made and is provided separately to this report.

1.3.2 Presentation

This Environmental Impact Statement comprises the following

- Non- Technical Summary
- Main EIS Volume
- EIS Appendices
- Photomontages

A separate Natura Impact Statement prepared under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive is provided separately.

Appropriate methodologies have been used to assess the effects relating to each of the environmental topics that have been investigated as part of the EIA. These methodologies are based on recognised good practice and guidelines specific to each subject area, details of which are provided within each individual technical section.

The Regulations require a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.

Within this EIS, significance is generally determined through combining the sensitivity of a receptor to an effect and the magnitude of the predicted change. This is generally undertaken through:

- Identifying baseline conditions of the site and its environs.
- Identifying the sensitivity of receptors that may be affected by changes in the baseline conditions.
- Predicting the magnitude of likely changes to the baselines.
- Assessing the significance of effect taking into account sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effect.
- Identifying of appropriate mitigation measures.
- Assessing the significance of residual effects, taking account of any mitigation measures.

Mitigation is defined within the Regulations as measures designed "to prevent, reduce or where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment". Within this EIS the following approach has been taken to mitigation:

- So far as possible mitigation measures are embedded within the development by design, for example through the locations of wind turbines, maintaining appropriate

separation distances between environmental receptors and wind turbines, and through incorporation of best practice approaches and construction techniques.

- Where mitigation measures are identified to prevent, reduce or offset likely significant adverse environmental effects, the mechanism through which such mitigation measures can be secured is identified.

Every effort has been made in the preparation of the document to keep it as concise as possible while also ensuring that relevant material is adequately covered. The method of presentation can be summarised as follows:

- Section 1 provides an introduction to the project, describing the method of preparation and identifying those responsible.
- Section 2 provides a description of the proposed development in terms of the site and the operation and decommissioning of the scheme.
- Section 3 provides a description of the construction of the development.
- Section 4 considers alternatives to the proposed development in terms of electricity generation, site selection and the proposed arrangement.
- Section 5 outlines the energy policy context at international and national levels and the planning policy context in which the proposed development will take place.
- Sections 6 – 19 consider the environmental impacts of the proposed development with detailed focus on the issues considered to be of potential significance.
- Section 20 considers the possible interaction of impacts outlined in Sections 6 – 19.

In an effort to minimise repetition and to keep the EIS as concise as possible, mitigation measures that are applicable to a number of topics may or may not be repeated in the document. In general, only mitigation that is associated with the primary impacts is described.

While every effort is made to present together all details relating to individual topics, these should not be considered in isolation of others and without reference to context.

1.3.3 Contributors

The EIA was prepared by ESBI Building, Civil and Environmental - Pre Development Group, Stephen Court, 18-21 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland and the following companies contributed to the preparation:

- Bord na Móna
- ESB Wind Development
- Biospheric Engineering Limited (Noise)
- Hayes McKenzie Partners Ltd (Noise)
- Biosphere Environmental Services (Terrestrial Ecology)
- Aquafact International Ltd. (Aquatic Ecology)
- Byrne Mullins & Associates (Cultural Heritage)
- URS Ireland (Landscape)

- Hydro-environmental Services Limited (Bellacorick Iron Flush study)

No significant difficulties arising from lack of information were encountered in the EIA process.

1.4 SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

The issues to be examined in the EIS were identified through the following:

- Scoping exercise
- Consultation of and experience with previous EISs of a similar nature
- The requirements of the Planning and EIA Regulations
- Issues raised at the public consultation events

1.4.1 Scoping

Scoping is a process that determines the particular issues which need to be examined in an Environmental Impact Statement.

- A Scoping Document was prepared and issued to key stakeholders. A copy of the Scoping Document is attached in Appendix 1A
- Scoping letters were issued to non statutory stakeholders that could potentially be affected by the development (A copy of the letter is attached in Appendix 1B)
- Scoping letters were issued to local people and elected representatives in the project area. (A copy of the letter is attached in Appendix 1C)

A project website was established www.oweninnywindfarm.ie and project background information, the Scoping Document, site location mapping and proposed layout provided in downloadable format.

To date the project website has registered over 1800 visitors.

1.4.2 Consultation

An initial pre application meeting was held with An Bord Pleanála on the 22nd March 2012. The meeting was essentially an information exchange allowing the prospective applicant to outline the development to officials of the Bord and the Bord to outline any key points in relation to same. An Bord Pleanála advised on the need for extensive consultation to take place and in particular with key stakeholders. Subsequently consultation was undertaken with the following key consultees:

- Consultation meetings have taken place with National Parks and Wildlife Service at National, Regional and Local level particularly with respect to the Bellacorick Iron Flush area and other areas of ecological significance within and around the Oweninny site.
- Consultation meetings also took place with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), An Taisce, Mayo County Council and the Irish Peatland Conservation Council.
- Consultation with telecommunication companies with infrastructure in the area was undertaken to determine potential interference issues from the wind farm layout.
- Public consultation events were advertised and held in Crossmolina and Bangor Erris in December 2012.

On-going consultation will continue during the project development phase.

The scoping opinion was issued in July 2012 to the relevant consultees as recommended in the Irish Wind Energy Association Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Industry listed in Table 2 of that document. Copies of the correspondence received in response to the Scoping Report are provided in Appendix 1D. Table 1-2 also contains a summary of the areas of concern raised by these interested bodies.

Table 1-2: Issues raised by key consultees

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
 <p>An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>	<p>The wind farm should be assessed by a suitably qualified archaeologist by means of a desk study and site visit given the number of Recorded Monuments in the vicinity.</p> <p>High likelihood of previously unrecorded monuments being discovered along with post-medieval farms and field systems. Details of these should be captured in the report.</p> <p>It is likely that detailed recommendations made on the basis of the assessment report will include requirements for geophysical investigations and/or pre-development testing.</p> <p>Borrow pits, or extraction, disposal or recovery sites must be included within the application area and covered in the EIS.</p> <p>Habitats on the site should be described as they are now, including in the context of Annex I habitats, or developing Annex I habitats.</p>	<p>A fully qualified archaeologist (Byrne Mullins and Associates) has been appointed to undertake the Cultural Heritage aspects of the study. Detailed desk studies have been undertaken and site surveys conducted. Meetings have also been held with the National Monuments Services (NMS) and the requirements for geophysical investigations and pre-development testing deemed unnecessary by NMS.</p> <p>All project components have been assessed as part of the Cultural Heritage Assessment which is described in Chapter 17.</p>
 	<p>Are Photomontages available showing all 112 turbines, substations and internal road networks?</p>	<p>Photomontages and a Landscape Assessment have been prepared for the EIS showing all project components. This is described in Chapter 11.</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>No issues or concerns in relation to the proposed development.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
 <p>An Taisce <i>The National Trust for Ireland</i></p>	<p>An Taisce requested an update and briefing on the development of this proposal including impact on An Taisce owned iron flush.</p>	<p>Draft Final Report on the Bellacorick Iron Flush (owned by An Taisce) issued to An Taisce for comment. An Taisce briefed on the final project design and final report on the Bellacorick Iron Flush</p>
 <p>Iascach Intíre Éireann Inland Fisheries Ireland</p>	<p>Robust silt control measures need to be in place throughout the construction phase to ensure that the rehabilitation works carried out in this catchment are not lost. A monitoring programme must also be in place for all surface water discharges from the site.</p> <p>The pouring of concrete should not be carried out in wet conditions. The surface water control measures for the proposed on-site concrete batching plant should be included in the EIA.</p> <p>Sites for the disposal of excavated material should be identified. These sites should be located on flat ground, a safe distance from watercourses and reseeded as soon as possible.</p> <p>All fuelling of machinery should be carried out off site or in a bunded area.</p> <p>IFI request that all roads and turbines, where</p>	<p>A detailed Hydrology, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan has been developed and will be implemented fully during the construction and post construction phases of the project to ensure minimum impact on water quality and hydrology in general.</p> <p>Construction in wet conditions will be avoided to the extent feasible. However, concrete foundations must be poured in a continuous fashion to ensure integrity of the foundation base. In such circumstances it may be impossible to avoid periods of occasional rainfall. The measures set out in the Hydrology, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will be robust and capable of dealing with any runoff during concrete pour operations.</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>possible, are a minimum of 100m from all watercourses. Although micro siting is requested as a condition of planning this buffer should be maintained.</p> <p>Where existing culverts are to be altered or new ones installed, IFI are to be notified. Any in-stream works should be carried out between May and October during dry weather conditions.</p> <p>A geological study should be carried out to ensure there is no threat of landslides during the construction phase.</p> <p>Hydrological impacts of the development on all watercourses should be assessed as part of the EIA. The location of any ducting crossing main watercourses should be assessed and identified.</p> <p>The impact of any forestry activity must be considered. The Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines must be strictly adhered to and felling should not be carried out during wet weather conditions.</p> <p>An Emergency Response Plan should be produced in case of a major spill. IFI should be a notifiable body under this plan.</p>	<p>Excavated materials will be side cast in a manner that will have minimum impact on water quality.</p> <p>Structures will be located a minimum distance of 100m from main watercourses (not field drains or outfalls) where feasible. In some instances access tracks will follow existing trackway routes which may be closer than 100 m to water courses. In these instances silt control measures will be put in place prior to construction taking place; IFI will be consulted with regard to any alteration of existing culverts.</p> <p>A geotechnical risk assessment of the site has been carried out. The results of the peat stability risk assessment show that the site contains areas of insignificant risk to substantial risk indicating mitigation measures are required for construction, see Appendix 4.</p> <p>All forest plantation clearfell will be conducted in accordance with the Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines (see Chapter 15)</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
 <p>Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo Mayo County Council</p>	<p>While Section 4.6 deals with potential noise impact some reference needs to be made in Section 4.1 about noise as a potential impact on human beings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sites, subject of the Appropriate Assessment, seem to be confined to those within the site or immediately adjoining the site. Our experience is that AA has also to include Designated Sites at some remove from the development site (15 km) as mentioned in the NPWS guidelines. You should confirm with NPWS what Designated Sites you should include. • There are 3 Recorded Monuments and Places within the proposed development site i.e. MA027-003--- Cist, MA028-001--- Court Tomb and MA028-007--- Ringfort (Rath\Cashel). • The EIS should make reference to these Recorded Monuments being adequately fenced off under archaeological supervision and preserved in situ prior to the commencement of any groundworks • The first part of the assessment should consist of a site visit/survey as well as the desk top 	<p>An emergency Response Plan has been prepared and included in Appendix 6.</p> <p>The potential for Noise impact on human beings is addressed fully in Chapter 7</p> <p>Discussions have been held with NPWS and all sites within a 15km radius have been assessed as being subject to Appropriate Assessment. A separate report prepared under Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive has been prepared separately to the EIS in accordance with the European communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011.</p> <p>Cultural heritage has been assessed by a qualified Archaeologist and is reported on in Chapter 17. This includes an evaluation of potential impacts on known Recorded Monuments and Places. Prior to site visits consultation was undertaken with the Senior Archaeologist, Forward Planning, Mayo County Council and with the National Monuments service. No geophysical or pre-development testing was deemed necessary by the National Monuments Service.</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The field survey should be very comprehensive and all new previously unrecorded sites and monuments must be treated in the same manner as Recorded Monuments and Places presently included and protected in the list of Recorded Monuments and Places for Co. Mayo. • In addition to the sources to be consulted for the desk top study an examination of all existing aerial photographic coverage of the proposed development site should be undertaken. • On foot of the site visit/survey the applicant may be required to carry out any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Geophysical and/or other non-invasive surveys (including architectural survey) b. Licensed pre-development testing c. Licensed archaeological excavation d. Archaeological monitoring of ground works • If a), b) or c) of the above archaeological works are required they should be undertaken as soon as possible and before a planning decision is issued. • Before the site visit is undertaken and prior to the submission of any archaeological 	

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>information the applicant and/or the applicant's archaeologist is advised to contact Gerry Walsh, Senior Archaeologist, Forward Planning, Mayo Co. Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be useful to include discussion about alternative turbine layouts and the reasons for the preferred layout 	
	<p>"The only site of geological interest is "Bellacorrick" (997700, 322000). The site is unlikely to be altered by the Windfarm unless you indicate otherwise".</p> <p>Geological heritage information should be included in baseline data.</p>	<p>Noted and included in Chapter 13 Geology and Soils.</p>
	<p>Regard should be given to relevant guidance and circulars available at www.nra.ie.</p> <p>Consultations should be had with the relevant local authority road design office with regard to existing and future national road schemes.</p> <p>The Authority would be specifically concerned as to the potential significant impacts the development would have on any national roads in the proximity of the proposed development, N59.</p> <p>The developer should assess visual impact from existing national roads.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Photomontages from viewpoints along the national and local roads in the area have been prepared as part of the landscape assessment and are included</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>The developer should have regard to any EIS and all conditions and/or modifications imposed by An Bord Pleanála regarding road schemes in the area. The developer should in particular have regard to any potential cumulative impacts.</p> <p>The developer in conducting EIA should have regard to NRA DMRB and the NRA Manual on Contract Documents for Road Works</p> <p>The developer in conducting EIA should have regard to the NRA's Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines, including the Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2006)</p> <p>The EIS should consider the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (SI 140 of 2006) and, in particular, how the development will affect future action plans by the relevant competent authority. The developer may need to consider the incorporation of noise barriers to reduce noise impacts (see Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes (1st Rev., NRA, 2004)).</p> <p>A traffic and transportation assessment be carried</p>	<p>in Chapter 10.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. This is included in Chapter 7 Noise impact assessment</p> <p>A Traffic and Transport Assessment has</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>out in accordance with relevant guidelines, noting traffic volumes attending the site and traffic routes to/from the site with reference to impacts on the national road network and junctions of lower category roads with national roads. The Authority's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2007) should be referred to in this regard. It is important that TTA would consider the cumulative impact of developments in the area and in addition, the applicant team should also consider Table 2.3 of the Guidelines which advise on circumstances where sub-threshold TTA may be warranted.</p> <p>The designers are asked to consult the National Roads Authority DMRB Road Safety Audit (NRA HD 19/09) to determine whether a Road Safety Audit is required.</p> <p>In the interests of maintaining the safety and standard of the national road network, the EIS should identify the methods/techniques proposed for any works traversing/in proximity to the national road network.</p>	<p>been prepared, including the potential cumulative impact during construction from other developments in the area e.g. wind farm developments (Cluddaun and Corvoderry for example). This is discussed in Chapter 14.</p> <p>A road safety audit has been undertaken by an independent consultant. This is referred to in Chapter 14.</p> <p>Noted</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
 <p>Three.ie</p>	<p>It has been determined that the wind farm will have a negative impact. Turbine 1 is in close proximity to our Telecoms site.</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place with all telecoms providers in the area and turbines have been relocated to ensure that an adequate corridor to prevent signal interference is achieved. This is discussed in Chapter 4 - Alternatives</p>
 <p>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara</p>	<p>If the proposed development will involve the felling or removal of any trees, the developer must obtain a Felling Licence from this Department before trees are felled or removed. The developer should take note of the contents of Forest Service Policy on the Granting of Felling Licences for Wind Farm Development.</p> <p>It should be noted that deforestation is a project to which the provisions of Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive (Council Directive 85/337/EEC) applies, being one of the projects listed in Annex II of that Directive.</p> <p>Where the felling of forest areas is proposed, the following information should be provided in the EIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons and rationale for all proposed felling (including timing and extent) and any replanting. This should include a justification/rationale for pre-mature felling, where proposed, in comparison 	<p>Keyhole felling and linear felling will be undertaken at turbine locations and along access tracks within forest plantation. Some felling activity will therefore take place. The requirement for forest felling, including details of felling areas, age and yield class and the potential impacts and mitigation are described in Chapter 15 Forestry.</p> <p>Felling will only be carried out in accordance with any licence issued by the Forest Service.</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>with the accepted rotation lengths for the species and yield classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total proposed felling associated with the project to include total area (Hectares) to be felled, tree species, yield class, age at proposed felling and normal rotation length of crop. Maps showing all known monuments, Natura 2000 sites (including candidate and proposed sites), pNHAs and NHAs in the locality should be included. • Total proposed forest area (Hectares) to be clearfelled and replanted, including species, yield class, soil type, age at the proposed felling time, normal rotation length of the crop, along with a Replanting Plan for clearfelled areas detailing proposed year/s of replanting, proposed species, ground preparation and fertiliser application. • Total proposed forest area (Hectares) to be deforested (i.e. clearfelled and not replanted) including species, yield class, soil type, age at the proposed felling time, normal rotation length of the crop. The total area/s proposed for deforestation in respect of (i) turbine footprints and associated infrastructure, and (ii) 	

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>turbulence felling (i.e. felling undertaken to minimise the effect of wind turbulence from trees) should be detailed separately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where any deforestation is proposed, the developer's proposals for compensatory afforestation at alternative site/s, proposed species, yield class, ground preparation, fertiliser application and normal rotation length of proposed crop. • The potential impacts of proposed tree felling operations and proposed mitigation and monitoring measures to be adopted, in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Soil stability (including landslides) (b) Water Quality (particularly with regard to sedimentation and eutrophication) (c) Landscape (d) Ecology/habitats (e) Monuments <p>Consider the likely impact, if any, on agriculture in the locality as part of the Environmental Monitoring Plan. Aspects that should be considered include the following:</p>	

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely impacts during site preparation, excavation and erection phases (impacts include water quality, risk to peat stability etc). Likely impacts when the development is complete (examples include noise and shadow flicker). 	
	<p>The HSE is keen to ensure the EIA process adequately indentifies and assess impacts of the proposed development on humans and human health. The following matters should be considered as part of the EIA:</p> <p><u>Drinking Water:</u> The location of drinking water supplies in proximity to the development be established and potential impacts on the water supplies for the development be assessed.</p> <p><u>Vibration and Noise:</u> The impact during construction and operation at noise sensitive locations be assessed including mitigation measures. A representative baseline noise assessment be carried out at noise sensitive locations. All dwellings in the vicinity of the proposal including unoccupied, habitable dwellings be identified. Consideration must also be given to any sites that have planning permission granted for development.</p> <p><u>Dust:</u> The impact of dust and particulate pollution</p>	<p>Noted: This is discussed in Chapter 16 on material assets</p> <p>Baseline noise data and potential impacts are discussed in Chapter 7 Noise.</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>including mitigation measures be assessed.</p> <p><u>Shadow Flicker</u>: The potential and impact be assessed.</p> <p><u>Public Consultation</u>: Early and effective consultation with affected communities be carried out. This is to reduce the risk of likelihood of future nuisance complaints in relation to for example noise, dust generation and shadow flicker.</p> <p><u>Telecommunications</u>: Consultation with any local television deflector group(s), RTE (Saorview) and mobile communications companies be carried out so as not to compromise the provision of telecommunications to the local community.</p> <p><u>Western Way Walking Trail</u>: Impact during construction and operation be considered.</p> <p><u>Access Rights</u>: Access rights to the lands in question be identified and ensure the proposed development does not compromise them. Any aspect of the development that requires the use of third party land must ensure permission for such access is forthcoming.</p> <p><u>Staff Facilities</u>: Identification of potable drinking water supply for the staff facilities be considered. Disposal of waste water from staff sanitary facilities during construction phase be considered.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation for dust are included in Chapter 12 Air and Climate</p> <p>Potential impacts from shadow flicker are discussed in Chapter 8 – Shadow Flicker</p> <p>Extensive public consultation has been carried out as outlined in this Chapter.</p> <p>Consultation has been undertaken with service providers which resulted in design change to the wind farm layout to avoid potential impacts.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>A temporary compound for up to four contractors will be established during the construction phase which will be adequately supplied with managed sanitary facilities and potable water.</p> <p>The potential cumulative impacts from</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p><u>Cumulative Impacts:</u> Impact of this proposal with existing and proposed wind farms in the vicinity be assessed.</p>	<p>other wind farms (Cluddaun and Corvoderry) within and adjacent to the site have been taken into consideration.</p>
<p>National Roads Design Office</p>	<p>Considering the possibility of underlying poor ground conditions the Mayo NRDO would recommend that the existing condition of the public road network in the vicinity of the proposed development be thoroughly assessed in the EIA. The assessment shall include any structures, bridges and culverts, along the routes and the impact the construction and operation traffic will have on the existing network.</p>	<p>A road condition assessment will be undertaken prior to any construction works being implemented on the site. Given the scale and potential phasing of the development this assessment may be repeated during the lifetime of construction by agreement with the planning authority.</p>
	<p>EIS must provide substantial evidence that the development is not to the detriment of the blanket bog in the area.</p> <p><u>Turbine Locations:</u> IPCC would have an issue with a number of locations as per figure 4b namely 11, 18, 20, 22, 34, 52, 42, 32, 86, 106, 110, 57, 100, 1 and 16. I put forward that these locations are highly likely to degrade either remnant peatlands or cause siltation within the river catchment.</p> <p><u>Protected Peatlands:</u> Over 50% of site boundary is directly adjacent to protected habitat. This development has a strong potential to negatively affect the hydrology and ecology of these</p>	<p>The ecology of the area, including potential impacts and mitigation is described fully in Chapter 9.</p> <p>All turbine locations identified by IPCC have been reviewed and turbine positions adjusted to ensure a minimum separation distance of 50m from bog remnants. Silt control measures will be put in place at each turbine location and along access trackway routes</p> <p>A specific Hydrology, Erosion and Sediment Control plan has been prepared to ensure minimum impact on hydrology and adequate silt control</p>

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Comment
	<p>protected sites. Concise reviews on the hydrological and ecological impact of all of the turbines is required as each one falls within the original hydrological unit of the surrounding blanket bog.</p> <p><u>Birdlife</u>: Concerned about the potential impact on birds, in particular the Golden Plover, Hen Harrier and Red Grouse.</p> <p><u>Visual Impact</u>: From Knockmoyle Nature Reserve in particular the old power station at Bellacorick was a large-scale visual detriment to the area. IPCC would be concerned that this significant development will result in certainly greater visual disturbance for the area in an overall landscape context.</p>	<p>measures are provided. This is discussed in Chapter 19.</p> <p>Existing baseline and potential impact on birds with mitigation is provided in Chapter 9.</p> <p>Visual impacts are described in Chapter 11.</p>
	<p>The approval of the Commissioners of Public Works will be required under Section 50 of the 1945 Arterial Drainage Act for the construction or alteration of any bridge over any watercourse and Section 47 of the same Act for the alteration or erection of weirs in any watercourse.</p> <p>No flooding should be caused during or after construction as a result of the development.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>No weirs will be altered or constructed as part of the project.</p> <p>Flood risk assessments have been carried out for all substations, operation and maintenance building and visitor centre. No change to the existing regime is foreseen.</p> <p>Impacts on hydrology are described in Chapter 19</p>

Based on the above, the key issues identified to be addressed in the EIS arise from:

- the visual impact of the wind turbines on the landscape
- the potential noise impact
- the potential for sediment and soil impacts to affect fisheries
- the potential for impact on bog remnants within the site
- effects of construction traffic on local roads
- impact on telecommunications
- human health specifically shadow flicker and noise

1.5 Consultation Meeting with National Parks and Wildlife Service

The Project Scoping Document was issued to the Development Application Unit (DAU) of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for comment. The registered project number under the DAU system is G Pre00311/2012.

Meetings were subsequently held at National and Regional Level with NPWS to discuss the overall project proposal and specifically the approach to the Bellacorick Iron Flush SAC study required to determine the potential for impact on this protected area. The key issues raised at the meetings with NPWS and clarifications provided are provided in Table 1-3.

Table 1-3: Issues raised by National Parks and Wildlife Service

Issue raised	Response
The implications of Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) on EPA IPPC Licence	The IPPC Licence was for Peat Production and will be surrendered at some point in future when EPA are happy that there are no outstanding emissions on-site or happy that the rehabilitation plan is being carried out and adhered to.
Continuing of re-wetting areas and recovery of lands as per the rehabilitation plan in light of the proposed wind farm.	Re-wetting of areas will continue to completion of the rehabilitation plan and drains have been blocked to contain water on-site. The wind farm access track network will occur mainly on higher ground, staying away from lower ground where possible.
Intention is to rehabilitate lands after construction of wind farm.	Revegetation is a process that has been shown to work on site and where material will be disturbed during construction it will promote seed establishment from the surrounding

Issue raised	Response
	seed sources on the site. Overall site development will be carried out in a manner that integrates with the bog rehabilitation programme.
The rivers in the south east of site are connected to a freshwater pearl mussel catchment and should be assessed in EIS with relevant mitigation	Acknowledged and included in the aquatic ecology section.
Note that there are two 'Owenmore' rivers in the area, one flowing east into the Deel and the other continuing from the Oweninny and flowing west. Shanvolahan stream and Sheskin River are also important.	Acknowledged and included in the aquatic ecology report and drainage control plan for the site
Clarification re Coillte owned property on site	Coillte have plantations on-site but land is leased from Bord na Móna which has the title to these areas. Keyhole felling or possible clear felling (pending a felling licence) will be undertaken where turbines or access tracks are to be positioned.
Borrow pits, or extraction, disposal or recovery sites etc. must be included within application area, and covered in the EIS/NIS	Acknowledged and incorporated into the EIS and Natura Impact Statement
Alien species: awareness of Alien Species during importing of material, especially Gunnera and Fallopia as material could be full of seeds.	Acknowledged and incorporated into mitigation.
<p>With respect to birds on site consultation with the local ranger was advised and potential impacts.</p> <p>Disturbance of a bird nesting is an offence under the Wildlife Acts and correct mitigation should be in place to avoid this although there are exemptions under the Wildlife Act.</p> <p>An assessment should be made to determine the critical areas of the site for bird breeding.</p> <p>The importance of assessing in-combination impacts in the EIS was stressed</p>	<p>Consultation with the local rangers has been ongoing during the collection of bird data on site.</p> <p>It was agreed that in some cases, where there are no breeding birds in an area, it is more advantageous to carry out works in summer as the risk of silt deposition in watercourses is reduced. It was also suggested that it would be preferable to have started work on site before the breeding season rather than to move into an area and start construction after the season has</p>

Issue raised	Response
	started. A plan will be outlined in the EIS aimed at achieving an appropriate balance on these issues.
Habitats on the site should be described and evaluated as they are now, including in the context of Annex I habitats, or developing Annex I habitats. NPWS data indicated that many lakes had been categorized as Annex I lake types.	Acknowledged and included in Chapter 9.
Silt control is seen as imperative to protection of water quality and silt control measures should be included in the EIS. NPWS requested that the drainage plan for the site be submitted to them for comment also.	A hydrology and sediment control plan has been prepared for the development, see Chapter 19 incorporating silt control measures.
<p>Bellacorick Iron Flush:</p> <p>With respect to a proposed study on the Bellacorick Iron Flush cSAC intrusive works may require Ministerial consent.</p> <p>A Screening Appropriate Assessment (Method Statement) would have to be submitted to NPWS on the intended surveys at the iron flush prior to commencement of surveys. This should contain exact and specific methods detailing what will happen and how this might impact on the conservation objectives of the SAC.</p> <p>A Section 20 will also be required if a Flora Protection Order species or its habitat will be impacted by any works or investigations at any stage.</p> <p>The key question to be answered is where is the water coming from and how can potential impacts on such flow paths be avoided. A key question relates to whether the iron flush has stabilised or continues to degrade post peat harvesting operations on site.</p> <p>NPWS recommended that the study on the</p>	<p>A description of the investigative survey, and screening appropriate assessment report was provided to NPWS and a Ministerial Permit to undertake the study subsequently received.</p> <p>An order under Section 201 of the Wildlife Act was also obtained to enable the survey to proceed in this sensitive area.</p> <p>The iron flush study was carried out by Hydro-environmental Services Ltd. under the supervision of the project ecology team, Biosphere Environmental Services Ltd., in accordance with the requirements of NPWS.</p> <p>A full report is included in Chapter 18.</p>

Issue raised	Response
<p>iron flush be expanded to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conductivity measurements on discharges in the area to trace groundwater discharge in the area. • Identify groundwater catchment supplying the iron flush (NPWS indicated that gravel deposits (Eskers) are probably feeding the iron flush). • NPWS recommended that the study should determine whether groundwater coming from the eskers (gravel deposits) on the Oweninny site contributes to the iron flush area located outside and east of the site boundary and the importance of this. • In particular water chemistry and surface vegetation should be used to identify where groundwater is emerging from the site and mapped. The report should identify any potential impacts on this iron flush area from turbine foundation construction and roading and recommend mitigation measures. 	
<p>Formoyle Flush</p> <p>NPWS requested that the potential impact of the development be assessed with respect to the Formoyle Flush which is located to the east of the site boundary.</p>	<p>A desktop and walkover survey as agreed with NPWS was undertaken. This assessment was also covered by Ministerial Licence and Section 20 order. The assessment report is also included in Chapter 18.</p>

1. 6 Consultation with Telecommunication and Signal Providers

There are a number of known telecommunication and signal mast providers operating in the general vicinity of the proposed development. As part of the design phase of the project the relevant stakeholders listed in Table 1-4 were consulted regarding the location of their masts (or shared masts) and the potential for signal interference. A site location map and preliminary wind farm layout showing 117 wind turbines was provided together with a link to the project scoping report on www.oweninnywinfarm.ie. Stakeholders subsequently provided the location coordinates of their own or shared transmission and

receiving masts and indicated that a buffer distance of 100m would be required between wind turbines and the communication path of their signal (see Table 1-5). This resulted in turbines been relocated to avoid signal interference.

Table 1-4: List of Mobile/Signal Communication Companies

Mobile/Signal Communication Company	Location	Easting IG	Northing IG	Easting ITM	Northing ITM
Meteor	Shanetra	106386	329346	506357	829353
	Bellacorick	97077	320359	497050	820368
Vodafone	Shanetra	106408	329235	506379	829242
	Bellacorick	96800	320200	496773	820209
O2	Shanetra	106318	329368	506289	829375
	Bellacorick	97077	320359	497050	820368
Eircom	Shanetra	106408	329235	506379	820244
	Bellacorick	96853	320249	496826	820258
	Dooleeg	102073	318578	502045	818587
H3G	Shanetra	106408	329235	506379	820244
	Bellacorick	97077	320359	497050	820368
ESB Telecoms	Bellacorick ESBT Tower	97077	320359	497050	820368
	Bellacorick Wooden Pole	96865	320167	496838	820176
	Truskmore	175909	347280	575866	847283
Tetra	Bellacorick	97077	320359	497650	820368

Note: Mobile phone companies supplied coordinates in Irish Grid

Table 1-5: List of Mobile/Signal Communication Companies Information provided

Mobile/Signal Communication Company	Information provided	Action taken
	<p>Tetra equipment is located on the ESB Telecomms tower at Bellacorick: E096889, N 320234.</p> <p>The Tetra antennas broadcast 360 degrees and are normally impacted by turbines within approximately 500m.</p> <p>Tetra transmission dish is on a bearing of 45 degrees from the site, this would normally require a few degrees clearance either side.</p>	<p>The data provided by Tetra was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>
	<p>Information about 2 Meteor links in this area was provided, both are on the ESB tower in Bellacorick</p>	<p>The data provided by meteor was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>
	<p>The coordinates for the microwave link that runs between Bellacorick and Truskmore were provided; the link runs through the proposed site location.</p> <p>Determining the positions of the turbines on the site, if you stay 150m either side of the microwave link ESB Telecom does not expect to have any problems. Final Turbine layout requested by ESB Telecoms</p> <p>Link provided http://www.esbtelecoms.ie/infrastructure/north_west.htm to map for the North West region, showing fibre optic network and all masts in that area.</p> <p>Bellacorick – N:96822 E: 320234 (Long: -9.34435 Lat: 54.07150)</p> <p>Truskmore – N: 175950 E: 347250 (Long: -8.22150 Lat: 54.22240)</p>	<p>The data provided by ESB Telecoms was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>

Mobile/Signal Communication Company	Information provided	Action taken
	<p>The Cluddaun Wind Farm Project proposes to consolidate the three masts on the Coillte property to one mast location.</p> <p>This would affect potentially two signals traversing the BNM property (very slightly) to that consolidated mast.</p> <p>Indicated the mast locations on drawings provided</p>	<p>The data provided by Coillte was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>
	<p>Vodafone identified a potential for interference. There is potential for blocked line of sight and increased multipath fading to just one PDH link, between Bellacorick, Kilsallagh MO027 and Shanettra, Crossmolina MO051, details below:</p> <p>Link ID: MO027MO051 A End: Bellacorick, Kilsallagh MO027 IG Easting: 96800 IG Northing: 320200 Dish Azimuth: 45.31 Deg EoN</p> <p>B End: Shanettra, Crossmolina MO051 IG Easting: 106455 IG Northing: 329750 Dish Azimuth: 225.3 Deg EoN</p> <p>Hop Length: 13.58km</p> <p>Line of sight options for Bellacorick are extremely limited due to the terrain. A desktop study of surrounding options has revealed that there are no alternative Line of Sight options to Vodafone structures for Bellacorick, should the link be blocked. Vodafone requested that when planning the final positions for the turbines, that</p>	<p>The data provided by Vodafone was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>

Mobile/Signal Communication Company	Information provided	Action taken
	<p>a clear path back to Shanetra is maintained for Bellacorick through the development. As a guide, an exclusion zone of 30m between the 1st Fresnel zone edge of the radiolink (not 0.6 of 1st Fresnel zone) and the rotor tip needs to be maintained. This conservative threshold allows for any inconsistencies with co-ordinates, particularly older sites such as Bellacorick, the co-ordinate records of which can deviate by up to 30m. Vodafone offered to assess final turbine locations.</p>	
	<p>Link provided by Eircom indicates that it is the only one that may be affected. Final turbine coordinates requested.</p>	<p>The data provided by Eircom was utilised to identify an exclusion corridor and to ensure no wind turbines were located within this corridor.</p>

1.7 Public Consultation

Public consultation is a key element in the environmental impact assessment process and every effort has been made by the project team to provide relevant information to the public to ensure a thorough understanding of the project and provide an opportunity for meaningful comment during the design phase and planning process.

Locally elected representatives were briefed on the proposed project and initial contact was made with local residents near the proposed site in February 2012. In July 2012 a letter issued to elected representatives and local householders advising them of the proposed wind farm development and providing a link to the project website (www.oweninnywindfarm.ie) where further information and the scoping document could be viewed. A copy of the letter is provided in Appendix 1B and Appendix 1C.

In December 2012 two public consultation events were held as indicated in Table 1-6.

Table 1-6: Public Consultation events

Date	Opening Hours	Venue
Tuesday 11 th December	2.00 pm – 9.00 pm	Crossmolina Town Hall, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo
Wednesday 12 th December	2.00 pm – 9.00 pm	Kiltane GAA Community Complex, Bangor Erris, Co. Mayo

The events were advertised in the following local newspapers (Table 1-7). Copies of the advertisements are provided in Appendix 1E.

Table 1-7: Public Consultation Event Advertisement

Newspaper	Advertisement dates
Western people	Thursday 6 th and Tuesday the 11 th December
Mayo News	Thursday 6 th and Tuesday the 11 th December
Connacht Tribune	Thursday 6 th and Friday the 7 th December

The public consultation events were also advertised on Sunday the 9th and Monday the 10th of December on Midwest radio. A total of twenty, forty second advertisements slots were broadcast over the two days.

A3 size posters advertising the event were placed locally in advance of the meetings in shops and other venues frequented by the public in Crossmolina and Bangor Erris.

Letters were issued in advance (30th November 2012) of the public consultation events to households and elected representatives in the general area.

Notifications of the public consultation events were also forwarded for inclusion in Parish notices.

Visitors to the Public Consultation event were provided with a copy of an Information Leaflet providing a description and details on the proposed development and how comments could be made to the project. (A copy of the information leaflet is provided in Appendix 1F).

The information leaflet was sent to all local residents and public representatives after the consultation events.

The consultation events provided information through a number of means:

- Information leaflet outlining the key elements of the project
- Poster display of various aspects of the project including a range of photomontages of the proposed development
- Representatives from the project developers and EIS team to answer any queries and expand on the display and written material provided.

1.7.1 Crossmolina Public Consultation Event

Sixty seven people registered their attendance at the public consultation event in Crossmolina and an estimated additional 10 people availed of the opportunity to obtain information without registering. In general, most people were happy at the level of information provided and the opportunity to comment. Most comments were favourable to the wind farm development mainly for economic reasons. However, a number of queries were raised and are summarised as follows:

Employment opportunities: Many people raised the issue of potential employment opportunities both during the construction and operational phase as there is very little opportunity available in the general area. The likely timing of construction was also queried. An indicative time scale was provided and it was indicated that a limited number of full time jobs would be available during the operational phase of the wind farm but that at peak up to 100 jobs would be created during construction. There would also be some spin-off jobs arising from local materials supply.

Noise: There were queries about possible noise impacts from operational turbines on nearby local residences. It was explained that the turbine layout had been designed so as to reduce the impact of noise at local residences. Noise modelling has indicated that noise levels would be within the Department of the Environment Planning Guidelines noise limits for occupied dwellings. Furthermore, given the distances between the turbines and residences in question (greater than one kilometre), unacceptable noise impacts are not expected.

Visual: All attendees appreciated that there would be some visual impact associated with the development but most did not express concerns. A number of people queried the height of the wind turbines and extent of visual impact from their locality. A large number of viewpoints will be provided from all major publicly accessible directions indicating the extent of visual impact that will arise.

Boundary issues: A number of people raised boundary issues relating to past land transfers with Bord na Móna. Bord na Móna undertook to review their title-ship deeds with the land registry and to meet with interested parties to discuss this issue. Grazing rights on the Bord na Móna lands were also raised.

Grid Connection issues: Some people queried the likely grid connection routes for connection to the national electricity grid. It was indicated that EirGrid had allocated 172 MW of the project which would be connected at Bellacorick existing substation utilising the existing 110 kV overhead lines, which would be upgraded (re-strung with new conductor). The remaining portion of the wind farm would be connected when the proposed EirGrid 400 kV 'Grid West' was constructed. The exact location of the required new 400 kV substation, to which the balance of the wind farm would be connected, and transmission system route was not known at this time as it is the sole responsibility of the grid provider, EirGrid. EirGrid is in the early stages of site and route selection.

Fishing Rights at Lough Dahybaun: One issue raised was continued access to Lough Dahybaun for angling purposes. Bord na Móna indicated that the wind farm development would not lead to any alteration in fishing rights at Lough Dahybaun.

Site access for Community Groups: Part of the existing site is used by the Crossmolina Walking Group and they requested mapping of the proposed access tracks for future use. It was indicated that these would be supplied but that access would be restricted during

the construction phases of the project for safety reasons.

Community Benefit: The issue of possible benefits to the local community was raised. They were advised that a Community Benefit Policy will be implemented by Oweninny Power Limited. This scheme is intended to support community projects. It was further advised that applications could be made once the project became operational and that an open and transparent consultation would take place between the development partners and community representatives to explore the most appropriate community benefit schemes. A Visitor Centre will also be developed as part of the Community Benefit to the area

Planning Process: There were general queries about the submission date of the application and the expected commencement date of the project should planning permission be granted.

1.7.2 Bangor Erris Public Consultation Event

Forty people registered their attendance at the public consultation event held in Bangor Erris in Kiltane GAA Community Centre. Again the majority of people were supportive of the proposed wind farm development in terms of the potential to generate employment in the local area. Potential noise issues were raised by a small number of people. Other similar issues included boundary and land rights queries and grid connection issues associated with renewable energy developments in the entire district. Participants were in general satisfied at the level of information provided.

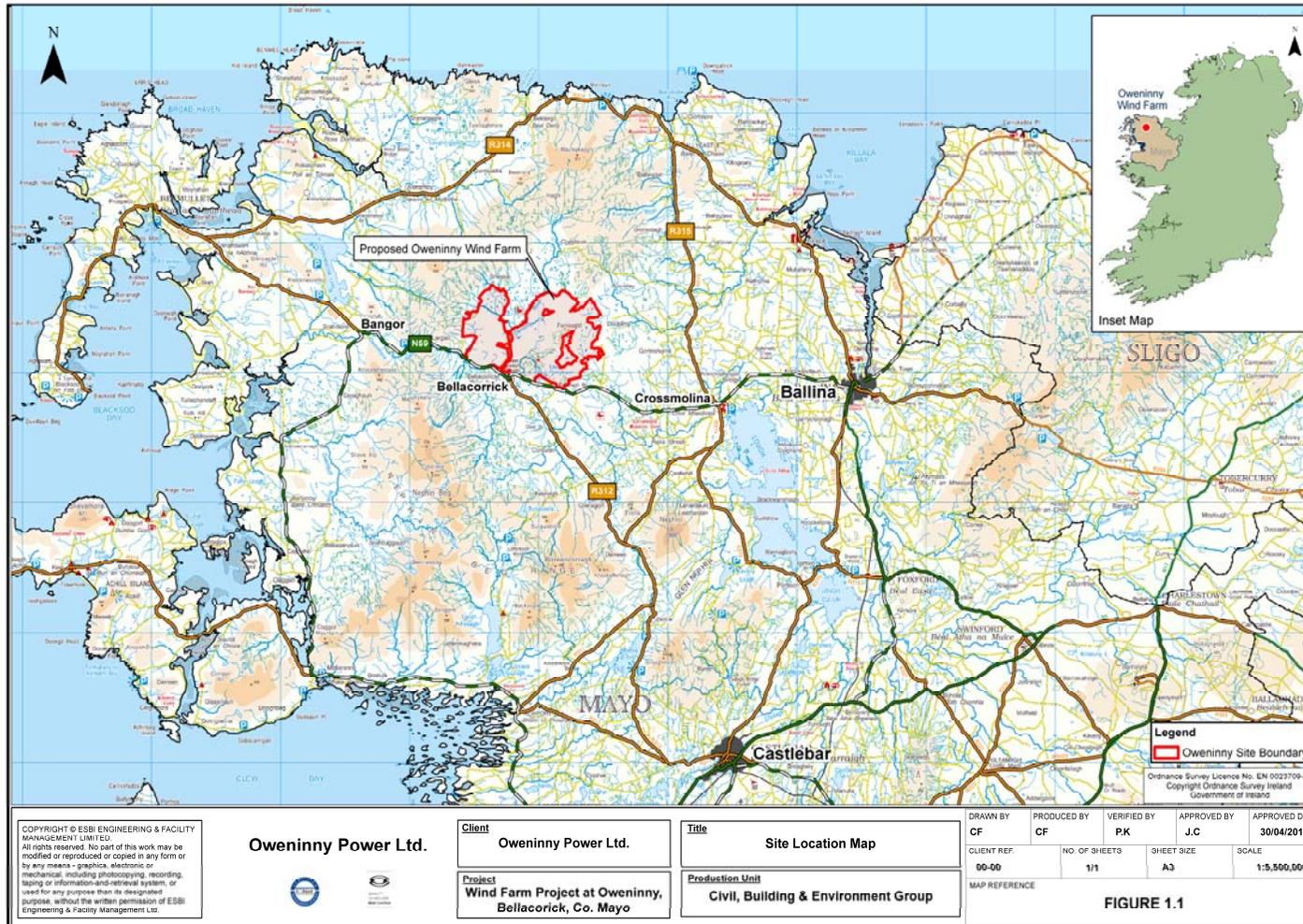


Figure 1-1: Oweninny Site Location Map