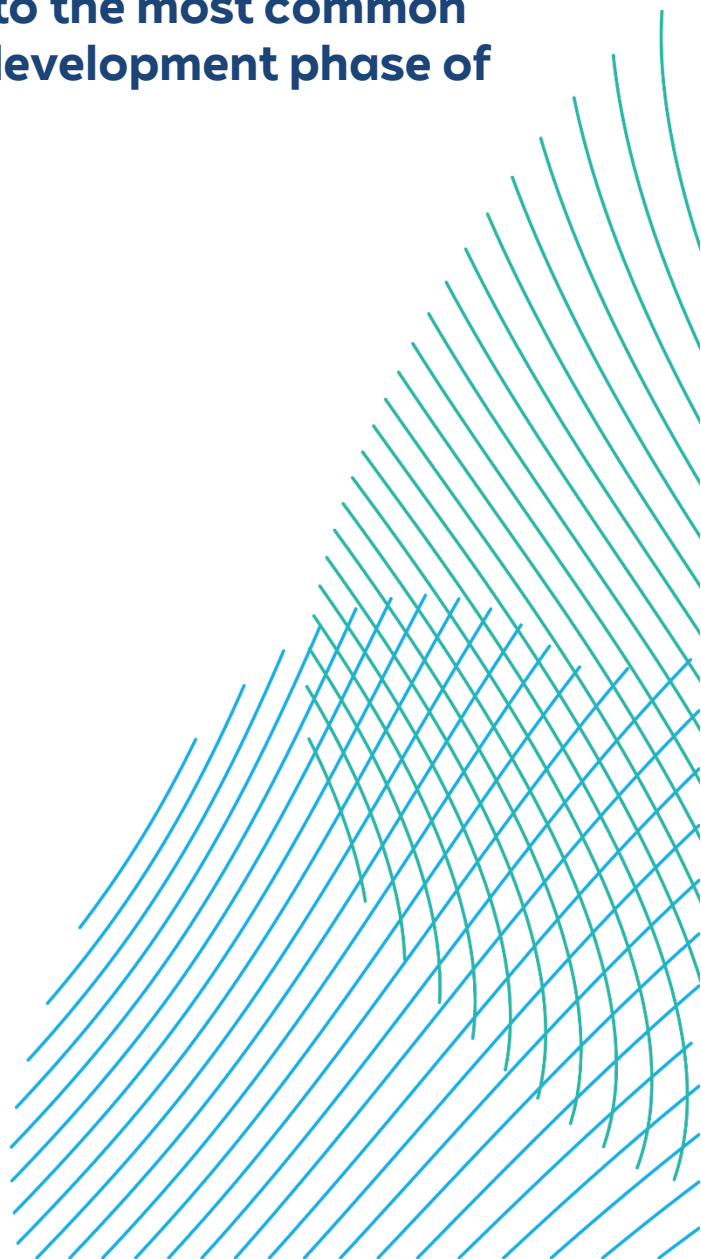




Castlegarden Wind Farm – Frequently asked questions

Please find below responses to the most common questions raised during the development phase of Castlegarden.



Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

When will we see the final turbine layout?.....	2
What impact will the wind farm have on the health of all neighbours (including animals)? ..	2
What are the impacts on flora and fauna?	3
What are the impacts to aquatic life?	3
What is shadow flicker? How does this impact on health?	4
What happens after the operational period?.....	4
What are the turbines made from and are the turbines recyclable?	4
What amount of energy and CO2 is involved in making the turbines?	5
Will all correspondence be submitted as part of the planning process?	6
Do wind turbines kill birds?	6
When will the EIAR be available?	6
Why was the Castlegarden / Raheenroche area chosen as a potential area for a wind farm?	6
How was our area chosen for a windfarm?	7
What level of noise will come from these turbines?	7
What will the level of infrasound be coming from these turbines? What impact will this have on health of all neighbours?.....	8
What will be the impacts on local infrastructure and use of local roads?	9
How much is RWE investing in Castlegarden wind farm?.....	9
What will be the impacts on water and sources of our water supply? Will there be any flooding risks?.....	9
Are there provisions to prevent water getting heavily silted?	10
What are the impacts on mobile phone / mobile broadband / TV reception?.....	10
What will the impacts on tourism be?.....	10
What impact will the project have on the property prices?.....	11
Where does the electricity go that is generated on the wind farm?	12
Is the electricity grid restricted in how much wind energy it can take?	12
Why can't we just have offshore wind instead? Do we need onshore wind?	12
What Business Rates will be paid to the County Council?	13
What benefits are there for the local community?.....	13
How much could the Community Benefit Fund be paid every year?.....	14
Who Will Administer the Fund?.....	14
What Happens the Fund after 15 years?	15

When will we see the final turbine layout?

Answer

Over the past months, we have carried out early stage feasibility and constraints studies in order to establish whether the Castlegarden/ Raheenroche site would be a suitable location for a wind farm. Following a detailed review of the preliminary findings, no problematic sensitivities were revealed, and we believe that the site has the capacity to accommodate 5 No. turbines.

A desktop constraints study has been completed which has allowed for the development of a proposed preliminary layout. Further layout iterations will emerge as we progress through these detailed environmental, ecological and engineering studies, the Environmental Impact Assessment and the community consultation process.

What impact will the wind farm have on the health of all neighbours (including animals)?

Answer

A detailed and systematic assessment of the potential impacts on Population and Human Health as a result of the wind farm is undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Development. The findings of this assessment and details of related measures proposed in order to protect the surrounding environment from any potentially negative effects on Human Health are available for review within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which is submitted as part of the Planning Application.

There is no empirical evidence to suggest that the existence of a wind farm has an impact on human health ([Common Concerns about Wind Power - 2nd edition Centre for Sustainable Energy, June 2017](#))

RWE design wind farms that optimise location of turbines such that they both capture the maximum energy possible whilst also following best practice guidelines. (See also responses to FAQs on Shadow Flicker, Noise and Ecology).

In Ireland, the HSE published a position paper in 2017 on wind turbines and public health and concluded that “published scientific evidence is inconsistent and does not support adverse effects of wind turbines on health” (HSE Public Health Medicine Environment and Health Group (2017) Position paper on wind turbines and public health.) Available [online](#). The HSE does however recommend adequate setback distances and meaningful engagement with local communities to address public concern.

A number of studies have been carried out in this area including a study undertaken in North America in 2014 (Knopper et al (June 2014) Wind turbines and human health. Published in Frontiers in public health, available [here](#), reviewed the evidence from 60 peer-reviewed scientific articles on the topic. The study found that the available evidence suggests

that EMF, shadow flicker, low frequency noise and infrasound from wind turbines are not likely to affect human health. They noted that some studies found that audible noise can cause annoyance to some people, however when sited properly with adequate setbacks to alleviate annoyance from noise, wind turbines are not related to adverse health.

Studies on health effects from wind turbine noise have also been carried out by national health bodies such as Health Canada (Health Canada (2016) Exposure to wind turbine noise: Perceptual responses and reported health effects, available [online](#), and the National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia (NHMRC (2015) Expert review of the evidence on wind farms and human health, available [here](#). Both studies found no consistent evidence that wind turbine noise was related to self-reported human health effects.

What are the impacts on flora and fauna?

Answer

A detailed and systematic assessment of potential impacts on Ecology as a result of the proposal is being undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development. The potential effects of the proposed development on avifauna, terrestrial and aquatic and flora and fauna during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases will be assessed. The findings of this assessment and details of mitigation measures proposed in order to protect the surrounding environment from any potentially negative impacts on Ecology will be available for public viewing within the EIAR which will be submitted as part of the Planning Application.

Under the European Habitats Directive, the proposed development is subject to the Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment (AA) Process. An AA Screening and a Natura Impact Statement will be prepared in accordance with the European Commission guidance document Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and the Department of the Environment's Guidance on the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (December 2009, amended February 2010).

What are the impacts to aquatic life?

Answer

As part of the EIA process any sensitive aquatic ecosystems within, adjacent to, and down gradient of the proposed project study area will be assessed. The findings of this assessment and details of mitigation measures proposed in order to protect the surrounding environment from any potentially negative impacts on aquatic ecology will be available for review by the public within the EIAR which will be submitted as part of the Planning Application.

What is shadow flicker? How does this impact on health?

Answer

Shadow flicker is the name given to the phenomenon that could be caused when the sun is behind a rotating turbine blade and casts a moving shadow over an opening in a building such as a window or glass door, creating a flickering effect within the building as sunlight is being blocked and unblocked every couple of seconds by the rotating blade. Modern turbine technology allows for constant monitoring of the conditions that cause shadow flicker to occur and can therefore control the operation of the turbine to eliminate any impact. The 2019 Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines propose that future projects should be conditioned to prohibit any shadow flicker from occurring.

The proposed wind farm will be designed to utilise these advancements in turbine technology to ensure that the effect of shadow flicker is eliminated and will not affect any inhabited properties.

What happens after the operational period?

Answer

Electricity generation technologies will have changed dramatically within the lifespan of the planning permission terms. After the operational period, a wind farm may look to be repowered (again depending on new technologies) and would have to apply for a new planning permission or the project will be decommissioned.

When a wind farm is decommissioned, the turbines are removed, and the land/site is restored to its original state. The wind turbine parts are removed from site for onward reuse or recycling. The main constituent material of a wind turbine is steel which is the most recycled metal worldwide.

It is a condition of every planning permission for a wind farm that a bond is put in place with the local planning authority which covers the cost of decommissioning the wind turbines and site restoration. The developer is not authorised to start construction of the wind farm until this bond is in place.

What are the turbines made from and are the turbines recyclable?

Answer

92% of the turbine is made of metal (steel, aluminium, copper and alloys) all of which are all very recyclable and valuable at end of life. Electronics and electrics are recyclable, and the fluids and lubricants used are disposed of according to relevant disposal guidance for each fluid.

The blades themselves are made primarily from fibre glass (3.9% of the remainder of the turbine is fibreglass (glass carbon composite) and 3.6% are polymer materials) and these

can be repurposed or recycled in a number of ways. The blades can be repurposed in sections, such as in engineering projects as part of powerline structures or towers, or roofs for emergency or affordable housing. Blade sections can be used to make bicycle sheds and playgrounds.

The fibreglass itself can be recycled by being crushed and used again to make fibreglass materials. Crushed fibreglass can be used as “feedstock” that is mixed with other components to form a new material such as composite manhole covers, waterproof flooring material, warehouse pallets, picnic tables, fencing, even sea walls and parking bollards.

What amount of energy and CO₂ is involved in making the turbines?

Answer

The EIAR for the proposed development will include a detailed analysis of the Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) losses and savings associated with the proposed development. The model used for calculating CO₂ losses is based on the ‘Calculating carbon savings from wind farms on Scottish peat lands’ methodology, established in 2008 (and updated in 2011) by scientists at the University of Aberdeen and the Macaulay Institute, with support from the Rural and Environment Research and Analysis Directorate of the Scottish Government, Science Policy and Co-ordination Division. The Macaulay Institute model can be used to calculate all potential CO₂ expected to be generated by a proposed wind farm, associated with the manufacture, transportation and erection of turbines, including felling of forestry and the removal of vegetation.

The CO₂ offset, or savings, associated with the proposed wind farm will also be calculated, based on the rated capacity of the proposal (in MW), the capacity or load factor which takes into account the intermittent nature of the wind, the availability of wind turbines and array losses etc., the carbon load in grams per kWh (kilowatt hour) of electricity generated and distributed via the national grid. The carbon load figure is provided annually by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. This calculation will show how many tonnes of CO₂ will be displaced / saved per annum as a result of operation of the proposed wind farm.

Overall, for the majority of wind farms, the amount of CO₂ that is lost to the atmosphere as a result of their construction and operation is offset by the CO₂ savings made by the wind farm within approximately its first year of operation. A 2017 review of multiple studies on wind turbine lifecycles found that “Published studies on typical modern wind turbines (capacities of 0.5 MW to 4.5 MW) show the Energy Payback Time ranges from as little as three-and-a-half months to just over ten months.” (Centre for Sustainable Energy. Common concerns about wind power. [Second Edition](#))

Will all correspondence be submitted as part of the planning process?

Answer

As part of the community engagement process, we will summarise the results of communications with the local community and the team. Questions asked, meetings held, correspondence received and replied to, will be part of the submission.

Do wind turbines kill birds?

Answer

Studies have reported the numbers of birds reported to be killed by turbines is far lower than deaths from other causes such as predation, aircraft and collision with structures such as communication towers, power lines and buildings (Erickson et al., 2005, Sovacool, 2013, Tabassum et al., 2014).

In the US a study by the American Bird Conservancy modelled the death rate of birds for 2020. Their study states that cats killed over 300 times more birds than turbines.

For any onshore development in Ireland it is typical to carry out two years of bird surveys before an application for planning permission for a wind farm is made. These surveys inform the layout and design of the project. They are also an essential part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

When will the EIAR be available?

Answer

The EIAR will accompany the planning application and will be available to the public to review from the start of the public consultation process, which begins after the planning application is submitted. The information gathered during our community consultation will also be fed directly back into the EIAR to further inform the final design of the wind farm.

Why was the Castlegarden / Raheenroche area chosen as a potential area for a wind farm?

Answer

The area was chosen for several reasons. The land is in an area designated in the Kilkenny County Development Plan Wind Energy Strategy as “open to consideration”. The study area does not contain areas designated as European Protected Natura 2000 sites – it is not a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA) and does not contain any nationally designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). It has available lands to accommodate a wind farm while keeping an appropriate distance from houses in line with Government guidelines and has good wind speeds.

How was our area chosen for a windfarm?

Answer

When choosing a potential area for siting a wind farm RWE go through a step by step process to decide if an area is viable.

1. Firstly we assess the area of wind potential around the country using SEAI's (Sustainable Energy Authority Of Ireland) Wind Atlas for Ireland.
2. Then we review the County Development Plan to identify those areas which have been zoned strategically for wind development by the County Council / local planning authority. Having regards to the county development plan we prepare an evaluation of the landscape and its sensitivity for wind energy developments.
3. Next we identify suitable lands in the area large enough to accommodate a wind farm, while maintaining an appropriate distance from houses in line with national guidance and best practice.
4. We investigate if there are any Natura 2000 sites or national environmentally designated sites in the area, which are identified and avoided.
5. We then integrate the areas identified in the above steps with information regarding accessibility to electricity transmission and distribution grids.
6. After these initial investigations, a potential area for development is identified and the next step is to identify 'constraints'. A constraint is a limiting factor on selection of a site such as nearby houses, cultural heritage, environmental or technical / physical factors (mountains / rivers / lakes/ geology, etc.).
7. These are then mapped and the remaining parcels of land that could potentially accommodate a wind farm are identified.

What level of noise will come from these turbines?

Answer

It will be the duty of RWE Renewables to demonstrate during the planning process that noise levels from our proposed development will not adversely affect local residents. The studies completed as part of the EIA will be used to design the project so noise levels at nearby residential homes do not exceed national planning guidelines.

The 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006) set out strict limits for the control of noise from wind energy developments to prevent undue noise pollution and to prevent any impacts on health.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) published "Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines" in December 2019 and these draft guidelines were under public consultation until 19th February 2020. At the time of writing, the 2019

Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines are not yet finalised and may be subject to further change on foot of completion of the public consultation process, so the relevant guidelines remain those published in 2006.

Should the revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines be finalised in advance of a planning decision being made on the proposed development the project can and will comply with any revised noise requirements by implementing mitigation by design through turbine selection and use of the flexible built-in turbine control systems.

What will the level of infrasound be coming from these turbines? What impact will this have on health of all neighbours?

Answer

Infrasound, sometimes referred to as low-frequency sound, is generally regarded as sound that is lower in frequency than 20 Hertz. Infrasound is a frequently present element of the natural and man-made environment. As noted in the Environmental Protection Agency document 'Guidance Note for Noise Assessment of Wind Turbine Operations at EPA Licensed Sites (NG3)' (2011), there is no empirical evidence that infrasound emanating from a wind farm causes ill health.

Levels of infrasound associated with wind turbine operations are particularly low and no higher than is experienced in everyday settings with no wind turbines present. Accordingly, no adverse health effects, loss of sleep or adverse effects on livestock are anticipated.

The overwhelming consensus in peer reviewed scientific literature is that there is no sound evidence to indicate infrasound caused by wind turbines creates harmful health impacts. In 2016, the Ministry for the Environment, Climate and Energy of the Federal State of Baden-Wuerttemberg in Germany published an investigation into infrasound produced from wind turbines.

This report entitled "Low Frequency Noise including Infrasound from Wind Turbines and Other Sources" presents the details of a measurement project which ran from 2013. In this study, researchers measured infrasound levels at distances of between 150 metres and 700 metres from six individual wind turbines when the turbines were switched on and when they were switched off. The infrasound levels they detected at a distance from the turbine of between 650 metres and 700 metres were the same whether the turbine was on or not. Among their conclusions they found:

- The levels of infrasound from road traffic are significantly higher than close to wind turbines;
- The highest level of infrasound recorded in the project was inside a car travelling at 130km/h;
- Infrasound generated by washing machines, heating systems in residential buildings and fridges were comparable to that of a wind farm. In fact, during the spin cycle, the

washing machine generated more infrasound than any of the wind turbines even at distances of 150 metres.

What will be the impacts on local infrastructure and use of local roads?

Answer

The nature of the proposed development is that it would result in increased traffic movements during its construction phase, but negligible increases in traffic during its operational phases. A traffic impact assessment will be completed and a proposed traffic management plan (TMP) will be prepared and will form part of the EIAR. Should this project attain planning permission, further consultation with local authorities and roads engineers will be completed. Once consultation with local authorities is completed a finalised TMP will be established including designated delivery routes, monitoring and inspection programmes and design upgrade of roads as required. Should the project attain planning permission, advance notice of traffic disruption and diversions would be advertised and communicated locally ahead of commencement of construction works. Primary commuting routes should not be impacted as part of the TMP.

How much is RWE investing in Castlegarden wind farm?

Answer

Delivery of the Castlegarden Wind Farm project would represent a total capital investment of around €30 million by RWE. It will also lead to tangible benefits to the local community such as employment opportunities during the construction and operation phases, payments into a Community Benefit Fund and indirect benefits to the wider community from annual operational business rates generated from the wind farm and paid to Kilkenny County Council.

What will be the impacts on water and sources of our water supply? Will there be any flooding risks?

Answer

As part of the EIA process, a hydrological and hydrogeological consultant will complete a comprehensive investigation and evaluation of the surface and ground water systems specific to the site and surrounding catchments. This will also include for the assessment of flood risks.

In general, irrespective of the direction of groundwater flow, the hydrological assessment for the EIAR assumes that all properties located around the proposed site have a groundwater well and the appropriate measures against any potential effects on these or any water supply will be proposed to be employed on this basis.

Are there provisions to prevent water getting heavily silted?

Answer

As part of the EIA process, baseline silt levels will be established relative to the appropriate catchments. A proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be prepared and will form part of the EIAR. During the construction phase, a robust Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be implemented, including detailed design implementation and monitoring programme to prevent siltation. The detailed CEMP will be reviewed, and approved, by the relevant authorities including Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) in advance of the commencement of construction as part of the planning review process.

What are the impacts on mobile phone / mobile broadband / TV reception?

Answer

A wind farm can be designed to avoid interference with signals from the equipment used by mobile telecommunications operators or with local television reception.

Scoping and consultation with national and regional broadcasters will be undertaken as part of the EIA process. This consultation together with a robust assessment completed as part of the EIA ensures that the proposed layout does not propose turbines within areas requested to be left clear by consulted telecoms utilities and broadcasters.

Subject to planning approval and prior to the commencement of construction, a follow up pre-construction telecommunications survey would be conducted to assess communication infrastructure in further detail, including reception and coverage locally. This will ensure that any necessary mitigation measures as identified and proposed in the EIAR as part of the assessment are put in place to avoid any potentially negative impacts on telecommunications .

What will the impacts on tourism be?

Answer

There is no evidence that wind farms negatively affect tourism. With regard to recreation and tourism assets in the area, no direct or indirect negative effects are expected during the construction or operation of the proposed development.

The EIA report will include a comprehensive analysis of tourism in Kilkenny in the context of Fáilte Ireland's Guidelines on the Treatment of Tourism in an Environmental Impact Assessment.

A Fáilte Ireland survey found that of 1,000 domestic and foreign tourists who holidayed in Ireland during 2012, over half of tourists said that they had seen a wind turbine while travelling around the country. Of this number of tourists, 21% claimed wind turbines had a negative impact on the landscape. However, 32% said that it enhanced the surrounding

landscape, while 47% said that it made no difference to the landscape. Almost 75% of respondents claim that potentially greater numbers of wind farms would either have no impact on their likelihood to visit or have a strong or fairly strong positive impact on future visits to the island of Ireland. (Fáilte Ireland Newsletter 2012/No.1 'Visitor Attitudes on the Environment: Wind Farms – Update on 2007 Research').

BiGGAR Economics undertook an independent study in Scotland in 2016, entitled 'Wind Farms and Tourism Trends in Scotland'. Overall, the study stated that there is no negative relationship between the development of onshore wind farms and tourism employment within the Scottish economy, at local authority level, or areas immediately surrounding wind farm development.

What impact will the project have on the property prices?

Answer

An enormous amount of research, some of which is summarised below, has been carried out in this area.

There are no known empirical studies carried out on the impacts of wind farms on property prices in Ireland. There are however a number of studies carried out in the UK and the US.

A major piece of [research](#) was published by Renewable UK and the Centre for Economics and Business Research which looked at more than a million house sales from 1995 to 2013 and compared the 82,000 which took place within five kilometres of a wind farm with the others. It found no indication that the presence of a wind farm had any effect on house prices.

In April 2014, the London School of Economics Spatial Economic Research Centre published a report based on 125,000 house sales in England and Wales between 2000 and 2012. The [study](#) found an average reduction in the value of the house of between 5 and 6 per cent within 2 km of very large wind farms.

This study obviously disagrees substantially with the findings from Renewable UK and the Centre for Economic and Business Research and so this led to further research by the Scottish Climate Exchange which was [published in Scotland in 2016](#).

This Scottish research looked to estimate the impact on house prices from wind farm development. Its conclusion suggested that there is no evidence of a consistent negative effect on house prices in the vicinity of wind farm developments. The study included the analysis of over 500,000 property sales in Scotland between 1990 and 2014.

Again, no evidence of a negative impact from wind turbines on house prices was found and suggests that "generally speaking the effect is either positive...or not distinguishable from zero".

It is understandable that for people who do not like wind turbines, they will not want to live near them. There are however other people who do not mind or even like them and are

happy to live in a community which receives some benefit from the development which can provide funding for their children's schools, local clubs and amenities etc, but the evidence supports the view that wind turbines do not cause house prices in the surrounding area to fall.

Where does the electricity go that is generated on the wind farm?

Answer

Every wind farm has an electricity substation. This collects the electricity from the turbines on the wind farm and is connected to the electricity distribution or transmission system which is operated by ESB Networks or Eirgrid and serves all consumers of electricity in the all-island electricity market.

As outlined in the SEAI report "[Energy in Ireland – 2021 Report](#)", 36% of Ireland's electricity was generated by wind energy in 2020 - it is the second greatest source of electricity generation in Ireland after natural gas.

Is the electricity grid restricted in how much wind energy it can take?

Answer

The electricity transmission system is operated by Eirgrid. One of Eirgrid's main responsibilities is to ensure that the Irish power system operates in a safe and secure manner.

Synchronous generation such as coal and gas produce the same amount of electricity all the time. Non-synchronous generation such as wind and solar produces varying amounts of electricity depending on the resource available.

In recent years [Eirgrid](#) has been working to increase the amount of non-synchronous generation on our power system. Eirgrid has already increased levels of renewable generation on the system from 50% to 65% and aims to increase this to 75% over the coming years. This will help Ireland reach its target of producing 80% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

Greater levels of interconnection (e.g. the Celtic Interconnector which will link Ireland and France) will also help to keep the Irish power system [secure and stable](#), and support further development of renewable resources

Why can't we just have offshore wind instead? Do we need onshore wind?

Answer

The urgent need to respond to climate change means that we'll need to use as many renewable resources as quickly as possible, including both onshore and offshore wind. In order to meet the target, set out in the [Climate Action Plan](#) of 80% of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030, we need significant levels of additional renewable energy capacity

to be developed. While offshore wind will play a part in these 2030 targets (rising from 25MW in 2022 to 7,000MW in 2030), onshore wind is also fundamental to the decarbonisation of the electricity market in Ireland.

Critical to achieving this plan, and as set out in the Climate Action Plan, there is a need to increase the installed capacity of onshore wind in Ireland from over 4,000MW to 8,000MW. The development of new onshore wind farms are crucial as we move away from our reliance on fossil fuels and towards the electrification of transport, heat and other areas.

Currently, onshore wind is the lowest cost renewable energy technology and as such will form an important part of the renewable energy mix.

The CAP21 commits Ireland to a legally binding target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2050 and an emissions reduction of 51% by 2030.

What Business Rates will be paid to the County Council?

Answer

A significant wider benefit of the proposed Castlegarden Wind Farm would be the annual business rates contribution paid to Kilkenny County Council (based on the installed capacity of the project) to be paid for the full operational life of the wind farm. These business rates will significantly benefit the wider local economy and could represent an annual contribution of approximately €18,000 per MW per annum to the County, equating to approximately €450,000 annually.

What benefits are there for the local community?

Answer

In 2020 the Government launched the [Renewable Electricity Support Scheme \(RESS\)](#) for communities living close to onshore wind farms. A key feature of RESS is that all renewable electricity generation projects ("RESS Projects") must establish a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the local community.

RESS outlines that for every megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity generated, each wind farm project will contribute €2 to a Community Benefit Fund every year (as defined under the RESS2 T&Cs) of the project for the full duration of the RESS support, typically 15 years. This fund will be under the control of the local community. An average size wind farm project (20MW) in Ireland can generate in the region of 60,000 MWh per year which would result in a community benefit fund of €120,000 per year.

The current Government RESS Guidelines (Terms and Conditions for the Second Competition under the Renewable Energy Support Scheme RESS2 October 2021) stipulate that the Community Benefit Funds generated will be distributed as per the guidelines which are as follows:

- A. “In respect of Onshore Wind RESS 2 Projects, a minimum of €1,000 shall be paid to each household located within a distance of a 1 kilometre radius from the RESS Project”
- B. “A minimum of 40% of the funds shall be paid to not-for-profit community enterprises whose primary focus or aim is the promotion of initiatives towards the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 4 (Quality Education), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 13 (Climate Action)”
- C. “A maximum of 10% of the funds may be spent on administration. This is to ensure successful outcomes and good governance of the Community Benefit Fund. The Generator may supplement this spend on administration from its own funds should it be deemed necessary to do so”
- D. “The balance of the funds shall be spent on initiatives successful in the annual application process, as proposed by clubs and societies and similar not-for-profit entities, and in respect of Onshore Wind RESS2 Projects, on “near neighbour payments” for households located outside a distance of 1 kilometre from the RESS 2 Project but within a distance of 2 kilometres from such RESS 2 Project”

How much could the Community Benefit Fund be paid every year?

Answer

The proposed wind farm in Castlegarden has a potential installed capacity of approximately 25MW. If future terms and conditions are similar to RESS2 requirements, this could mean that between €145,000 and €160,000 is paid into a community fund each year (based on the amount of electricity that could be generated by the wind farm every year). The amount of funding will be dependent on the final capacity of the wind farm and the amount of electricity generated by the turbines when operational.

Who Will Administer the Fund?

Answer

Each fund needs to be administered transparently and any administration costs will be paid out of the Community Benefit Fund.

The handbook for Community Benefit funds – “Renewable Energy Scheme Good Practice Principals for Community Benefit Funds” gives guidance for developers and communities about how the CBF should be organised and run. RWE will advocate the use of a third party to administer the fund and the Government has appointed the SEAI as the Funds Support, Oversight and Compliance body and as such has a key role in supporting the successful delivery of Funds.

These [guidelines](#) could change as we go from RESS1 and RESS 2 and any renewable energy support schemes going forward.

RWE supports the development of a funding process that puts decision making into the hands of local communities. This means that a panel of local community representatives would form a committee to decide how to invest the Community Benefit Fund in a variety of projects that could benefit residents, local businesses and the community including skills development and creating job opportunities, tourism initiatives and area regeneration projects.

What Happens the Fund after 15 years?

Answer

In addition to the 15 years of Community Benefit Funds RWE will commit to maintaining a community benefit fund for the full lifetime of the windfarm (up to 35 years) in line with best practice and guidelines.