

Lyrenacarriga wind farm

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Website: www.lyrewindfarm.com

Email: lyre@innogy.com

Telephone: 056 771 5782

The proposed Lyrenacarriga (Lyre) windfarm, is being developed by Curns Energy Ltd, a joint venture between RWE Renewables Ireland (formerly innogy Renewables Ireland) and Highfield Energy. The proposed development is situated in the vicinity of Lyrencarriga townland and surrounding areas in Co. Waterford and Co. Cork.

PROJECT FACTS

Location:	5km SE of Tallow, Co. Waterford and approx. 15kms NW of Youghal, Co. Cork
Site area:	Approx. 799 hectares
Elevation:	Ranges between 140 – 210 metres above ordnance datum
No of turbines:	17 turbines
Installed capacity:	Between 60 megawatts (MW) and 85 MW
Turbine height:	Up to 150 meters
Set back from properties:	A minimum distance of 700 meters has been applied
Investment:	Expected to be in the region of €75 - 100 million
Timeline:	Curns Energy Ltd intends to submit a planning application to An Bord Pleanála in Autumn 2020.

How will Lyrenacarriga Wind Farm benefit the community?

Community Benefit Fund

Should Lyrencarriga Wind Farm be consented, it has the potential to provide significant additional investment into community projects that will benefit local residents and businesses.

Following the publication of the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS), it is anticipated that a community fund could be in the region of €6,000 per MW of installed capacity per annum. This means that a wind farm of 60MW-85MW capacity could result in a fund upward of €360,000 per year for the local community, subject to the final installed capacity of the wind farm. This represents a dependable source of income for the communities local to Lyrencarriga.

RWE Renewables Ireland supports the development of a funding process that puts decision making on what funds are spent where in the hands of local people. The flexibility of the investment that could come from Lyrencarriga Wind Farm would mean that a panel of local community representatives could decide how to invest the income in a variety of projects that will benefit residents, local businesses and the community as a whole including creating job opportunities and skills development, tourism initiatives and area regeneration projects.

Potential community shared ownership

A further potential income stream could come via RWE Renewables Ireland offering the local community the opportunity to participate in a community shared ownership scheme whereby they could invest in the wind farm in return for a share of future revenue.

Supply chain opportunities & jobs

During the construction phase of the wind farm, there will be supply chain opportunities for local businesses leading to an increase in local investment and job opportunities. Prior to construction starting, RWE Renewables Ireland will award the principle contract for Civil Balance of Plant supply and installation of the turbines, and the Electrical Balance of Plant contract. Once these main contracts have been placed, there will be potential opportunities for supply chain companies in the region to tender for subcontracts. The types of businesses that could benefit from this expenditure is wide ranging, and is likely to include: traffic management; materials supply; plant hire; fencing, fuel, security, waste management, signing and lighting, telecommunications, drainage, catering and hotel and B&B businesses.

Payment of business rates to local council

A significant wider benefit of the proposed Lyrenacarriga Wind Farm is the business rates contribution estimated to be in excess of €800,000.00 per annum for the full life of the wind farm. These business rates will be paid locally and contributions will significantly benefit the wider local economy.

Why onshore wind?

The continued deployment of onshore wind, which represents the cheapest form of new, large-scale electricity generation, will be key to meeting and facilitating decarbonisation at the cheapest cost to consumers. A January 2019 report, *Wind for a Euro: Cost-benefit analysis of wind energy in Ireland 2000-2020*, from energy and utilities consultants Baringa, reveals that the net cost of wind energy for Irish consumers amounts to less than €1 per person per year since 2000.

Ireland is going through a major energy transition. It is the Government's intention that by 2050 our homes, cars, workplaces, shops, schools and leisure centres will be powered by electricity from renewables. This transition will need every person in every community in Ireland to play their part. Communities that host a renewable energy project – onshore wind, offshore wind, biomass, battery storage, hydro or solar – are playing a very important role in this transition.

With the second highest wind resource in Europe, Ireland's onshore wind has been deemed critical to leading the country towards the legally binding targets. The move away from fossil fuels could also benefit Ireland's energy security, encouraging national generation for national energy consumption. This in turn reduces spend on imported fuels. In 2018, wind energy saved Ireland 3.149 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions and prevented more than €432 million of imported foreign fossil fuels (SEAI 2019, "Energy in Ireland").

The Department of Climate Change, Action & Environment (DCCAE) reported in their 'Fourth Progress Report on the National Renewable Energy Action Plan' December 2017 that Ireland would achieve 13% of its 16% RES target by 2020. SEAI in their report 'Ireland's Energy Targets – Progress, Ambition & Impacts' (April 2016) estimates that Ireland's inability to achieve its 2020 renewable energy targets will result in fines of between €65 million and €130 million per percentage shortfall on its overall binding target after 2020 until it meets its targets.

The Climate Action Plan, published in June 2019, is the Government's plan to give Irish people a cleaner, safer and more sustainable future. The Plan sets out actions across every sector which will ensure we meet our future climate commitments. A key part of the Plan is a move to 70% renewable electricity by 2030, a measure which will be driven by the introduction of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme ('RESS'). In August 2020, the DCCAE published and submitted a revised *National Energy and Climate Plan* (NECP) 2021 to 2030 for Ireland to the European Commission. The revised NECP formalises the targets set out in the Climate Action Plan. The DCCAE have also committed to further revising the NECP to incorporate and formalise Ireland's target to achieve a 7% annual average reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2021 and 2030, committed to in Ireland's *Programme for Government, Our Shared Future*, published in July 2020.

As a responsible company and developer, RWE Renewables Ireland is committed to ensuring that the communities that host our renewable energy schemes are able to share in the Ireland-wide economic and environmental benefits that these projects can deliver, as well as more specific local benefits. These include countrywide reduced reliance on fossil fuels and improved air quality and more local funding to spend on local buildings and projects along with more jobs and employment opportunities.

Why here?

Local Policy- County Development Plans

The proposed development is located within the administrative boundaries of both Waterford County Council and Cork County Council. With 11 turbines, substation and associated infrastructure being proposed within County Waterford and 6 no. turbines and associated infrastructure being located in County Cork. Accordingly, analysis and review of both the Waterford County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 (as extended) and the Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020 (as varied) is considered pertinent in demonstrating the appropriate nature of the proposed development within both jurisdictions.

The section of the site in Co. Waterford is located within a 'Preferred' area for wind energy development, as designated by the Wind Energy Strategy as part of Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 (as extended). The section of the site located in Co. Cork is located within an area 'Open to Consideration' for wind energy development, as designated by the Wind Energy Strategy as part of Cork County Development Plan 2014.

Every wind farm development that might be proposed in these areas will have to be the subject to a very detailed Environmental Impact Assessment, and will be subject to the full rigour of the planning process. The Lyrenacarriga Wind Farm proposal was chosen to be developed at this location following a detailed and plan-led screening of Co. Waterford and East Co. Cork.

Other important considerations

The site is not located within a Natura 2000 site, meaning that it is not located within a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA).

The site has good road access for turbine component delivery and good access to national grid infrastructure, with capacity available to connect the site.

The majority of the proposed wind farm site is currently utilised for commercial forestry, with other areas used for agriculture. These land uses will be able to continue in conjunction with a wind farm development at the site.