



Páirc Ghaoithe
na Gaillimhe
Galway Wind Park



Sustainability Impact Report

November 2016

Contents

Project partners	2
About the project	3
About this report	3
Foreword	5
Galway Wind Park: Impact Summary	6
Economic impacts	8
Employing a local supply chain	8
A word from local suppliers	10
Calculating the contribution to jobs and wealth across Ireland	12
Galway Harbour playing a key role	15
Social impacts	16
Engaging with the local community	16
Investing in a lasting legacy: The Galway Wind Park Community Fund	16
Community sponsorship during construction	17
Ensuring a safe workplace	18
Minimising visual impacts	19
Environmental impacts	20
Awarding best practice	20
Generating carbon savings	21
Powering green energy	21
Environmental benefits of a local supply chain	22
Using materials sustainably	22
Local walking trails and access for anglers	22
Ecological education	23
Benefitting biodiversity	24
Minimising waste on site	24
Setting the benchmark for best-in-class	25

About SSE



SSE's purpose is to provide the energy people need in a reliable and sustainable way. We are Ireland's largest provider of wind power and the third largest energy generator by capacity in the all-island Single Energy Market. We operate over 1,800MW of generation capacity, of which almost 550MW is generated at our 25 wind farms across the island of Ireland.

In 2015, SSE commissioned Ireland's newest and one of its cleanest power plants, the 464MW CCGT (combined cycle gas turbine) power station at Great Island, Co. Wexford.

Since 2011, SSE has contributed over €4bn to the Irish economy, or around €2m a day - creating jobs, sustaining employment, driving competition and greening our economy.

SSE's retail brand, SSE Airtricity, is the second largest energy provider on the island of Ireland, supplying greener electricity and natural gas to around 800,000 homes and businesses.

At SSE, we want all of our actions and decisions to be ethical, responsible and balanced, helping to achieve environmental, social and economic well-being for current and future generations. We aim to do that by being responsible in all that we do.

About Coillte



Coillte is a commercial forestry company operating in forestry management, the manufacture and export of innovative wood panel products and establishing renewable energy through wind and biomass. With 440,000ha of land, Coillte owns and manages approximately 7% of the land cover of Ireland.

Coillte completed four wind farm projects in the last 12 months with a total investment value of over €400m. As one of the largest co-developers of onshore wind generation in Ireland, Coillte is a significant contributor to Ireland's renewable energy generation and is well on the way to achieving its ambition to having 350MW of installed capacity by 2019.

Coillte is also the leading provider of outdoor recreation facilities in Ireland, including 2,000km of walking trails, 150 recreation sites and 12 forest parks, resulting in 18m visits being made to Coillte's forests every year.

At Coillte, our CSR work is embedded in our sustainability ethos. As stewards of the land and forests, we understand the importance of local communities and it drives some of our key policies, including our open forest policy.

Our Community Benefit Schemes provides us with an opportunity to further build on the work we are doing in relation to our social, environmental and economic commitments. It enables us to provide goodwill, improve relationships, social inclusion and community cooperation.

Project partners

A project of the scale of Galway Wind Park requires the cooperation and coordination of many different partners and organisations. The strong relationship between the project's main contractors, as well as suppliers and sub-contractors, is key to the successful delivery of this project.



Siemens is manufacturing, installing and commissioning the wind turbines for Galway Wind Park. Siemens will also maintain and operate the wind turbines on behalf of SSE after the installation works are completed. Siemens has partnered with leading wind turbine installation and transportation specialist companies to deliver this project.



Roadbridge is the main civil works contractor for Galway Wind Park and is acting as project supervisor during the construction stage. Roadbridge believes in performing to the highest safety and environmental standards and is demonstrating its considerate constructor credentials at Galway Wind Park.



Suir Engineering is undertaking the design, installation and pre-commissioning of civil and electrical systems at Galway Wind Park grid substations to enable the wind turbines to connect to the national grid.



GMC is installing the 110kV underground cable from Galway Wind Park (Doon) to Ballybrit, connecting two electrical substations. This work was done in a rural and urban environment and also involved a directional drill under the River Corrib.



Kirby Group Engineering and Construction design, engineer, procure, supply, construct and commission high-voltage (HV) and medium-voltage (MV) electrical transmission and distribution systems. Kirby are carrying out the electrical works associated with the internal electrical network for the turbines at Galway Wind Park.

About the project

Galway Wind Park is a wind farm cluster that consists of four wind farms – Cloosh, Lettercraffroe, Seecon and Ugool. A total of 69 turbines are permitted with a total grid capacity for 169MW.

Phase 1 (64MW), which entered construction in February 2015, is owned and financed by SSE while Phase 2 (105MW) is a 50/50 joint venture between SSE and Coillte.

When completed in late 2017, it will be the largest onshore wind farm in Ireland, with the capacity to generate enough green energy to power around 89,000 homes, equivalent to almost 80% of the homes in Co. Galway.

About this report

The Galway Wind Park Sustainability Impact Report summarises some of the key sustainability – environmental, social and economic – impacts resulting from the construction of Ireland's largest onshore wind farm.

The analysis was undertaken by the Galway Wind Park team. Feedback and comments are welcomed to sustainability.ireland@sse.com. For more information about Galway Wind Park, please see the project website which features key updates: www.sse.com/galwaywindpark.



The project team with community members planning the Corribdale Trail



The first fully installed turbine at Galway Wind Park - August 2016

Foreword

Renewable energy is at the heart of Ireland's economy and society. Achieving Ireland's legally binding 2020 targets and beyond for renewable energy requires strong partnership between government, industry and local communities.

The Galway Wind Park project demonstrates how two industry leaders can join forces to deliver the country's largest onshore wind farm while delivering valuable economic, social and environmental impacts at a local and national level. This report is a review of those impacts.

By harnessing and distributing renewable energy, we are not only meeting the challenge of climate change, but also seizing the significant opportunity that investment in green energy presents for Ireland's communities and economy.

This report quantifies the carbon emissions that will be abated because of Galway Wind Park. It also assesses the value of the project to Ireland's economy and job market through calculating the impact of the capital expenditure invested so far.

Although the impacts on carbon emissions and GDP may be the most obvious, the project team, local community and wider stakeholders know there are many more impacts from a project of this scale. This report seeks to shine a light on those impacts too: everything from local job creation; local supply chain involvement; support for rural regeneration; use of sustainable materials; recycling and waste minimisation; and supporting local biodiversity.

As a responsible developer, the Galway Wind Park project team is acutely aware of the importance of adding value to local communities throughout the development process. That's why we have worked hard to be creative in our approach and add value where we can. Working to educate local children on flora and fauna; restoring land back to its original state, sometimes even enhancing it; working with local contractors so as many local people benefit from the economic opportunities created: these actions are the right thing to do, but they make good business sense too. Taking sensible and considered actions now makes sense for ensuring success over the long-term.

We are very proud of the efforts made by our team. We believe they are taking their responsibilities to local people seriously. Our objective is to continue to build on this success and to leave an enduring legacy that will remain long after the completion of the project.

SSE and Coillte look forward to completing construction and continuing our successful partnership throughout the lifetime of this best-in-class wind farm.



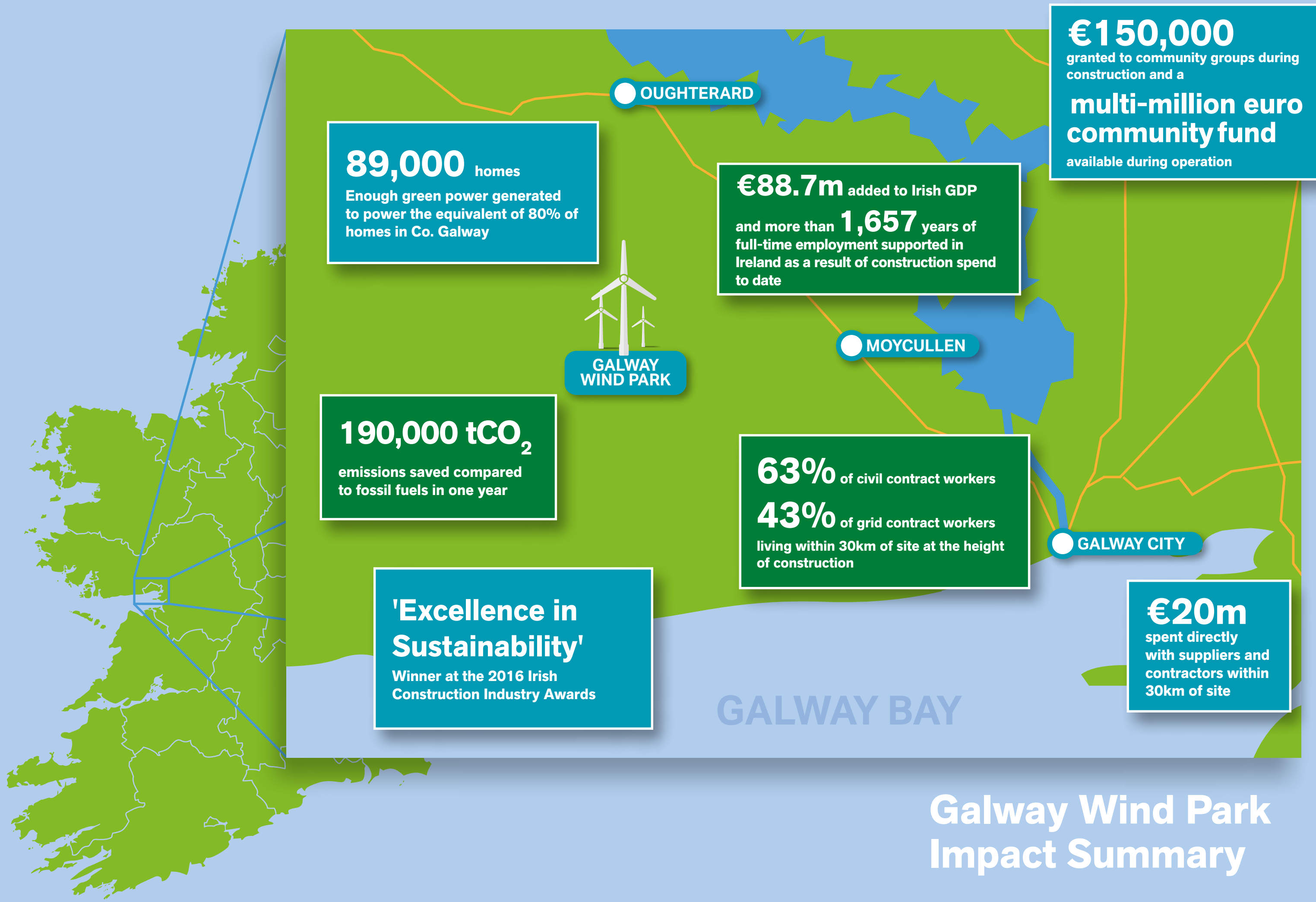
Gregor Alexander

**Gregor Alexander,
Finance Director, SSE**



Mark Foley

**Mark Foley,
Managing Director of
Coillte Land Solutions**



89,000 homes
Enough green power generated
to power the equivalent of 80% of
homes in Co. Galway

● **OUGHTERARD**

€88.7m added to Irish GDP
and more than **1,657** years of
full-time employment supported in
Ireland as a result of construction spend
to date

€150,000
granted to community groups during
construction and a
**multi-million euro
community fund**
available during operation


**GALWAY
WIND PARK**

● **MOYCULLEN**

190,000 tCO₂
emissions saved compared
to fossil fuels in one year

63% of civil contract workers
43% of grid contract workers
living within 30km of site at the height
of construction

● **GALWAY CITY**

**'Excellence in
Sustainability'**
Winner at the 2016 Irish
Construction Industry Awards

€20m
spent directly
with suppliers and
contractors within
30km of site

GALWAY BAY

Galway Wind Park Impact Summary

Economic impacts

Coillte and SSE are committed to powering Ireland's greener future, local communities and the local economy. Throughout the project to date, the team has demonstrated this commitment by encouraging strong participation from local suppliers and workers.

So far around €130m has been spent on the project, with about half of the total project expenditure still to be spent. It is a core objective of the Galway Wind Park Project that the economic impact of the project is maximised for local communities and businesses, as well as benefitting those across Ireland. In addition to the creation of jobs and business during construction, long-term employment will also be created for up to 14 full-time operations staff.

Employing a local supply chain

Demonstrating the project's commitment to local supply chain engagement, a 'Meet the Buyer' event was held with over 120 local firms and residents attending and registering their interest.

More than 100 local businesses have provided products and services to facilitate the delivery of Galway Wind Park, including local suppliers of stone, concrete, steel, haulage plant and machinery, grid substation equipment, catering and security services.

Information provided by the team's contractors, Roadbridge, Suir Engineering and GMC Utilities, shows that over €20m has been spent with local sub-contractors and suppliers so far.

€
€20m
spent with
local suppliers

Local supply chain and local workers

Civil works contract*

Spend on plant and labour with local sub-contractors (within 30km)	44% (€5m)
Spend on materials and services with local suppliers (within 30km)	53% (€8m)
Site workers living within 30km of the Galway Wind Park site	63%
Site workers living within 10km of the Galway Wind Park site	23%

Grid works contract**

Spend on plant and labour with local sub-contractors (within 30km)	40% (€2.4m)
Spend on materials and services with local suppliers (within 30km)	25% (€1.5m)
Site workers living within 30km of the Galway Wind Park site	43%
Site workers living within 10km of the Galway Wind Park site	32%

*Data provided by Roadbridge as at August 2016 ** Data provided by Suir Engineering as at August 2016



A word from local suppliers



Installation of the turbine bases on site

"I have been involved since the Galway Wind Park project first started. As a local businessman, I am grateful for the opportunity to work on such a big project in the area. My company provides heavy plant equipment for the project.

I'm happy to say that as a result of working on the project, not only have I been able to invest significantly in new plant machinery, I've been able to provide additional employment to six local people, not to mention the jobs created by other local businesses that I use to keep my machines working.

As for the future, working on this project has already led to securing work elsewhere around the county."

Niall Curran, Niall Curran Plant Hire, Moycullen



"As a local business, Lydon Steel is delighted to be one of Roadbridge's major suppliers for the Galway Wind Park project. We provide steel for the wind turbine bases.

Not only has our association with the project allowed us to significantly grow our business somewhere in the region of 20%, but crucially we have been able to employ an additional three people, creating much needed employment in the local area.

We are also proud to have contributed in some way to bringing a source of renewable energy to Galway."

Tom Gilligan, Lydon Steel Ltd, Galway



Calculating the contribution to jobs and wealth across Ireland

Turbine installation in progress at Galway Wind Park

By the time Galway Wind Park becomes operational in late 2017, over €270m will have been spent during the construction phase. Where possible, the Galway Wind Park team aims to employ local workers and use Irish businesses to supply goods and services for the project. For example, much of the planning, development, environmental monitoring, site preparation and civil works have been carried out by Irish contractors and sub-contractors.

There is a significant proportion of expenditure which will be spent on goods and services that Ireland does not currently have the technical capacity to produce, such as the wind turbines themselves. The wind turbines account for more than half of the total project spend, with the major components made in Denmark and the turbine towers coming from China and Vietnam: countries which have developed expertise in wind technology. However by taking measures like delivering the turbine blades and components through Galway Harbour, this activity will benefit the local economy as much as possible.

The Input-Output (I-O) economic model was used to calculate the economic impact of the project to the wider Irish economy. This model estimates the direct impact from project expenditure in Ireland, as well as the ripple effect across the economy from supplier and contractor expenditure and employees spending their wages.

Using construction expenditure data up to the end of October 2016, the economic contribution to Irish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated along with the years of full-time employment supported. In total, construction of Galway Wind Park is so far responsible for supporting 1,657 years of full-time employment in Ireland and contributing over €88.7m to the Irish economy.



€88.7m
added to GDP



1,657 years
of employment supported



Delivery of Galway Wind Park turbine blades to Galway Harbour

In conversation with:
Captain Bob Ellis

Deputy Harbour Master

Galway Harbour playing a key role

Can you tell us a bit about your role?

I am the Deputy Harbour Master at Galway Harbour with specific responsibilities for the scheduling and coordinating of all aspects of turbine deliveries for Galway Wind Park.

Is this the first time wind turbine components have come through Galway Harbour?

While this is by far the largest wind energy project to be handled by Galway Harbour, actually this is the fifth wind energy project to come through our facilities. Indeed, because of our growing experience and capacity, we are also able to set aside and designate 10 acres of land at the harbour to facilitate the ongoing delivery and storage of components for this large scale project.

How was the link made between Galway Harbour and Galway Wind Park?

During the public consultation event for Galway Wind Park, I became aware of the project and delivery plans for turbine components. When I presented the opportunity to bring components through Galway Harbour, the local team highlighted infrastructure challenges at Galway but were keen to explore the option further and see if these issues could be overcome. I knew the shortcomings could be rectified, and that Galway Harbour wanted to provide the service, so started doing something about it. Galway Wind Park is committed to maximising



local economic benefit and the local team was keen to make it work. Working closely with the project team, we worked to solve key infrastructure and technical challenges and a request was made to Siemens, the project turbine supplier, to liaise with Galway Harbour Company.

How important is the project for Galway Harbour?

Being able to undertake this project is very important to the ongoing sustainability of Galway Harbour as we await a final decision on the current plans for the new port facilities with increased capacities. Economically, it reflects a significant portion of the Harbour's marine income over the next two years. In respect of employment, apart from the existing workforce, it is key to providing for up to 25 additional jobs locally over the timeframe of the delivery programme with further employment being created from ancillary or supplementary services that the harbour uses.

Social impacts

The Galway Wind Park team recognises that developments impact local communities, in particular during the construction phase. Teamwork, trust and cooperation with local community stakeholders are all essential for ensuring a successful project that works for everyone.

A community programme has been developed and tailored to the specific social, economic and cultural fabric of the region. Located 30 minutes from Galway city, there are a number of towns and villages close to the project. Ongoing engagement and communication with the Doon, Rosscahill, Seannaphesteen, Moycullen, Oughterard and Galway city communities has been a major part of the project to date, particularly as it has moved from development to the pre-construction and construction phases.

SSE and Coillte take their pledge to be a good neighbour seriously, and aim to ensure the community's need for consultation, engagement and long-term benefit is met.

Engaging with the local community

From the outset of the project, a number of goals were identified to demonstrate industry best practice in delivering a large scale energy project, with a key focus on working closely with communities. The approach has been three pronged – consult early, communicate often, and actively demonstrate the benefits.

The Galway Wind Park team focuses on keeping local residents, community groups, businesses and political representatives fully informed as the project proceeds. The locally based community liaison team actively manages this relationship between the community and the project. Working together, a host of measureable benefits are being delivered – creating jobs, supporting businesses, delivering education initiatives and supporting local community groups.

Local engagement methods have included community consultation events; local meetings and workshops; a community sponsorship programme; door-to-door calls; project newsletters in both English and as Gaeilge; and stakeholder site visits. During construction, recreational users are provided with alternative walking routes as part of Coillte's open forest policy.

Investing in a lasting legacy: The Galway Wind Park Community Fund

SSE and Coillte's objective is to leave a lasting and enduring legacy that will remain long after the completion of Galway Wind Park's construction.

Galway Wind Park is scheduled to become fully operational in 2017, after which SSE and Coillte will jointly establish a community fund to benefit the local community, as well as the wider area, over the 25 year life of the wind park. The fund is expected to be split between a multi-million euro local community fund and a multi-million euro regional fund.

The Galway Wind Park Community Fund is set to be the largest wind farm community fund established in Ireland to date.



€150,000
community sponsorship fund during construction



Multi-million euro
community investment fund during operation

Community sponsorship during construction

SSE and Coillte recognise that the investment in renewable generation at Galway Wind Park benefits from the cooperation of the local community in a variety of ways, particularly during the construction phase.

The companies have invested more than €150,000 to support over 30 local community projects through its Construction Phase Sponsorship Programme, providing funds to local schools, sports clubs and tourism projects.

Local community groups who have benefited from our sponsorship programme to date include:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ Corribdale Trails Oughterard | ▪ Oughterard Rugby Football Club | ▪ Oughterard Agricultural Show |
| ▪ Moycullen Ladies GAA Club | ▪ Baile Nua Fun Cycle | ▪ Rosscahill Footpath Scheme |
| ▪ Men's Shed Moycullen (Cró na bhFear Maigh Cuilinn) | ▪ Oughterard Scouts | ▪ Moycullen Basketball |
| ▪ Killanin GAA | ▪ Galway Hospice | ▪ Discover Oughterard |
| ▪ Killanin Pitch Committee | ▪ Collinamuck Angling Club | ▪ Oughterard Courthouse |
| ▪ Cumann Ramhaiochta | ▪ Corrib Athletic Club | ▪ Sonas (Moycullen Active Retirement) |
| ▪ Oughterard Area Football Club | ▪ Corrib Basketball Club | ▪ Comortas Maigh Cuilinn |
| ▪ St Paul's Basketball Team | ▪ Menlo Emmets Hurling Club | ▪ Oughterard Retirement Community |
| ▪ Sensory Garden Oughterard | ▪ Moycullen Active Retirement | ▪ Blood Bikes |
| ▪ Killanin Scouts | ▪ Rural Dementia Conference at National University of Ireland Galway | |
| ▪ Corrib Basketball Club | ▪ Moycullen Agricultural Show | |



Ensuring a safe workplace



Health and safety for employees and the local community is the top priority at Galway Wind Park, and a core value for all major partners involved in the project. This means all decisions made by the project team take the safety implications into account.

Ongoing safety training on site comprises environmental awareness, emergency spill response, first aid, emergency drills, project inductions, daily pre-task briefings and weekly toolbox talks. The team has also introduced a system for recording safety and environmental site observations (SEARs). Observations and/or concerns are submitted anonymously to collection boxes located throughout the site. This information is then used to establish areas for improvement.

Health initiatives on the project include regular visits of a public health nurse to site, health-awareness campaigns, promotion of healthy food on site, which is served daily for all operatives at no cost to them, and healthy eating booklets provided by safety officers.

As well as helping keep employees and contractors safe on site, the project team takes further actions to make sure local communities are kept safe too. For example, the team distributed winter safety kits to local residents in Doon in December 2015.



Ugool substation in construction

Minimising visual impacts



Mitigating the visual impact of Galway Wind Park is a key focus for the project. The wind turbines were carefully positioned during the planning stage so the visual impact is reduced, while still ensuring strong levels of energy output.

To minimise the visual impact from the substations, the Galway Wind Park team has employed innovative solutions. For example, the size of the Knockranny and Ugool substations were reduced significantly by using specialised switchgear, which could be installed within a building rather than over a large outdoor area.

The substation building at Knockranny was also clad in juniper green panels to blend in with the surrounding conifer forestry, while at Ugool the front of the building was clad in stone sourced on site by local stone masons to fit in better with its surroundings.

A peat berm surrounding the area will also be planted with trees to further screen the developments.

Environmental impacts

Galway Wind Park will make a significant contribution towards greening Ireland's national energy and decarbonising power generation across the island.

It will help achieve Ireland's 2020 target of making sure 16% of total final energy consumption comes from renewable energy, as well as helping Ireland play its part in meeting the EU's climate target of ensuring a 20% reduction in emissions from a 2005 baseline, and the longer term vision of transforming Ireland to a low carbon society and economy by 2050.

The wind park site has a wealth of ecological and environmental value for the local area. Since the outset of the project, much care and attention has been given to the development of the site to minimise possible negative impacts on the local environment.

Awarding best practice

Galway Wind Park has won and been shortlisted for a number of environmental and sustainability awards to date as a result of efforts to protect the environment and the project's overall sustainable approach.

- Winner of the Excellence in Sustainability Award at the 2016 Irish Construction Industry Awards.
- Finalist for the Green Project of the Year Award at the 2016 Irish Construction Industry Awards.
- Finalist for the Green Construction Award at the 2016 Green Awards.
- The project was externally audited by Achilles, a UK-based organisation which audits sustainability activities of companies and their supply chain, and was awarded a score of 100% in the 'Environmental' category as an indication of the sustainability systems employed on the project.



Generating carbon savings

Approximately 190,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions will be saved as a result of Galway Wind Park's first year of energy generation compared to fossil fuels. This is because the energy would otherwise likely have been produced using a mix of carbon intensive forms of energy generation, such as coal and oil.

Over time, the savings in CO₂ emissions will continue to be significant each year but will gradually decrease as the Irish energy grid mix moves away from more carbon intensive fossil fuels and towards less carbon intensive sources.



190,000 tCO₂
emissions saved in first year

Powering green energy

Galway Wind Park is predicted to generate enough renewable energy to power the equivalent of approximately 89,000 homes every year, equivalent to almost 80% of the homes in Co. Galway.

This calculation is based on typical annual consumption (source: Commission for Energy Regulation) and a one-year average of the recorded capacity factors of SSE wind farms operating on the island of Ireland, from April 2015 to March 2016. Historic figures are for guideline purposes only – the actual future performance at Galway Wind Park may vary.



89,000 homes
powered with renewable energy



Environmental benefits of a local supply chain

Through actively promoting a local supply chain of labour, equipment and materials whenever feasible, the Galway Wind Park project is limiting its carbon impact by reducing the environmental impacts of transportation. Details of local spend and the number of local workers within 30km and 10km of site can be found on page 8.

The project has also introduced a number of initiatives to further reduce emissions from vehicles:

Car-pool arrangements for 50 cars and mini-vans transporting construction team operatives to and around the site.

Site canteens provide breakfasts and hot dinners to all workers daily, minimising the need to travel.

Aggregate for 68% of project infrastructure has been provided by borrow pits on site.

Houses have been rented in the local area for 17 employees with long distances to commute. A car-pooling arrangement is in place from these houses to the construction site.

Using materials sustainably

The main energy consumer during construction activity is heavy machinery, so the project team has taken action to reduce emissions from these items and introduce energy-saving measures on site including:

Cement on site has been replaced with ground-granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS), a by-product of steel manufacturing, which means its production involves virtually zero CO₂ emissions as well as a longer life cycle.

Battery-based power source for off-peak and night-time electricity requirements in the compound offices, canteen and IT servers, has resulted in an estimated saving of 271 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) per annum over traditional generator emissions.

Monthly monitoring of the energy efficiency of new machinery by manufacturers, along with energy efficient features such as auto-shut off of engines and eco-mode for low energy work has led to a decrease of approximately 25% in fuel consumption.

Local walking trails and access for anglers

The project team is mindful of recreational activities in the local area, so alternative walking trails have been provided during the construction period. The current closure of the Cloosh lands is temporary and Coillte's open forest policy will be reinstated as soon as possible once construction ends and it is safe to do so.

Pedestrians can access the Lettercraffroe Lough via a 2.5km route, and an alternative 6.4km walking route in Buffy accommodates walkers from the Letter road side. There are also three Coillte recreational sites in the area at Lackvarea, New Village and Derroura. For more information, please visit the Coillte Outdoors website: www.coillteoutdoors.ie.

Coillte don't own the fishing rights to the lakes in the local area, but there is an agreement with construction site staff that if anglers do arrive at the main gate then they will be escorted through the site to access the lakes. The team has also supported two years of the Galway Wind Park Fishing Cup, with over 35 local anglers competing.

Ecological education

Galway Wind Park's education outreach strategy uses engagement tools such as schools visits, on-site tours, educational briefings, schools competitions and support for local educational and environmental programmes. Below are some examples of how the project team has provided community education for the local area.

#1

Winter wildlife and habitats of Connemara

The Roadbridge environmental team ran a local school photography competition to raise awareness of biodiversity among local children and to encourage the students to explore the countryside. The team received over 45 entries from students, but it was 13 year old Grace Hooper's photo (right) that was chosen as the winner. Grace was given a framed copy of her photo and a compact digital camera from Roadbridge at a school ceremony. The school principal was also presented with a GoPro camera to help support future school biodiversity projects.



#2

Cultivating the senses

In conjunction with the 'Garden Group' at Clann Family Resource Centre, Oughterard, the Galway Wind Park team made a donation for trees, shrubs and flower bulbs, as well as practical help, for the delivery of the Sensory Garden on Station Road. The garden is designed to use plants and materials to stimulate the senses and to create a therapeutic and calming space. It is also a wildlife-friendly space and will attract pollinating insects. Further plans for the garden in the near future include more planting and the installation of seating.



#3

Project at Scoil Chuimín agus Caitríona, Uachtar Árd

A team of six from Galway Wind Park spent half a day helping to redevelop and landscape a large flower bed at the front of the school. Several lorry loads of topsoil were delivered to the school. Galway Wind Park's civil contractor Roadbridge provided an excavator to assist with the work. The school was given a voucher to purchase plants for the flower bed, and the team returned to help pupils plant flower bulbs, crab apple trees and sunflowers.



#4

Bird and bat boxes for local schools

The team partnered with the local Men's Shed in Moycullen (Cró na bhFear Maigh Cuilinn) to build wooden bird and bat boxes for local primary schools; aiming to enhance the school children's understanding of local biodiversity and bird life. Members of the project team visited Moycullen National School, Newtown National School, St. Annin's National School and Tullykyne National School, to present the bird and bat boxes and meet with the pupils.



Benefitting biodiversity

Detail gathered for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has ensured an optimal design for the project and currently informs construction methods used on site. A number of additional biodiversity and habitat management measures further help to make this project truly sustainable, both in its construction and long-term legacy to the area. Examples include:



Monthly monitoring of protected wintering wildfowl and breeding bird populations is carried out by the on-site ecological team.



A process of eradication by treatment and removal of the non-native invasive Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron on-site infestations has been carried out.



The Kerry slug is protected under EU and Irish law. As a result, a survey and translocation exercise was completed to protect the local population.



Reinstatement and reseedling of borrow pits, access roads and turbine locations using locally harvested native grass and heather seed has been undertaken.



Water levels in the peat surface are tracked so that the impact of nearby construction on the hydrology of the bog can be monitored.

Minimising waste on site

The project team is also focused on minimising waste and therefore adopts a policy of reducing, reusing and recycling whenever possible. Examples include:



Around 95% of structural components required for construction of the site compound were reused or recycled from a previous project.



A rainwater harvesting unit has now been incorporated into the roofed area constructed over the diesel tanks in the main compound to provide 'grey' water to site toilets.



All concrete waste is crushed and reused on site as general fill.



All dry recyclable waste is sent off-site for recycling. Dedicated bins are provided in the courtyard for office recycling and skips are provided in the main compound.



All earthworks material is reused on site and all excavated spoil is used for ballast and backfilling or landscaping works, or is deposited at agreed on-site deposition areas.



All batteries are collected on site and recycled. €5 per box of filled batteries is donated to the Laura Lynn Foundation.

Setting the benchmark for best-in-class

The White Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland highlights that energy is the lifeblood of Ireland's economy and society. Ireland's ability to attract and retain Foreign Direct Investment and sustain Irish enterprise depends on achieving a secure, sustainable supply of energy at a competitive cost. This report demonstrates the economic, social and environmental benefits that Galway Wind Park, and other renewable energy projects, present for Ireland's rural communities, the national economy and the global environment.

Galway Wind Park will become Ireland's largest onshore wind farm and deliver renewable energy for around 89,000 homes per year, helping offset carbon released into the atmosphere from fossil fuel energy generation. As we move towards a decarbonised energy system, Ireland's citizens and communities will have an increasingly significant role to play. This project has taught all partners involved the importance of participation, engagement and support from local residents, community members, businesses and electoral representatives.

A best-in-class project means recognising the support and cooperation from those that have been impacted. As Galway Wind Park moves to the operational phase in late 2017, what is set to be Ireland's largest wind farm community fund will be put in place for the lifetime of the wind park – providing investment for community projects well beyond the €150,000 granted to local groups during the construction phase.

But a leading community fund is just one way such a large project should deliver value to the local area. From the early planning stages, SSE and Coillte deliberately adopted an approach of maximising local economic benefit, using the skills of the local workforce and procuring goods and services from local businesses whenever possible.

Over €20m has been spent directly with local suppliers and contractors located within 30km of Galway Wind Park and, during the height of construction, 63% of civil contract workers and 43% of grid contract workers lived within 30km of site. At a national level, €88.7m has been added to Irish GDP and more than 1,657 years of full-time employment has been supported in Ireland as a result of the construction spend up to the end of October 2016, with roughly another year of construction still to come. Going beyond construction, long-term employment will also be created for up to 14 full-time operational employees.

As Ireland moves to deliver its 2030 renewable energy commitments, projects like Galway Wind Park are helping to set an industry benchmark for best-in-class large scale project delivery. Demonstrating the full benefits of wind energy, for everybody, is key to maximising the success of Ireland's energy transition.

SSE and Coillte look forward to being part of the communities that will host Galway Wind Park for the next 25 years, and to leaving a lasting legacy for those communities and the wider area.

