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# Gortloughra Wind Farm

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Project Booklet

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Q2 2024

# Gortloughra Wind Farm



## ■ Introduction

At Statkraft, we believe that a better, cleaner, and more sustainable world is possible to achieve and that by working together, we can avoid the worst impacts of climate change. As Europe's largest renewable energy producer, we have been making clean energy possible for over a century and continue to lead the way towards a carbon-free future.

Statkraft has been present in Ireland since 2018 and now employs more than 130 people across its offices in Cork and Tullamore. We are committed to delivering affordable renewable energy on to the Irish grid system and working with communities to explore how these projects might work best in their local areas.

Understanding the local area, its people, environment, traditions and history form a core part of how we approach the development of renewable energy projects. Our dedicated Community Liaison team for this project will endeavour over the coming weeks to meet with as many members of the community as possible. If you would like to contact us to arrange a visit, please do not hesitate to do so on the contact details located at the back of this booklet.

## ■ Need for this project

Projects like Gortloughra Wind Farm enable communities to utilise their own natural resources and provide clean affordable energy solutions that reduce carbon emissions and our dependence on expensive fossil fuels.

Renewable energy sources not only reduce our reliance on imported, polluting fossil fuels; they also ensure security of supply through climate-driven disruptions. A recent UN report confirmed that 2023 was the warmest year on record with heatwaves, floods and droughts affecting millions of people across the world.\*

Ireland is also seeing challenges in meeting its own climate action targets. In the 2023 Climate Action Plan, the Government established a target for 9GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2030. Ireland's current installed capacity is just under 50% of that target.



\*State of the Global Climate 2023 Report, World Meteorological Organisation <https://wmo.int/publication-series/state-of-global-climate-2023>



## ■ How this project has evolved over time

Statkraft has a long history in working with partners to deliver renewable energy projects across Ireland. Over the last number of years, you may have engaged with the previous developer of the Gortloughra Wind Farm project. It has been working to ready this project for the planning system and carrying out various assessments and community consultation events to ensure the local area was suitable for a project of this kind.

Statkraft will now oversee the final stages of the planning applications as well as the operational and management aspects of this project should it be successful. At Statkraft, we have the required expertise and resources to see projects such as the Gortloughra Wind Farm to fruition and ensure that they produce benefits for the local community for decades to come.

Statkraft will continue to ensure that local knowledge and information gathered over the last number of years in the community is not lost.

This proposal is to develop an 8-turbine wind farm in the Shehy Mountains, West Cork. At the initial stages of consideration, designers drafted a project outline that would maximise the wind energy potential of the site. Placing local appropriateness as a fundamental consideration, further optimisation of this design was carried out. This has resulted in some changes to the project and its consenting process. There will now be two planning applications submitted into the planning application:

- As the total output is now reduced to 48MW, the wind farm and turbine delivery route will be submitted as one application to Cork County Council in late Q2 2024;
- The substation and grid connection will be submitted by Q3 2024 into An Bord Pleanála as it qualifies as a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID).

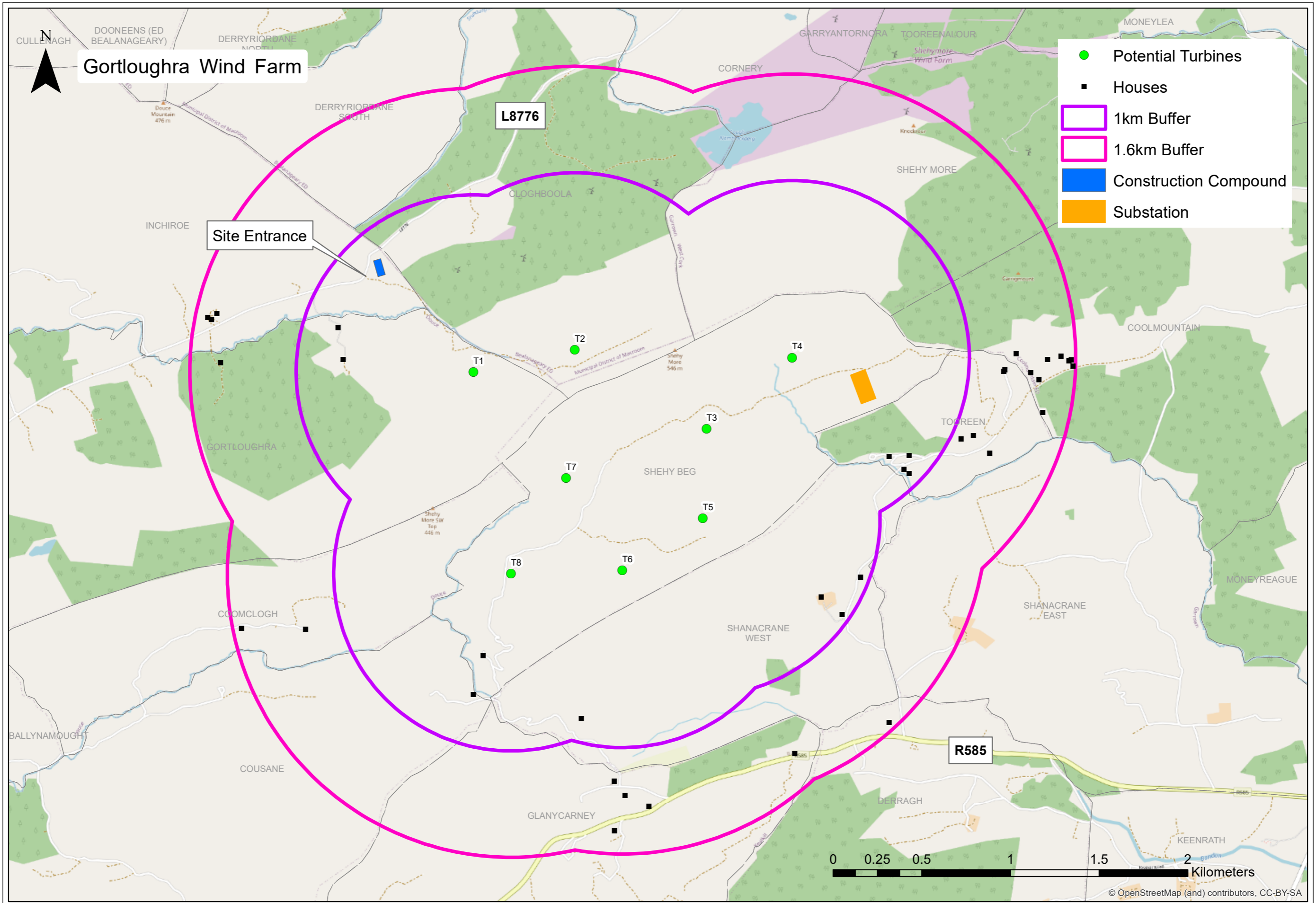
Other key changes include:

- **Grid Route:** Two grid routes are currently under assessment and have been presented to both Cork County Council and An Bord Pleanála. The preferred grid route coming from this assessment will be identified and submitted to An Bord Pleanála.
- **Substation:** The substation and temporary construction compound have been micro-sited (by 50 meters) to lessen the environmental impact.
- **Met Mast:** The temporary met mast was removed from the site in Q4 2023.

## ■ Project at a glance

- 8-turbine project
- Turbine heights of 175m
- Distance to nearest turbine – over 700m
- Over 48MW of renewable energy to the Irish electricity grid
- Zero shadow flicker policy
- Underground cable to connect the proposed project from its on-site substation to an off-site substation which is connected to the National Grid
- Total Community Benefit Fund of circa €3.5 million over 15 years, depending on the final design
- Recreational, community and biodiversity improvements associated with the development
- Annual rates payments to Cork County Council of over €15.4 million over the project lifetime
- Associated works will include access tracks, turbine foundations and hard standing areas, drainage works, temporary site compound, grid systems services, substation, underground electrical and communications cables between turbines and an underground cable to connect the proposed project to a local substation







## ■ Understanding the local area

West Cork has a strong pride of place and local identity. There is also strong connection to nature, crafts and music. The Shehy Mountains area is rich in archaeology and heritage which highlights how the communities of the past lived and thrived on these mountains, as self-sufficient, holistic and spiritual spaces.

These cultural aspects are what we hope to protect, support and strengthen during the lifetime of the project. To ensure the protection of local archaeology and heritage, we have committed to having an onsite archaeologist during the construction period. To promote the rich heritage, we are also committed to developing an archaeological trail using the existing old Butter Road that runs adjacent to the site, subject to agreements with local stakeholders.

We take our commitments to protecting history, heritage and the natural habitats in areas where we work seriously, and we would be very interested in any suggestions you may have in relation to this proposal.

West Cork has a history of spearheading sustainability movements in Ireland such as the organic horticulture movement; generating clean and renewable energy to power its thriving local businesses and communities would be a natural step for such a forward-thinking area

## ■ Community Benefit Fund

A dedicated Community Benefit Fund (CBF), made available through the Government-led Renewable Electricity Support Scheme, is a great way to support sustainable, local initiatives that benefit the entire community. In all communities, it is the local people who are the experts of their own area and know the locality's strengths, weaknesses, needs and goals. The funds are designed to be allocated for local initiatives that reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that our communities have a healthy, inclusive and green future. If you have any questions in relation to the CBF, please contact the Community Liaison Officer whose contact details are on the back of this booklet.



For information on how the CBF is administered, please visit the *Renewable Electricity Support Scheme Good Practice Principles Handbook for Community Benefit Funds*

The Gortloughra Wind Farm, as proposed, could bring with it funding in the region of an estimated €237,000 a year for 15 years, or over €3.5 million over a 15-year period. Below are some examples of what has been considered in other areas where we have worked and might give a good indication of what can be achieved and advanced locally.

- Direct benefit schemes, such as near neighbour payments
- Energy efficiency schemes for households
- Funding for amenity and equestrian trails
- Funding for local heritage initiatives
- Support for local education schemes
- Biodiversity initiatives
- Local festivals and events

Should this project go ahead, we will liaise directly with local sustainability and community groups to ensure the CBF is utilised

## ■ Project sustainability

Our ambition is to contribute to a more sustainable future for all. At the same time, the way we develop our projects in local communities must be sustainable and responsible – and we are guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For Statkraft, the sustainability of the project includes:

- Supply chain management: This covers health and safety, environment and climate, human rights, labour rights, and business ethics
- Stakeholder management
- A Biodiversity Management Plan which is provided as part of the planning submission. Biodiversity will be integral to the project and our goal is to help maximise the potential for the area. In recent projects, wildflower meadows, bird boxes, native tree planting, insect hotels and eel brushes were among the measures included in our management plan.

If you have any suggestions for biodiversity initiatives and/or habitat enhancement measures that Statkraft could implement alongside the project, please contact the Community Liaison Officer



## ■ Next steps

Our community engagement team will be working in the area to ensure that information is available and that you have an opportunity to discuss the various aspects of this proposal. The team will also be in the community, distributing project information in the weeks before the project is submitted for planning.

Should this project come to fruition, we look forward to continued engagement with you about delivering increased environmental, economic, and social benefits for the community.

## ■ Our obligations and responsibilities

During consultation, our objective is not to seek support for the proposal, but to provide information to allow you to develop your own considered opinion, based on accurate information, on what this proposal has to offer. As this process develops, we will continue to work with you to ensure that this wind farm delivers effective climate action while also delivering for the local area.



## For more information, visit the following websites

<a href="http://www.windenergyireland.com">www.windenergyireland.com</a> Wind Energy Ireland (WEI)	<a href="http://www.epa.ie">www.epa.ie</a> Environmental Protection Agency
<a href="http://www.seai.ie">www.seai.ie</a> Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI)	<a href="http://www.gsi.ie">www.gsi.ie</a> Geological Survey Ireland
<a href="http://www.un.org/climatechange">www.un.org/climatechange</a> UN Climate Change Website	<a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a> National Parks and Wildlife Service
<a href="http://www.climatecouncil.ie">www.climatecouncil.ie</a> Ireland's Climate Change Advisory Council	<a href="http://www.corkcoco.ie">www.corkcoco.ie</a> Cork County Council
<a href="http://www.localenterprise.ie/green">www.localenterprise.ie/green</a> Local Enterprise Office	

## Talk to our Community Liaison Officer

The Community Liaison Officer for this project is Eva Hill. She is also supported by a dedicated team who have years of experience in both wind energy and community development. The team are available to provide information on this proposal or indeed the wider issues of climate action. We would encourage anyone who has an interest in this proposal or wider environmental, cultural or recreational development to get in touch with us using the contact details below.

### ■ Dedicated Website

There is a dedicated project website ([www.gortloughrawindfarm.ie](http://www.gortloughrawindfarm.ie)) in place where all information and updates relevant to the project will be posted. You can also share your feedback on the project on the website.

If you have any further questions, you can contact your dedicated Community Liaison Officer on the contact details provided below.



### Privacy Policy

Here at Statkraft we take your privacy seriously and we treat your information with respect. To facilitate environmental safety management systems and to ensure appropriate assessment and development; consultation and domiciliary data within the study area is collected. For more information about how Statkraft processes personal data, please consult our general privacy policy at <https://www.statkraft.ie/privacy-statement/> – or you can also direct any specific questions you have to [privacy@statkraft.com](mailto:privacy@statkraft.com)

### ■ Contact Us

#### Community Liaison Officer

Eva Hill

**Email:** [enquiries@gortloughrawindfarm.ie](mailto:enquiries@gortloughrawindfarm.ie)

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[www.gortloughrawindfarm.ie](http://www.gortloughrawindfarm.ie)

