

Community Benefits Policy - Wind Farm Projects

Coillte's core purpose is to enrich lives locally, nationally and globally through the innovative and sustainable management of natural resources. Coillte is committed to helping reduce Ireland's carbon emissions and achieving the Irish Government's renewable energy targets. It considers the development of renewable energy projects such as wind farms to be fully compatible with its policy of responsible forest management.

Coillte has a long history of working with the communities in the environs of the forests and land assets under its stewardship. As an extension of this, Coillte will continue to work with and retain their relationship with local communities where they develop alternative uses for the land under their stewardship, such as wind farms.

Our experience around the country has generated an inherent understanding that each community and receiving environment with which we interact is unique. The Coillte approach to Community Benefits reflects this fundamental understanding. Reflecting on this and on the fact that each wind farm will also be different in terms of its capabilities to deliver benefits to the local communities, Coillte makes the following commitments in relation to the Community Benefits Scheme on its Wind Farm projects.

Coillte will provide a Community Benefits mechanism at all of its wind farm projects.

- The Community Benefits Scheme will take the form of one or a combination of the following options:
 - A Community Fund, available to support projects on an annual basis.
 - "Benefit-in-kind" scheme, consisting of, for example, improved recreational facilities or services relevant to the locality.
- We will engage in open and transparent consultation with local communities to explore the most appropriate community fund or benefit-in-kind scheme for each project.
- Any Community Benefit Scheme will consider the following:
 - The uniqueness of each area in terms of its population density and demographic; social and infrastructural needs; physical environment and any other types of funding in the area (e.g. other wind farms).
 - The delivery of an appropriate application and distribution mechanism to ensure a fair and transparent sharing of Community Benefit, where a Fund is the mechanism implemented.
 - Proposed initiatives and the dispersal of any fund will prioritise projects and activities that have a focus on environment and sustainability. Any specific projects and activities will be assessed on their own merits and should benefit the wider community.
 - It is intended to support community projects in the locality of the wind farms. The geographic area eligible for the fund will vary on a case by case basis but will be defined through the consultation process.
 - Applications are open to not-for-profit groups only. Funds will not be permitted to support individuals or private enterprise.
 - The governance and operation of any fund or initiative will be completed in a transparent manner and will involve both Coillte and non-Coillte representatives, as appropriate to each project.