THE
GUIDE

4

Spring 2021

EARNING LOCAL SUPPORT
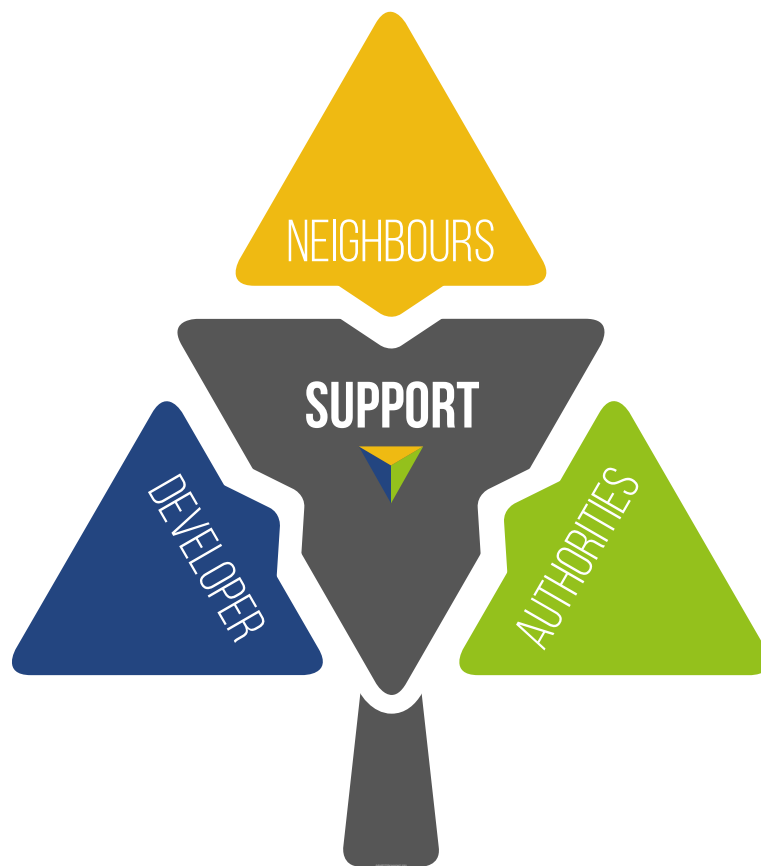
FOR

WIND ENERGY PROJECTS IN IRELAND

This RDD Programme is led by AstonECO Management ltd., and peer reviewed by NUIG.

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m a n a g e m e n t

NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

EARNING LOCAL SUPPORT
FOR WIND ENERGY PROJECTS IN IRELAND

NEIGHBOURS

SUPPORT

DEVELOPER

AUTHORITIES

A Guide to create an engagement process for neighbours, project developers & the authorities to create locally supported sustainable energy projects.

Spring 2021

seai SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

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1. ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide outlines a framework for developing partnerships between communities and developers. This is to enable energy projects to be built on a foundation of local support, successfully achieving the "Just Energy Transition".

It is a live document, open to review and improvement. It is intended to be adopted and adapted by communities, developers and policy makers alike, and be tailored to their ambitions. It is part of a suite of seven documents as presented in the image below, and has been informed by:
- The Situation Analysis and Literature Review (Sections 2 & 3 below),
- National and International best practice – in particular government guidelines,

AA1000SES & OECD meaningful engagement guidelines, and
- Experience from wind energy, extractive industries, tourism and community development projects.

Aspects of the approach in this Guide have been demonstrated in the Case Studies and have been used successfully in over 20 projects throughout Europe. Elements of this approach have been tested at different levels within projects in Ireland.

The Guide aims to support wind energy project teams and local communities to ensure they can, and want to, successfully co-design developments suitable for all parties' needs, including

All these documents are available online at: **www.astoneco.com/earning-local-support-energy-projects-ireland**

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the investors, community, developers and the government.

Its goal is to enable the development of sustainable, socially supported projects. It highlights the importance of dialogue and pathways to partnership building between neighbours and developers.

It is important to note that the perspectives of all parties, including engineers, design teams, community members, planners, local authorities, corporate teams and investors have been carefully considered throughout this document. All feedback is still welcome and will be incorporated in a later edition.

The Guide enables an engagement process to deliver an acceptable road-map to build the required sustainable energy infrastructure in a neighbour and developer partnership going forward. This Guide was made possible through the invaluable input from 150+ neighbours living close by existing or proposed turbines in the nine counties in Ireland presented in the adjacent map. Invaluable input has also been given from developers, from wind energy project owners, from communities who are working to develop their own wind farms, from government officials and from people from the research community. Each conversation added constructive criticism, acknowledgment of what

was going well, and gave insights into the changes needed to add multiple levels of value for all concerned. These layers of information and insights have been included in this Guide. A special thank you to each and every one of you for taking the time - in may cases very considerable time - to make these valuable insights - and Guide-creation oversight - available.
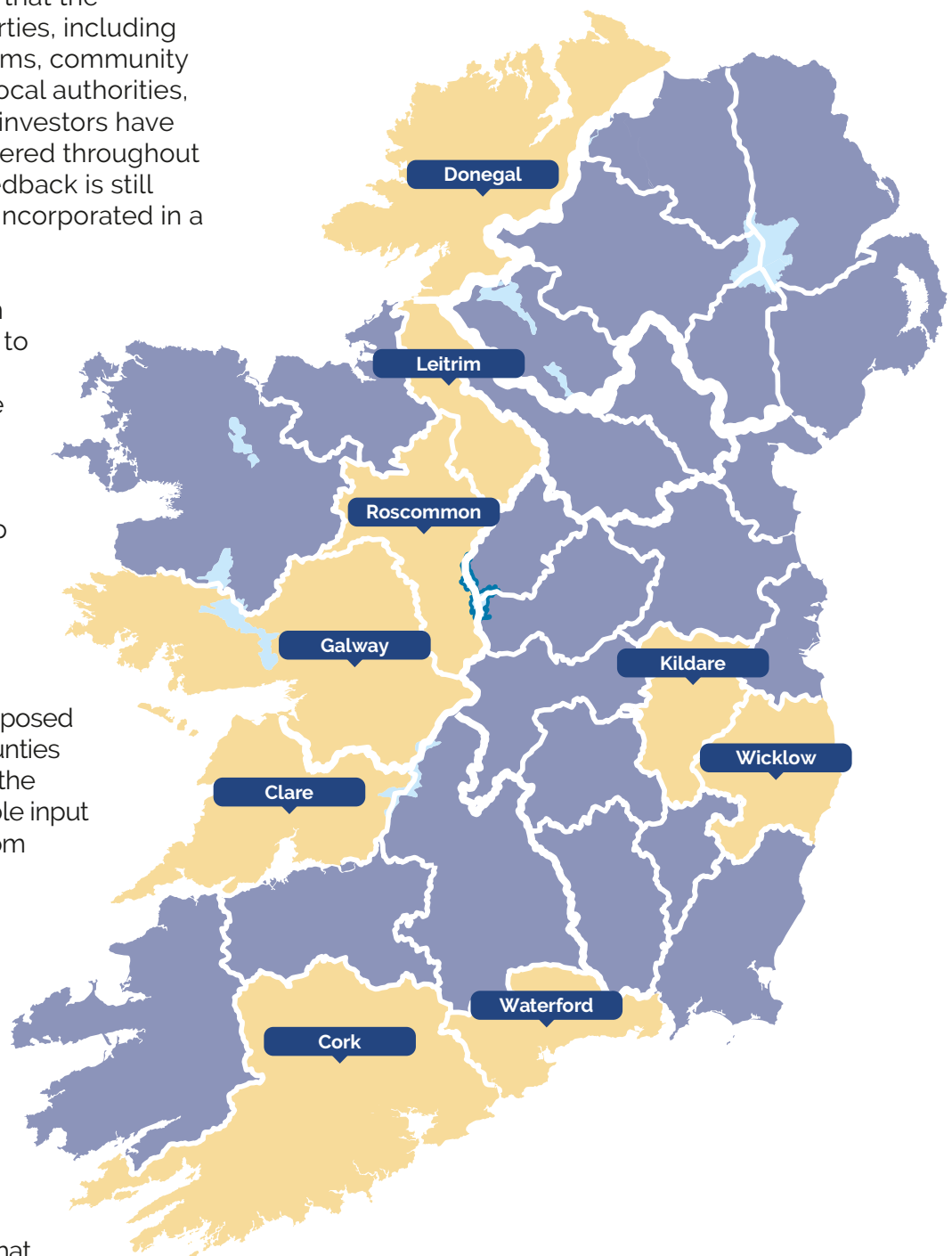
2. INTRODUCTION

This Guide was developed using a very simple project development model presented in Figure 1.

To help us get into the right mindset and question our current understanding of the challenges, document 2 of this programme presents a Situation Analysis based on many conversations with people at the coal face of renewable energy roll out (excuse the mixed message). This highlights that:

▶ Many people in communities in rural Ireland feel that the developer and the authorities/government undertake generally tokenistic engagement with regards to how wind energy projects are sited, designed and integrated (or not) into the local sustainable development fabric. This not only leaves the neighbours in a state of minimum to no control over what is decided concerning the impacts on their community; it also leaves out the development of useful synergies. This causes fear and anger. Both breed opposition.

▶ There are few democratic or dialogue structures in communities in Ireland for neighbours to engage on these issues when they arise.

▶ This is exacerbated due to a lack of formal or informal local councils, or representative community organisations, present to cultivate and represent the community voice.

▶ This is then confounded when wind farms are sited on land that straddles two, three or more communities. In these cases, it becomes even harder for meaningful local engagement to take place.

This results in many issues of importance to neighbours not being
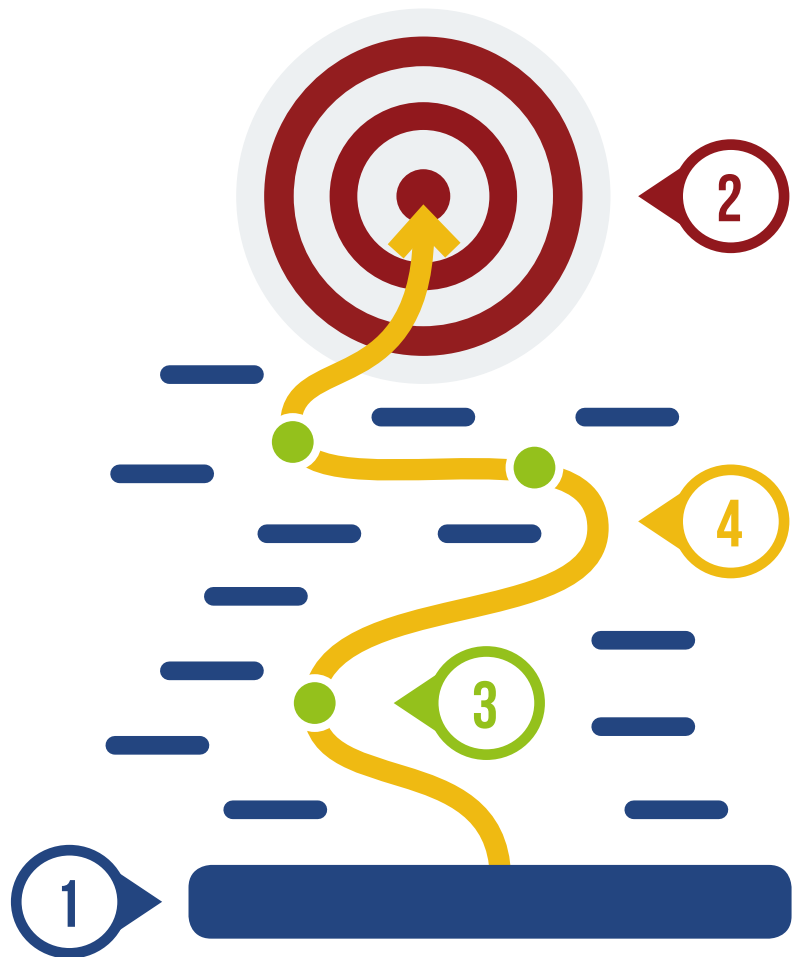
1: Situation analysis and challenges going forward. This always needs to be updated for each new project using proactive listening.

2: The joint community–developer goal: if we are not clear where we are going, no road will get us there...

3: Identify the opportunities to get from where we are to where we want to be.

4: Create a co-designed strategy between the developer and the neighbours to get there.

Figure 1: The journey this guide is designed to help us deliver on.

acknowledged or addressed. Some of these issues are presented in Appendix 1, others are highlighted in the Situation Analysis, while some need to be caught during the proactive listening phase of community engagement.

The sense of disempowerment among a proposed project's neighbours that the above gives rise to becomes one of the drivers that triggers opposition to wind farm developments in Ireland.

On top of this feeling of disempowerment, issues such as:
▸ distances from homes with the associated health and property price worries, and
▸ impacts on the local landscape and environment, sense of place, tourism, community energy opportunities, etc., not being addressed at the earliest possible stage gives rise to fear that they never will.

From the perspective of near neighbours, the feeling of being a mouse in between two large cats (Developer and State) is not a very comfortable place to be. Opposition is often the only option open to people to rectify this power imbalance.

Through the rise of opposition to wind farms, resulting in a break on the roll out of sustainable energy infrastructure, it is demonstrated throughout Ireland that this is not just non-sustainable for the wind industry, it is also not a sustainable place for a responsible government to expose their citizens to.

A common request heard during

the groundwork for this Guide was for a process for a middle path for project development that can work for communities, developers and the authorities alike. A process that everyone can rely on.

This Guide seeks to address an underlying home-truth: that if the three parties mentioned above are to work as a team to create locally supported projects, then the agreed process needs to work for all of them.

As the parties understand each other better, and trust that the conversation is in good faith, agreements are easier to reach, opportunities easier to see, impacts more easily managed, and solutions more easily defined.

This Guide presents an approach to hear, acknowledge and address neighbours' concerns around energy projects in Ireland, to enable successful sustainable outcomes for local communities, developers and the nation.

3. THE NEED FOR A COMMUNITY -BASED PARTNERSHIP

The imposition of wind turbines on communities without all concerns regarding negative impacts on neighbours being first acknowledged and addressed has been identified as one of the main triggers of opposition to windfarms. The perceived, or real, lack of consideration of the impacts on local sustainable development adds to this. This places significant pressure on the planning authorities as they assess project proposals due to mounting opposition. A pressure that is only increasing as government policy is clearly to continue to deploy more turbines.

A planning process under pressure will in turn find it very difficult to guide projects towards optimum designs as our nation goes through its energy revolution. This not only causes considerably increased costs today; it also exposes us all to missed opportunities as we look back at what could have been done versus what was done.

The request highlighted in the Situation Analysis that projects be initiated, co-designed and implemented with the sustainable development of all concerned much more in mind came across in varying guises. The frustration in many quarters that this is not happening is growing.

Addressing this, and building of trust that all future projects will address this, is very much at the heart of the path to earning local support.

The goal to be committed to needs to not only ensure that negative impacts upon neighbours be removed, or fairly mitigated, but must also ensure the opportunities inherent in harnessing the nation's winds are fully identified and realised. In today's more and more complex and challenging world, missing such opportunities gives rise to increasing levels of frustration.

To address this, a holistic goal for projects being put forward for consideration is required.

This may not require a change in government policy; but simply that synergies between all sustainable development related government policies are identified and harnessed.

It will mean a change from the current design process of 1) secure land access and conduct a wind farm design, 2) undertake the EIAR (environmental impact assessment report), 3) conduct Decide-Announce-Defend public consultation, 4) submit an application for planning approval, 5) provide a legalistic reply to objections and deal with any court challenges. This Guide helps to get us onto the path of the change being requested by near neighbours and developers' staff on the ground alike. The steps recommended here would require change – especially in mindset and approach. It includes: 1) Identify where a harness-able resource is and build confidence that a developer could have a fair shot at it should they invest in its examination, 2) undertake systematic, structured and meaningful proactive

listening, etc – see Figure 3 on page 21 for a summary.

To minimise changes required, the upcoming community report[1] offers an opportunity to ensure this is done. By undertaking this report under the umbrella of a partnership between developers, neighbours and their community, and ideally relevant local development authorities, a lot of the hard work required is forced into the early part of project design. This helps to reduce investment risks early on: either there is a good project to be undertaken or there is not.

There is, however, a lot of concern in communities, and elsewhere, that the report will end up as a one-sided report by the developers or their EIAR team rather than a report from all impacted or potentially impacted parties. There are already examples of this very one-sided approach by leading wind farm developers published during 2020. It is not the intention of this Guide to call out any individual stakeholders, but a Google Search will reveal current examples. It is useful for all concerned that that these are available as it demonstrates what a missed opportunity looks like.

To address this, the creation of a partnership between all parties to provide a holistic and inclusive platform from which to write such a report is needed. As demonstrated in the case studies, this requires coaching and support within the neighbours' community/ies and within the developer. It then typically requires someone trusted enough by both to pull it together and facilitate the first two years of its existence. Once formed, this partnership or forum can be used for all other locally-relevant aspects of project design. Typically, the project is no longer

a traditional wind farm as we have come to know then, but a project powered by wind energy. Such a platform enables mutual understanding, the timely sharing of information, informed decisions, a local advocacy for a well thought out project, and a spring board for a more sustainable and meaningful planning process.

Let's call this a Community-Based Partnership[2].

Through this Community-Based Partnership, a project is presented for permitting that satisfies the goals and standards sought after by the developer, near-neighbours, local community, and best-in-class planning & development strategies and guidance.

This approach requires shared, locally-developed and agreed goals created within the support system of a shared, locally-developed and agreed engagement process.

For the engagement leading to such goals to be successfully supported by all, the neighbours, host community and developer need to see that they will get a return on investment for their time and efforts. To ensure time and effort is not wasted, from the near-neighbours point of view, there is a clear request that the engagement must be built on ground-rules both parties agree on beforehand. Many developers say they don't have an issue with this. But there is limited evidence of this to date. The engagement leading up to the creation of this partnership is critical. In-depth discussions with the developers feeding into the creation of this Guide revealed that it is also in the interest of the developers to have such ground-rules defined and agreed at the earliest possible time.

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[1] the revised draft wind energy guidelines (2019) propose that developers have to produce a community report.
[2] Note that the need for such a partnership approach has been identified from quite a few angles. The https://www.nesc.ie/publications/wind-energy-in-ireland-building-community-engagement-and-social-support/ report from 2014 was quite strong in its recommendations for such a community-based partnership approach.

4. FINDING THE GOAL(S) TO COMMIT TO

To get the ball rolling, the formation of a Community-Based Partnership needs an initiating goal.

The Situation Analysis documented two goals articulated by neighbours and developers. These are by no means set in stone, but are reproduced below to prompt the required conversations.

To be clear, the developer referred to in the developer's goal became known during the creation of this Guide as 'The Ambitious Developer'. Such developers are committed to earn their profit within the context of good community relations, and through their actions, are eligible for investments committed to national and international best practice levels of CSR[3], social performance and ESG[4]. They become a developer trusted by neighbours to work with design briefs that support the sustainable development of both.

Again to be clear, CSR is understood here in the context of the ISO26000 definition, i.e. 'an organisation's responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that:
▶ contributes to Sustainable Development, including health and the welfare of society;
▶ takes into account the expectations of stakeholders (includes near neighbours of turbines, their host communities, the developer's team, the investors, the authorities and organisations who work to protect vulnerable wildlife, etc.);
▶ is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour;
▶ and is integrated throughout the organisation and implemented in its relations.

It is important to note that developers were open to be ambitious, and would welcome the required more holistic approach, **providing all developers had to commit to it.**

THE NEIGHBOURS	THE AMBITIOUS DEVELOPER
Goal: To ensure that only wind energy projects supporting locally sustainable pathways addressing community, environment and economic realities are advanced.	**Goal:** To only create projects that are financially sound, technically feasible, environmentally compatible and socially supported.

[3] CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility – see Appendix 3 for more details.
[4] ESG: Environmental, Social, Governance: increasing seen by project investors as a window into the future

Based on the goals a set of neighbours and developer developed for themselves, taking the above initiating goals as starting point if they wish, a common goal agreed to by all parties needs to be thrashed out locally at the beginning of each project. Better to be ambitious and fall short in a transparent and accountable manner that builds trust rather than start off with a goal that does not unite.

To get the conversation going, stay impact focused. Start at the house most likely to be nearest to a turbine. Be upfront about the possibilities and the potential impacts. If there are a number of possible turbine layouts under consideration, then it is the house most dominant in all layouts that gets approached first.

This approach is deemed somewhat problematic by developers as there is a fear that if neighbours are spoken with before land-owners sign land access agreements they may be left exposed to competing developers being forewarned and potentially creating a bidding war for land access. Or worse, secure a site in the middle of their potential site that would make it difficult to go ahead based on the land they have available. This is often quoted as a reason for developers not to enter early engagement with potential neighbours. It may therefore need government policy support. Other countries report the granting of 'exploration licences' where only one developer has the right to submit a wind energy proposal for a given area over a given timeframe. If such a solution would be forthcoming, then best practice from overseas, or from the extractive industry, could be introduced.

Again, there is no one size fits all. Other methodologies, designed locally with potentially impacted people using the experience of those involved, can also work. The main principles not to be ignored are (i) inclusivity – make sure that anyone possibly impacted does have their say, (ii) materiality – make sure that the issues deemed important by all those possibly impacted are on the table, (iii) make sure that all issues are acknowledged and addressed in a credibly fashion, (iv) don't behave like a dominating parent or a dictator: each decision has its rightful owner – respect this and work with this.

Whatever the methodology, the goals agreed need to be committed to by the whole developer's team (including the Board), all neighbours and landowners.

And remember, people in positions in companies do change. Agreements benefit from being clear and on paper. This also cultivates trust.

What follows is a potential initial common goal identified during consultation for this Guide. It is only placed here to provide a starting point. The final goal is the one all parties above commit to.
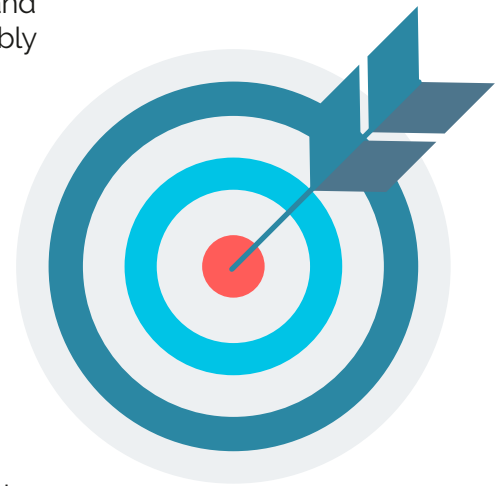
> **Common Goal:** only projects that add medium and long-term value to the host community, do not leave any individual worse off, and are attractive enough to secure the required investment are advanced.

There are quite a few complex issues that need to be dealt with to reach such a shared goal. Here are some:

Analysis of this goal from a near-neighbours' point of view

1. In most cases communities are not against green energy projects in their locality, nor are they against well designed value-adding wind energy projects. They are against damage being done locally. See Apendix 1 for a reminder of some of the issues.

2. Before anyone commits to this goal, neighbours, and indeed all involved will want 'value' and causes for being 'worse off' transparently identified and acknowledged so that this is not the cause of misunderstandings later.

3. The reason a community would be committed to the above goal is clear; yet, given the examples of projects that exist that have been exclusively designed by developers and their design and EIAR teams that dot the country, many neighbours ask why would a developer be committed to this. The developer will need to have thought this one through. To prompt this, the policy makers may need to help.

4. If the national need to build wind energy projects continues, communities want wind projects designed and built in partnership with local communities so that no more opportunities will be lost or unnecessary damage done. They want this partnership to: (i) support local cohesion and sustainable development, and (ii) build trust that there is a process that ensures this will happen.

5. Such a partnership enables neighbours to engage with a developer in a meaningful way. Within this partnership - the Community-Based Partnership - the above goal would be refined.

Analysis of this goal from a developer's point of view

1. A developer can confidently support this goal – at least initially - as they have the power to choose not to invest in a particular project should the negotiations pan out in a way that makes the required investment non-viable. This joint goal does not take away their veto.

2. A developer also understands that a clear statement has come from many communities around Ireland that, simply put, too many turbines from the wind industry are being imposed in the wrong – or less than optimal – place, or in a way that is splitting, and so weakening community cohesion and wealth. Addressing this is essential for the longer term health of the industry.

3. The developer, for their long-term success, understands that to address this not only makes sense, but also that they will save time and resources in projects today if they can meet the above goal. It would enable them to be in a much stronger position to earn and maintain local support for their projects, and so obtain an easier and less costly route to planning permission and success.

As mentioned already, to resonate with all parties, such a goal requires a clear and agreed engagement process to help it be appropriately adapted at a potential project level, and agreed to.

A first step in creating such a process is to engage on ground rules. These need to be agreed up front. The ground rules need to be jointly identified and agreed between the neighbours and the developer, and then clearly committed to as a basis for all engagement on decisions going forward.

Done well, this process can build a lot of trust and mutual understanding, and pave the way for many constructive conversations leading to a mutually agreed project. It is made operational through the creation of the Community-Based Partnership.

It is said that one of the main reasons developers undertake tokenistic engagement, and dismiss or downgrade complaints against them, is that they don't know how they could ameliorate the local impacts to a level that a complainant would accept.

This may be true, and certainly an acceptable sustainable resolution requires respectful and meaningful discussion between the two parties. To build the level of trust required for such meaningful conversations, each party will want the engagement to truly address their concerns. This underlines the need for an engagement process similar to the one outlined in this Guide.

The suggested starting goal, like the Guide, has been created through listening to many neighbours who have had to live through the creation of major local projects in their area. It has also had significant input from developers – largely at project management level, but also at ownership level. The ethos of shared goal setting is a common thread going through all the successful projects the approach captured in this Guide – termed Smart Engagement – is based on.
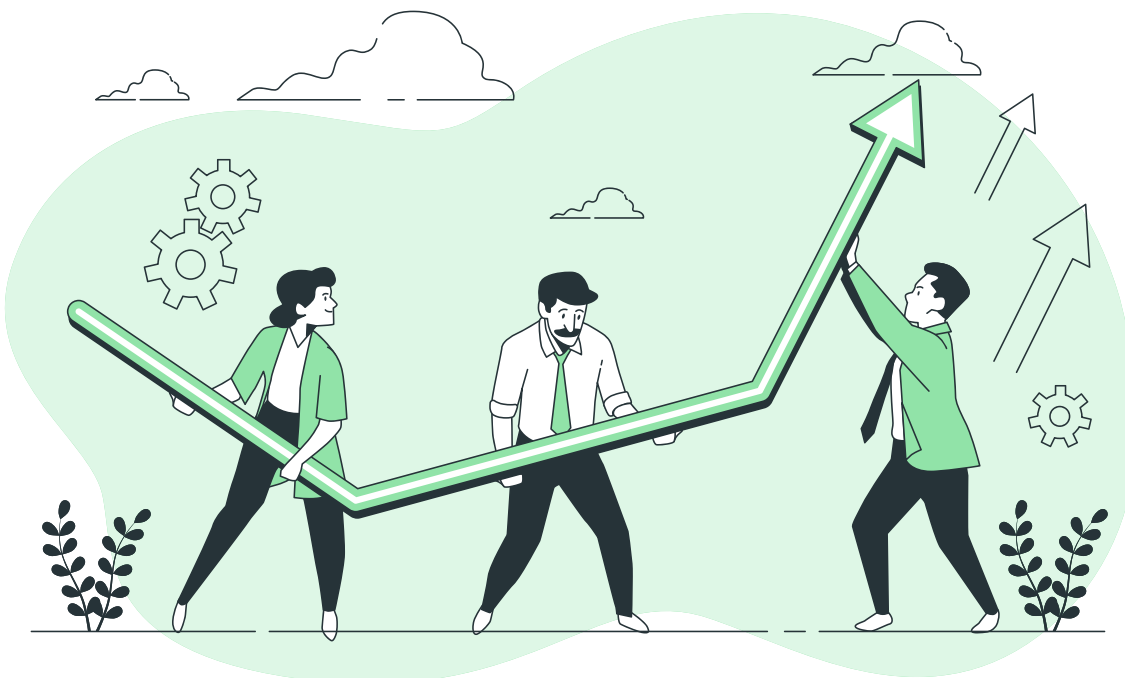
5. THE START OF THE CONVERSATION

To start a meaningful conversation linked to harnessing the wind energy of Ireland, there are typically some basic bits of information to be shared and examined between the potential neighbours and the developer before there will be enough trust to advance.

The steps outline below shows the order of some steps of this conversation.

THE NEIGHBOURS	THE AMBITIOUS DEVELOPER
	1. Introduces oneself.
	2. Outlines what the wind resource is in the area.
	3. Outlines what the technology being considered looks like and what potential impacts are associated with it.
4. Wants to know who might be impacted and how.	
5. Wants to know how harnessing this wind resource might negatively impact local homes, livelihoods and quality of life. Or more directly, from a human point of view, wants to know the full impact on oneself, the area one lives in, and on the life savings that the home represents. (Appendix 1 for more).	
	6. Wants to know the best way to engage with near-neighbours and their community to examine the local pros and cons of a wind energy project.

7. Examine together, 'on the back of an envelope', what a viable project might look like based on a scoping of the issues in terms of set-back, protected areas, suitable land, etc.
8. Start talking about an engagement process to acknowledge and address issues, examine goals and mobilise opportunities.

This takes us invariably to the need for some ground rules to enable engagement to happen. It is pretty clear that such a conversation in today's climate would not progress very far without them...

6. GROUND RULES

THE NEIGHBOURS	THE AMBITIOUS DEVELOPER

To ensure trust **is built and preserved**, it is recommended to agree ground rules (GR) for engagement between neighbours and a developer at the outset. They may differ from community to community and developer to developer. The important thing is that they have to reflect what people need in order to proceed towards a partnership. To help prepare the rules, what follows is a starting point: it is a synthesis of commonly requested conditions members of local communities have asked for in Ireland before they are prepared to sit down and examine a proposal with a developer. Once the ground rules are agreed and respected, meaningful engagement is so much easier. Ultimately, the outlining and development of concerns and aspirations needs to be informed by an open conversation between the neighbours and developers. That way, the important considerations for decisions to be made can be identified up front. These rules help us get there.

Some Ground Rules proposed by neighbours	For the developer's exercise (as outlined after the GRs below).
1. Remember that from the moment someone learns of a potential wind farm in their area, it is the start of a stressful and time-consuming process that they never asked for. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the developer at the earliest stage to agree with the neighbours how information is to be shared and how decisions are to be made. It is also incumbent upon the developer to make this process as easy as possible for the potentially near-neighbours so that time is not wasted.	
2. Health is NOT negotiable and the onus is on the developer to ensure there are no negative health impacts due to the proposed project.	
3. Impact on property price and other issues important to near-neighbours are to be assessed, monitored and addressed.	

4. Engagement between the developer and the neighbours is to be conducted in full respect of the time being made available by the neighbours. It needs to be transparent, complete, inclusive, responsive and accountable, with all concerns being addressed by team members who have the authority to make sure action happens at the end of each conversation.	
5. As the proposals, opportunities and risks become clearer, an open and transparent conversation needs to be held to identify who else needs to be included in the assessment process of a potential project.	
6. The steps to be undertaken to ensure mutually respectful engagement and decision-making between neighbours and the developer are to be negotiated, agreed and recorded before the project is advanced. This becomes the agreed engagement process.	
7. Some decisions belong to the near-neighbours, some to the developer and some are jointly owned. Decision ownership needs to be clarified at the earliest possible stage. Breakdown to include (i) list and timing of the key decisions to be made, (ii) a review of this for completeness by the neighbours and their community; (iii) decision ownership / interest is then assigned and agreed with potentially impacted people (neighbours and developer, and if possible, Statutory stakeholders). The process outlining how these decisions are to be taken is also to be agreed.	
8. Engagement does NOT mean that the person engaging is in agreement with the proposed project. It is to be assumed that all parties have significant concerns with, or are even downright opposed to, the project proposal until they state otherwise.	
9. Community funds are NOT to be used to garner support from nearby centres of population and politicians, without the developer first having responsibly resolved issues that directly impact those within the potential impact zone (e.g. due to noise, property price, health worries). The impact zone for noise, with reducing intensity, can typically be anything up to 2km from a turbine but can be more or less. This impact distance is to be transparently assessed for each project, for each set of impacts and conditions. To ensure the use of the community benefit funds is correctly managed and does not split communities, all community aspects are to be designed in partnership with near-neighbours, and NOT before impact concerns are acknowledged and addressed.	
10. Permission must be sought and given before anyone's contact information or concerns, opinions, etc can be shared with others.	

11. Discussions throughout this process need to address all aspects of local sustainable development, and not be hijacked by a subgroup of issues expressed by the people with the louder voices.

12. When a commitment is made, the word 'ensure' is to be used rather than 'assure'.
To **assure** someone is to remove someone's doubts, vs.
To **ensure** something is to make sure it happens – i.e. to guarantee it. Ref: https://www.grammarly.com/blog/assure-ensure-insure/

13. Basic meeting management needs to be respected: Invitation and proposed agenda sent out earlier, everybody arriving on time, everybody arriving prepared, moderator and minute keeper defined, only one speaks at one time, respect, no personal attacks, minutes are kept with a clear "who does what until when" outcome, minutes are agreed on by the participants, either at the meeting or via email up to 3 days after the meeting, before being finalised.

14. Where a community of neighbours is not yet sufficiently united, support is to be given to the neighbours to work together to help understand the issues, freely communicate with each other and the developer, and build understandings based on non-bias information.

A useful exercise for a developer or a neighbour to go through these ground rules (GR) is as follows: a. Put them into the left-hand side of a two-column table. b. Complete the right-hand column of the table under a title with 2 questions: 'i) What concerns would we have with these ground rules? and ii) how would we address these concerns…. Examples for a developer undertaking this exercise are given below for GRs 2, 3 & 6. These are conversation starters and would benefit from being worked through in a partnership between State, developer and neighbours.

Ground Rule Number	i) What concerns would a developer have with these ground rules? and ii) how they propose to address these concerns….
GR 2: Health is **NOT** negotiable and the onus is on the developer to ensure there are no negative health impacts due to the proposed project.	**For GR 2:** **i)** We typically state that there are no proven negative health effects from wind turbines. To prove there are no negative effects may be extremely expensive or impossible, because how do we prove a negative? To make such a statement could require a lot of independent research. **ii)** If the country deemed it was necessary, can we get support from the State for this? So that all these related questions are answered from an independent authority.

For GR 3: Impact on property price and other issues important to near-neighbours are to be assessed, monitored and addressed through transparent communication between the developer and the neighbours.	**For GR 3:** **i)** We typically state that there is no proven property price reduction. How do we address our fears that if we measure and then have to acknowledge there are externalities to be compensated, that we don't end up in a spiral of costs that can get out of control? **ii)** Can we get support from the State for this? So that all these related questions are answered from an independent authority. And if there needs to be a property price guarantee put in place then this is done by a State agency – financed by a fund generated by a tax on turbines closer than a certain distance from a house?
For GR 6: The steps to be undertaken to ensure mutually respectful engagement and decision-making between near neighbours and the developer are to be negotiated, agreed and recorded before the project is advanced. This becomes the agreed engagement process.	**For GR 6:** **i)** What if we introduced a more expensive engagement process than another developer – would this make us less competitive in the auctions? And a critical issue here is one of rights and responsibilities – under the new guidelines, the developer is only required to prepare a community report that the planning authority will weigh up. This implies agreements are helpful but not required. We typically want discussions to reach agreement but if an agreement cannot be reached can we go ahead anyway? **ii)** What is the real ratio in cost between (a) an engagement that would result in a win-win partnership and (b) continuing with the legal and planning status quo with their inherent delays and costs? And if we were to go for the former – is there sufficient evidence to show that it would work? In today's world, will we really be able to avoid open community discussions concerning compensation, partnership & benefit distribution?
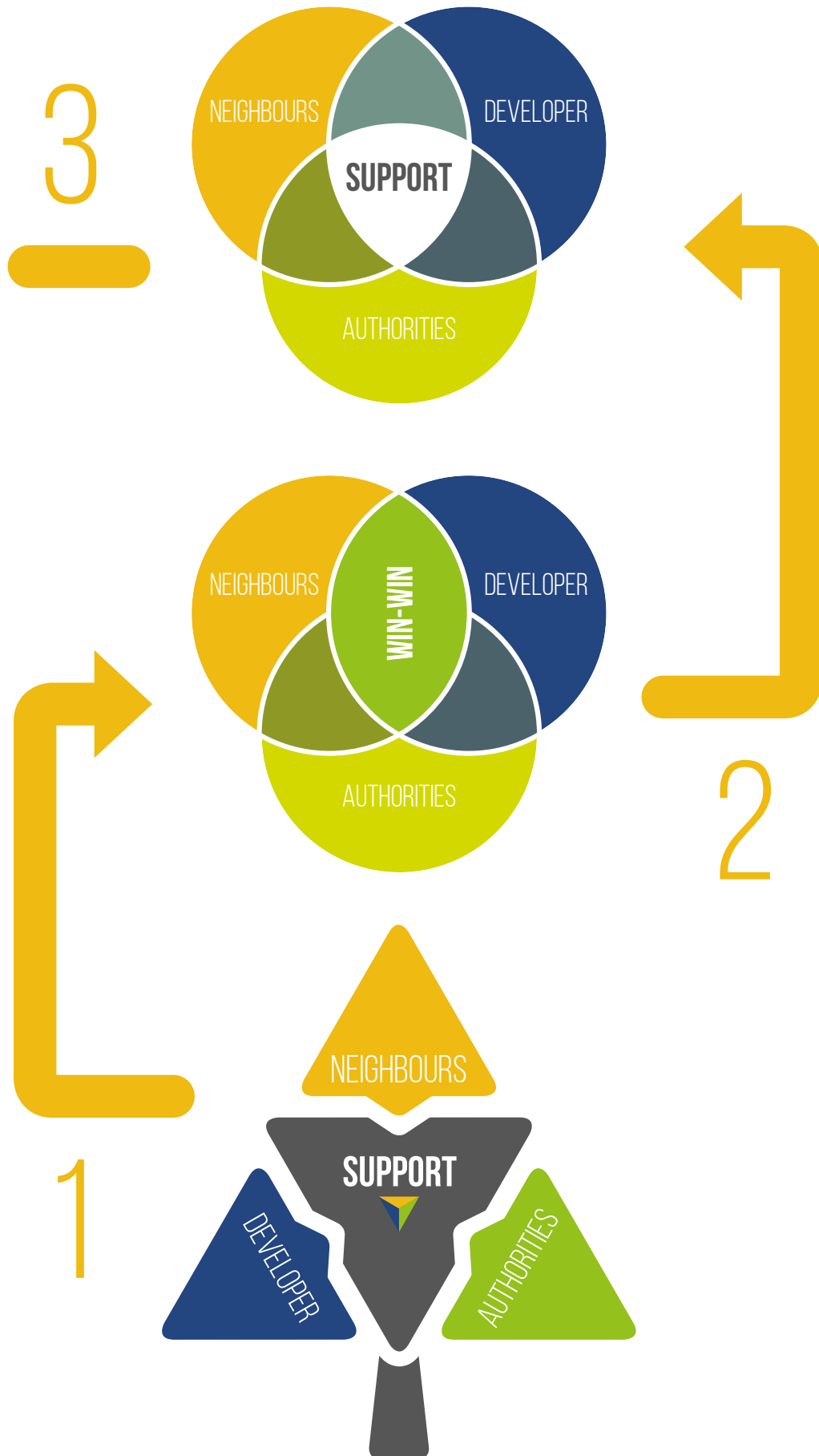
Figure 2: Transforming the mentality and vision into a framework and process

7. ONCE WE ENGAGE, HOW WILL THE RELATED DECISIONS BE TAKEN?

If we are to have mutual trust, and reach a fair win-win project, it is vital to agree at an early stage what the key decisions are, who is at the table for each decision, and who ultimately decides on the issues most important to each party.

It is a very human thing to want to be at the table for decisions that might impact us. Community members need a feeling of control over the decisions being taken that can impact their community. They also need to feel that their joint ideas, ideals and development vision is

reflected in any project that is given a local go ahead.

To this end, and for many of the reasons highlighted by this programme to help earn local support, the win-win partnership decision-making model is proposed. To operationalise this, as we move forward from vision to action, let's call the win-win zone shown in Figure 2 the Community-Based Partnership Zone. Or the 'Partnership Zone' for short, as shown in Figure 3.

This model is made up of three overlapping circles, with one circle representing the neighbours, one the developer with its proposed project, and a third representing relevant authorities or State bodies (or other people or organisations further away who have a stake in the project). In the spirit of the law, the third circle also include the proposed project's impact assessments: only in this approach their creation reports into the Partnership Zone, rather than solely into the developer as currently is the case.

In the Partnership Zone, the developer and the neighbours share decision ownership.

The people in each zone own the decisions that impact those in their zone the most. For example, the developer needs to decide if this investment makes sense to them – that is a decision for the developers alone. Whereas the neighbours and their community need to decide whether the final project respects the community's development vision and constraints, including whether all aspects of the project impacts (potential or definite, positive or negative) on residents and the environment have been considered and fine-tuned enough for the project to be supported. How the decisions are taken where these two interests overlap belongs in the Partnership Zone.
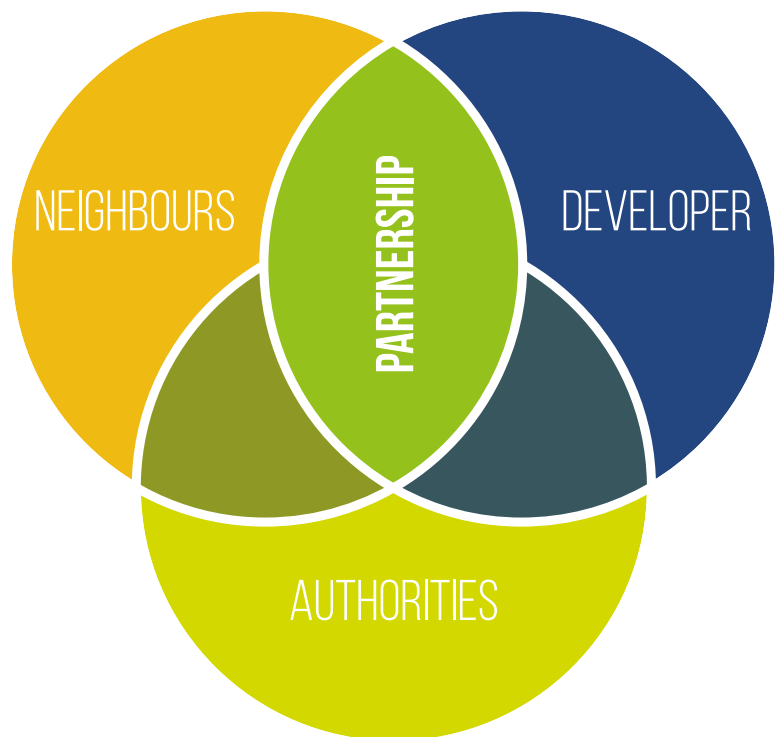
Figure 3: The partnership zone

If you were to apply this model to the decisions regarding the concerns expressed in Appendix 1, then you will see that the ownership of the vast majority of the decisions relating to these concerns belong in the Partnership Zone. To date, most, if not all, projects that have experienced opposition have not respected this simple fact. Decisions have been imposed, not shared. This portrays the wind industry as invaders. The risk of stronger opposition is high, as is the creation of a self-imposed dead-end. It can be seen here that it is the developers' actions – or inactions - that are cultivating the opposition. Then if benefit funds are thrown into this mix – it becomes clearer why people perceive these as a request by developers that blind eyes be turned. The extractive industry world-wide knows that this is a critical process mistake. This mistake needs to be removed from wind energy projects if local support is to be restored.

8. THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN BETWEEN THE NEIGHBOURS & THE DEVELOPER

Simply moving the pertinent decision-making from the developer to the Partnership Zone will not magically fix the problem. The Partnership Zone, just like any new organisation, will need to develop the communication channels, trust, team building and governance structure to progress confidentially and successfully. A bit like a scrum in a rugby match between Leinster and Munster: there is no point in engaging unless both teams are ready for the encounter; otherwise the whole thing can so easily collapse, with the consequential damage that that brings.

Based on experience in the extractive industries, and more and more in wind farm projects, the developer and the community typically first need a structured strengthening of their capacities to successfully build and optimise the benefits from this Partnership within their own camps; and then as they meet together. Some examples of required preparations are presented in Chapters 9 and 10.

A typical process that will enable this partnership to form is presented in Figure 4. The clearly expressed agreements reached at the end of each phase enable the progression to the next phase.

An example of how a developer approaches building the partnership zone is given below. This reflects steps taken in recent projects. Note that these steps may need to be different for each community. Ultimately, the steps should be designed to meet the needs of each party, and the local and developer's reality, culture and aspirations. The numbering and colour coding links these back to Figure 4.
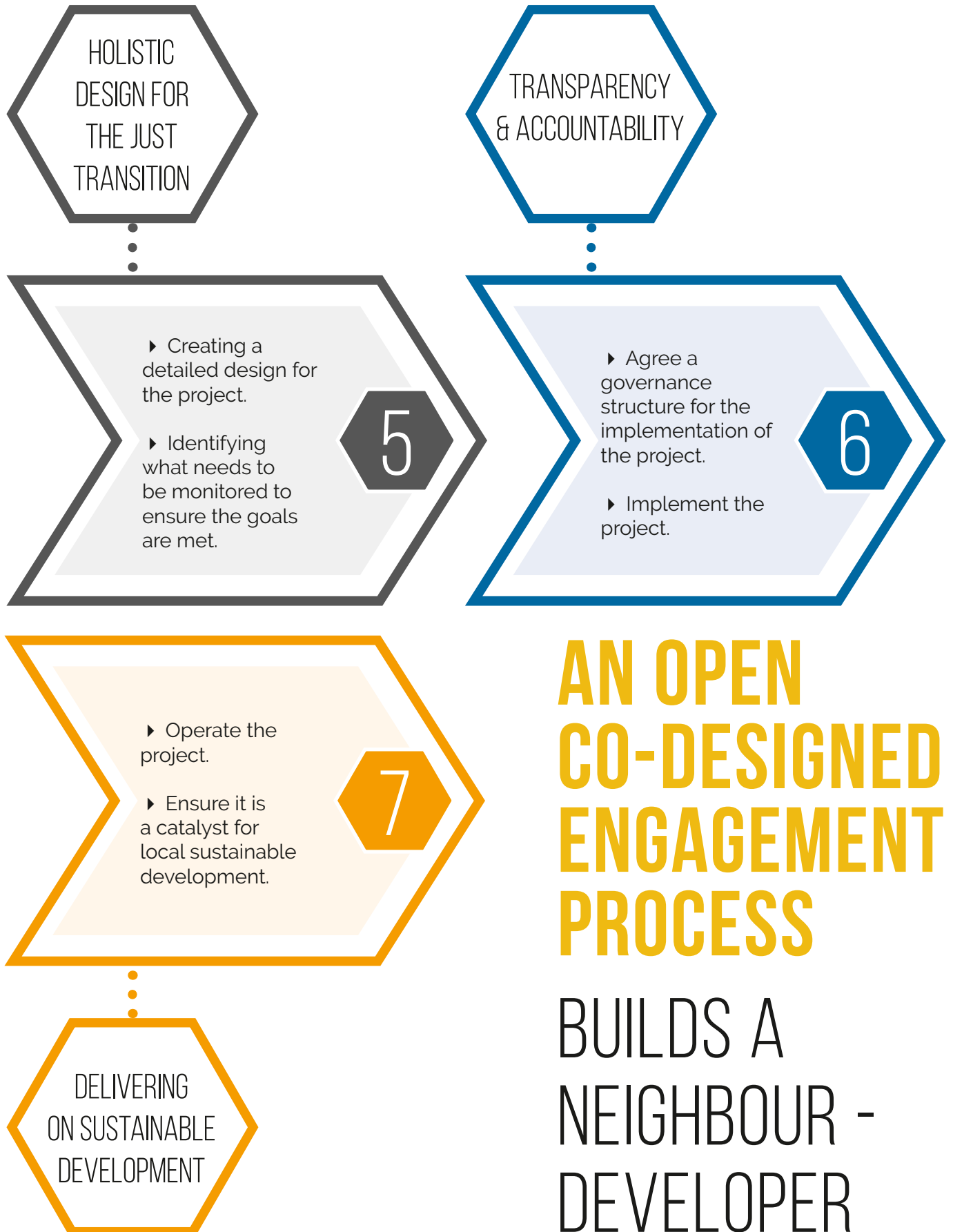
STEP	ACTION
1A	The decision-makers of a developer's team introduce themselves, and the potential of a project, to everyone within the project's Impact Zone (see Figure 5 from the Situation Analysis). They proactively listen to what they are being told. This step should first be announced via a letter to everyone with an interest outlining the proposed approach. An initial draft of this letter should be refined via one-to-one meetings with the closest neighbours[5]. Ground rules are discussed. Meetings should always start with the nearest home and going out until there is no more potential impact. Some examples of this are given in the case studies.
1B	In particular, the developer's team should work hard to understand the challenges, concerns and aspirations of the people their decisions can impact – this is foundational. The Situation Analysis, elements of this guide and many other components of this programme have been created to help with this.
1C	To go through more detail, a second round of meetings takes place once neighbours have had time to digest the possibility of a potential proposed project. All potential negative impacts are discussed. The developer keeps the proactive listening hat on. It is not solution time yet. Draft ground rules are agreed on.
2A	At times and places agreed with the neighbours, further meetings take place to discuss potential layouts and the pros and cons of a potential project. These meetings help examine synergies that could be developed through harnessing the energy of the local wind. All questions and concerns are collected, and shared with those who raised them to check for correctness.
2B	Once approved by the neighbours, the developer sends a copy of all questions and concerns received to everyone in the various Impact Zones; and includes a copy of the ground rules. People are asked to point out what information is still missing and how they would like this to be addressed. This is clarified in a further set of meetings.
2C	An engagement process to define joint goals based on the foundation of the above is presented to each household. Feedback on the goals is collated. A case for joint goals is built.

[5] Note that during the creation of this Guide there was considerable feedback that we, as a nation, should be more proactive than waiting until the developer knocks on the door. Where there is an untapped economical resource, developers do come. There is a feeling that we should be setting up teams in each county to identify areas where wind turbines, and other renewable energy technologies, might be acceptable based on a fair impact and benefit-sharing for people in the impact zone, and significant contribution to local sustainable development. Such a model may need to be government, or even community, driven. A model of robust assessments, local partnerships, mitigated impacts for affected people, coupled with real tangible local benefits would need to be placed on the table. The current idea of one size fits all that is in the RESS (Renewable Electricity Support Scheme) raises concern if it ignores the reality that impacts, impacted areas, and community dynamics vary from site to site. And it does not require the measurement of externalities to inform compensation. For this partnership approach to work, many neighbours have said they would need support from a professional paid by the State or the interested Developer, or both, to act on behalf of and support the local community. This role is deemed necessary to help the balance between the "two big cats" and the "mouse" mentioned in the introduction to this Guide. This note has not been included in the above steps as developers consulted do not yet feel it is realistic at this stage given tight timeframes. Given the increased amount of local concern around the current model the developers employ, this may merit further examination. Such a model could likely partner with the LEADER programme and similar local development initiatives.

THERE IS AN ENERGY RESOURCE

HOW MIGHT HARNESSING THIS FIT IN LOCALLY?

1

▸ Getting to know each other.

▸ Getting to know each other's goals, challenges, fears and aspirations.

2

▸ Looking at the pros and cons of each other's goals.

▸ Examining where it would make sense to have joint goals.

3

▸ Agreeing a decision making structure going forward.

▸ Creating a conceptual design for an energy project.

4

▸ Undertaking impact assessments.

▸ Identifying the variables to be addressed in the detailed design.

TRUST BUILDING

PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT

Figure 4: An open co-designed engagement process to build a neighbour - developer partnership to earn local support for a jointly designed project. Uses a Smart Engagement approach.

HOLISTIC DESIGN FOR THE JUST TRANSITION

▶ Creating a detailed design for the project.

▶ Identifying what needs to be monitored to ensure the goals are met.

5

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

▶ Agree a governance structure for the implementation of the project.

▶ Implement the project.

6

▶ Operate the project.

▶ Ensure it is a catalyst for local sustainable development.

7

DELIVERING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AN OPEN CO-DESIGNED ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

BUILDS A NEIGHBOUR - DEVELOPER PARTNERSHIP

STEP	ACTION
3A	The developer creates, engages on and distributes leaflets that present themselves, the process so far, the goals discussed and their proposal (including a reasoned timetable for discussion). Included is a process for feedback on how the concerns regarding their proposal are to be gathered, assessed and, ultimately managed should a project get a green light.
3B	Working with everyone within the Impact Zones of the proposed turbine sites, as the proposal, its risks and opportunities become clearer, parties discuss and agree what other stakeholders should be included in the process.
3C	Before decisions start to be taken, the neighbours and the developer work together to form a governance structure for the Partnership Zone. Clarity on what the decision-making powers of this partnership are is created – through the robust engagement process agreed in previous steps. This structure becomes known as the Partnership.
3D	If an agreement to go to the next level is made, the information developed to date is shared with all in the Partnership Zone, the Impact Zones (should some of these be larger than the Partnership Zone) and other interested parties.
	Check: The list of those being engaged with at this stage should be inclusive of everyone who has any potential impact from the project, or who can in any way impact the project going forward.
3E	The developer drafts answers to the questions relevant to them. The other parties to the partnership do the same. How concerns are to be addressed is documented. These are reviewed by all parties until they are sufficiently clear and agreed.
3F	The Questions and Answers (Q&A) are printed and distributed to all parties. The Q&A is accompanied by a cover letter from the developer, and from the Partnership, that outlines the proposed next steps. Senior members of the developer's team are seen to be very much involved in the process.
3G	The proposed engagement process between the local neighbours and the developer is finalised within the Partnership. A project proposal is finalised and the assessment process begins.

STEP	ACTION
3H	With the material risks becoming clearer, the Partnership agrees the timing, content, roles & responsibilities, and resources needed to assess the proposed project. This is needed to ensure that the risks, and their mitigation, are well documented, understood and managed.
4A	To do this, a project assessment process that reports into the Partnership is designed (a Community-Based Impact Assessment – CBIA – see Appendix 2 for an example process). Participants are supported to get as involved as they wish in assessing the proposals. Access to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is included in this. Appendix 2 outlines an example of how this process might look, and the beginning of its co-design. Once the process is agreed, the CBIA is typically much shorter and much less time-consuming than it first appears, if trust has been earned.
4B	Once the risks are fully understood, the Partnership agrees a process that ensures the potential for positive impacts are well documented, understood and included. **(Under this step, the proposals of the government's RESS are closely examined, and the method to apply them locally is agreed.)**
5A	Examples of various project proposals – with their pros and cons - are shared and those options most appropriate for the local neighbourhood are agreed upon. The pros should include a clear description of the overall goal of the project justifying why it should be considered in the first place[6]. Engagement is with all interested parties at the agreed engagement levels.
5B	A project design preferred by the Partnership is chosen in consultation with all stakeholders. Note that the win-win or no-deal policy needs to apply if the consultation is to be in good will: after all, at this stage all members in the partnership should be working together to identify the win-win project. If they can't then there most likely is not one – and so planning would most likely be refused later anyway, at increased costs to the developer and community in time, money and opportunity costs.
5C	KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are agreed to track how issues important to each party within the Partnership Zone are managed.

[6] This is to include, in simple concise language, answers to fundamental balancing questions like how much fossil fuel back up is needed to enable this proposed wind project be used by the national grid: only telling part of the story undercuts trust and trust can be often more easily eroded than built.

STEP	ACTION
5D	A draft governance structure to ensure the correct balance of power between all parties in the partnership Zone for the project going forward is co-designed and agreed. This is to include, should the project be given planning, how decisions agreed to date will be delivered on and tracked, who is at the table, who takes which decision, how is the discussion around this kept transparent for all interested parties, etc. This goes into the Community Report for planning.
6A	A Community Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report is drawn up within the Partnership Zone.
6B	Application for planning permission is conducted from within the Partnership Zone.
7A	If the project gets planning approval: the governance structure is put in place with legal responsibilities clearly defined.
7B	The roll-out of the project designed in the Partnership Zone is assured.

9. A STAKEHOLDER PANEL INSTEAD?

The partnership needs to be more than a stakeholder panel or community benefit fund allocation committee.

A question often asked by developers, county councillors, etc. is 'do we really need a full partnership? Won't an advisory committee or a Stakeholder Panel, or such work instead?

This question is not limited to just energy or wind energy projects. It has been raised during all projects where Smart Engagement (an engagement process that delivers a project that is not just financially viable, technically feasible and environmentally compatible, but is also locally accepted, or even wanted, one) was applied throughout Europe.

Referring to projects that have improved their stakeholder engagement, an organisation called CSR Europe stated 'Stakeholder panels have increasingly

Figure 5: Stakeholder panels tend to be formed by people who represent the different sets of issues being discussed (picture from CSR Europe)

A Panel can advise the company to do much more strategic community engagement; but only a partnership with each member of that community can define what that means. The approach outlined here up to the end of Chapter 8 outlines a response to the growing feeling of being disenfranchised that more and more citizens experience. It is a strategic and systematic response. One that addresses the unease at its roots, and one that can deliver a sustainable project.

become a solution for corporate engagement with stakeholders in order to move from a defensive position to a comprehensive strategy covering both opportunities and risks.'

Yet, they tend to be assembled by a company, or an organisation working on their behalf, and they meet only once or several times per year, to exchange on pre-identified issues.

They inform corporate policy, action or performance. But they are company centric. The stakeholders are consulted, not partnered with. Applied to the context of earning broad community support, their inherent assumption that a few people can represent a whole community is flawed: who has everyone's trust in a host community for wind energy projects in Ireland? Who would every neighbour say the following about: 'yes, that person will protect my interests in front of this developer'? And who would help stop a 'divide and rule' situation from arising? Who will provide the independent advice? Who would act as the honest broker between all parties?
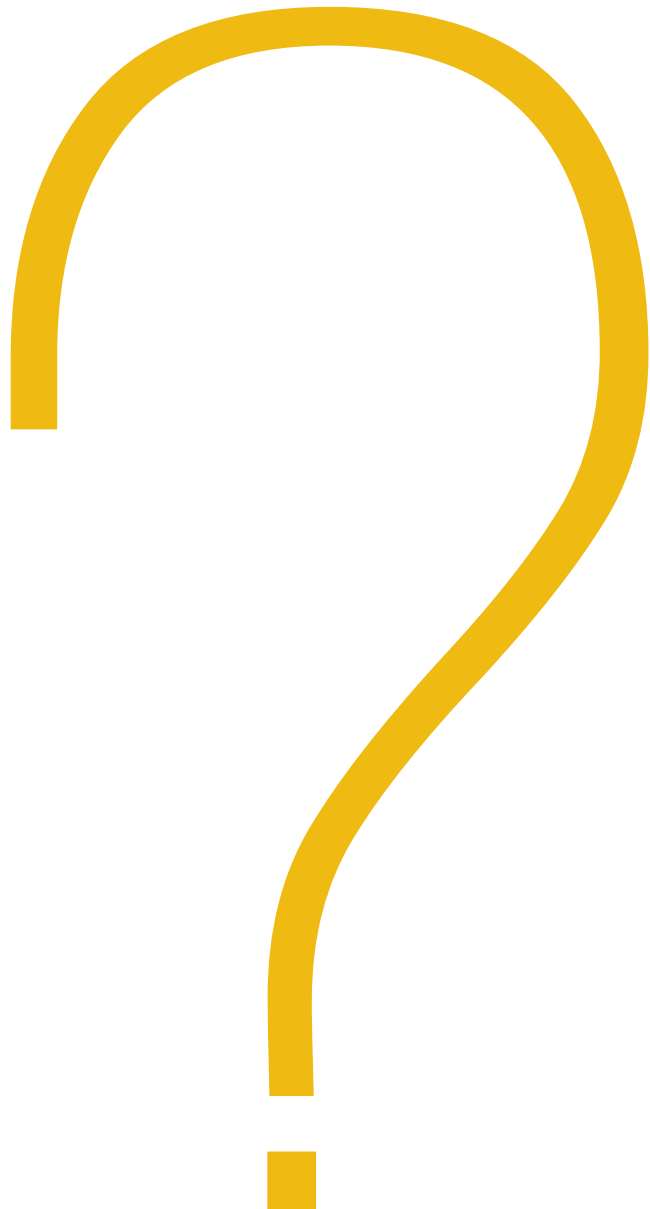
10. COMMUNITY PREPARATION

Community members have an inherent reflex to protect their social, physical and environmental systems of support. A community, indeed, can be defined as a group of people having a common desire for ongoing actions that strengthen their natural environment, economy and social well-being; and a strong aversion to actions that go against this. A community's attitude is influenced by longer term realities, while needing to deal with shorter- and medium-term challenges.

Due to these drivers, a community is generally open to partnerships that maintain or enhance cultural, economic and community well-being while protecting, or even restoring / enhancing, the natural environment upon which people, homes and economies depend.

Engaging with a developer (be this an outside commercial developer or an internal community developer) is, therefore, a daunting task for many people: is this a road to build what is inherently important to the community; or would it undermine it?

Based on the feedback received during the research for this programme, it can be said that news of a potential new wind farm in the neighbourhood in Ireland in 2020 generally brings terror and sorrow to many[7]. This journey is often started by a google online of what this might mean to you as a neighbour. That news is rarely joyful. Then, reaching out to people around Ireland who have gone through the experience of having a wind farm forced onto their neighbourhood yields little better news, if any at all.

Yet, like most potential changes in an area, there can be positives as well as negatives. Indeed, designed well, in an open and transparent fashion that builds social cohesion, the right sites can be found for wind turbines and useful long-term partnerships made with these potential 'new neighbours'. Designed poorly, turbine siting tends to result in the opposite. Note that the quality of the design – the plan for something before it is made – is judged by the eye of the beholder. The chapters up till now have hopefully outlined why this eye needs to be that of both the community and the developer; not just the developer.

To this end, being prepared tips the balance into the side of the positives; or should a wind farm really not be where a developer is proposing to put it, being prepared provides reasoned and well-developed arguments as to why the proposal should not go ahead. From the perspective of the country as a whole, a general guiding rule should be that good positive sites be used, while sites where the negative impacts are not mitigatable, or justifiable by enhanced local sustainable development, should be avoided.

To make such a decision requires a bigger picture vision of where the community is headed and what can

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[7] This is collaborated by a number of independent academic researches – one of the latest coming from ESRI in early 2021 https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RB202105_0.pdf where they found that just 36% of the population of Ireland are willing to accept the development of wind farms within 5 km of their homes. The resulting fear is exacerbated by leaders of the wind industry still making strong statements of how much support they have from local communities: which in turn adds to community members' feeling that they are, yet again, not being listened to, acknowledged and taken into consideration. This is a vicious circle that needs to stop.

be good, or not, for that community. A good starting point is a community's sustainable development vision. But very few communities in Ireland currently have a community-wide inclusive one; addressing this before or by the process to design an energy project will make for a better end result.

Clarifying your Sustainable Development Vision

When a community is faced by a project proposal by a developer (or by any project proponents for that matter) there are a series of universal questions they are faced with from the very beginning. These include:

1. What exactly is this proposal, and in whose interest is it being proposed here?
2. What would the impact of this proposal be if built? On us, on our neighbours, on our community?
3. Who is behind this proposal, and will they be open and honest with us during an examination of this proposal?
4. If they are only prepared to give a one-sided version of what they are planning, and what the impacts would be, how can we find out the whole story? Who can we trust?
5. Who else in the community might be concerned and open to give time to undertake this assessment?
6. Should we team together as a community to address this potential threat?
7. Who is our community, and what would we agree on?

Once these questions are addressed, a community is in a much stronger position to proactively and constructively engage with a potential developer. They have, or are on their way to have, a common vision for their sustainable development that unites them as a community.

In many cases in Ireland, this does not yet exist. For years 'community visioning and planning' has been 'delegated' to county councils or even departments in government. Sometimes people even think the Dáil can do it. Successful communities nationwide and worldwide come down to the activities of the people therein.

Therefore, if wind farms - and other energy projects - are to be rolled out in a way that supports, rather than undermines, the government's commitment to local sustainable development and social cohesion, there is work to be done in each host community before a wind farm is designed, or even maybe proposed.

Addressing this is a very important step in earning local support.

Once sufficient trust is present to enable meaningful dialogue, the above includes identifying the current sustainable development reality and what a desirable, or a version of the predictable, future looks like[8].

Some communities have already started this journey and have influenced this chapter of this Guide, for example:
 ▶ Some through organising their tourism section – e.g. Loop Head Tourism;
 ▶ Some through organising their energy section – e.g. the Aran Ireland

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[8] **Predictable future:** this type of future is the one we 'predict' based on our sense and judgements of how things are likely to go in the future. It is informed by the past and hence tends to look like a version of the past – although perhaps if we try hard, a better version of the past. **Desirable future:** is that future we would like to have. It is a picture of a future we may wish for, though not yet fulfilled. As it has not happened yet it is a future that is up for invention, it can be created. It doesn't have to come from the past, though can take pieces from it to be included, but can be created from nothing through imagination, exploration and conversation.

Source: being examined within the community in the Loop Head Together Case Study

Energy Coop (CFOAT), The Loop Head Energy Action Partnership (LEAP), the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities initiative, local projects supported by Energy Agencies,

▶ Some have built wind turbines – e.g. Templederry,

▶ Some are looking larger at the bigger sustainable development spectrum energy – e.g. the Dingle Hub, the Aran Islands' Development Coops, and Loop Head Together.

When considering this, one thing that needs to be kept in mind as we reach out to learn from other countries is that there is not a culture of community-led energy projects in Ireland. In Denmark, years ago a farmer had their own small tractor and their own way of generating energy. In Ireland we just had the tractor. In ireland today, the tractors are becoming so big that farmers let contractors buy them, and then they work with the tractors. The turbines have come to Ireland as 'big tractors'. If we want an energy culture, there is some further thinking and work to be done to learn from our agricultural industry. Agriculture after all is all about tapping solar energy and turning it into food products. Another

set of experiences close to energy we can learn from is peat in the midlands – the Energy Systems Integration Partnership Programme (ESIPP) has recently conducted research in this area. Currently, community generated energy flowing onto the grid accounts for a tiny part of the energy being generated in Ireland. To make sure that the energy revolution supports rather than undermines local sustainable development, this home truth needs to be kept front and foremost. To earn local support for energy projects in Ireland, they must be co-designed in partnership with the local community. This takes considerable capacity building within communities, and indeed most probably within developers and authorities too.

To help show that such an approach is totally realistic, this RDD programme has initiated case studies to provide examples of what a process that prepares for this looks like on the ground. See both the LEAP (Loop Head Energy Action Partnership) and Loop Head Together. Learning has also come from the other initiatives mentioned above.

Activating the path to get there

A goal is to arrive at a community / neighbours' vision that is clear and psychologically owned by a representative portion of the community, with all members in the community having given their views, or having had a realistic and user-friendly opportunity to do so. Upon this foundation, proposals to support the creation of the future the neighbours are

** Loop Head Tourism

* Loop Head Energy Action Partnership
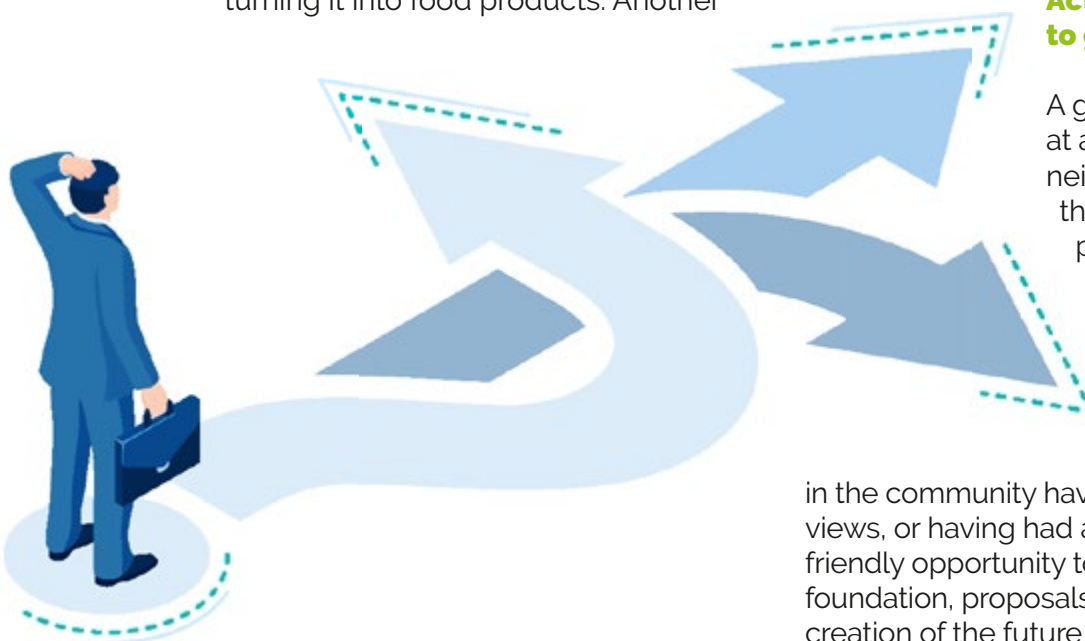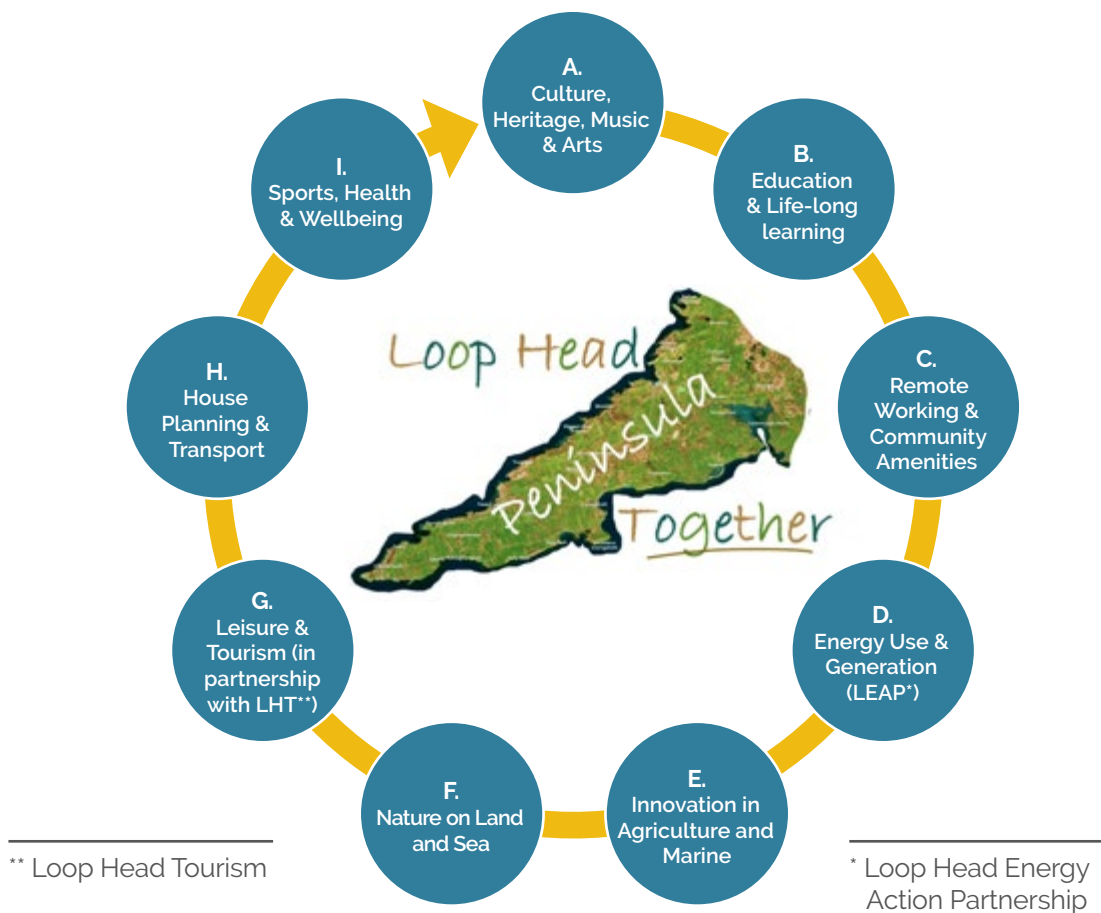
Figure 6: Focus groups identified as key to building local sustainable development by the community on the Loop Head Peninsula, Co Clare.

motivated by are looked at within local focus groups. An example coming from the Loop Head Together case study cultivated as part of this RDD programme is presented in Figure 6. This community – made up of three parishes - saw all these themes as interlinked and needing to be addressed in a holistic fashion if there was then to be a truly useful discussion around the role of energy, or other, projects within the local context.

If, as the sustainable development goals become clearer, wind energy is considered to be a good candidate to catalyse solutions, then the focus group responsible for energy (D in the case of Loop Head) works with knowledgeable and objective individuals to examine

the pros and cons of differing options. Should there be a real opportunity to develop a commercial windfarm, they may choose to do this with a developer. Should they decide that partnerships with wave energy, offshore wind or biomass would be more appropriate, then they progress accordingly. As an adaptation of the old saying goes – may the best goal win.

Such a process would result in a robust foundation for a Partnership Zone between the host community and the developer. Ideally this partnership would have a strong link with, or even the active participation from, relevant members of the authorities. This latter tends to depend on the conversations
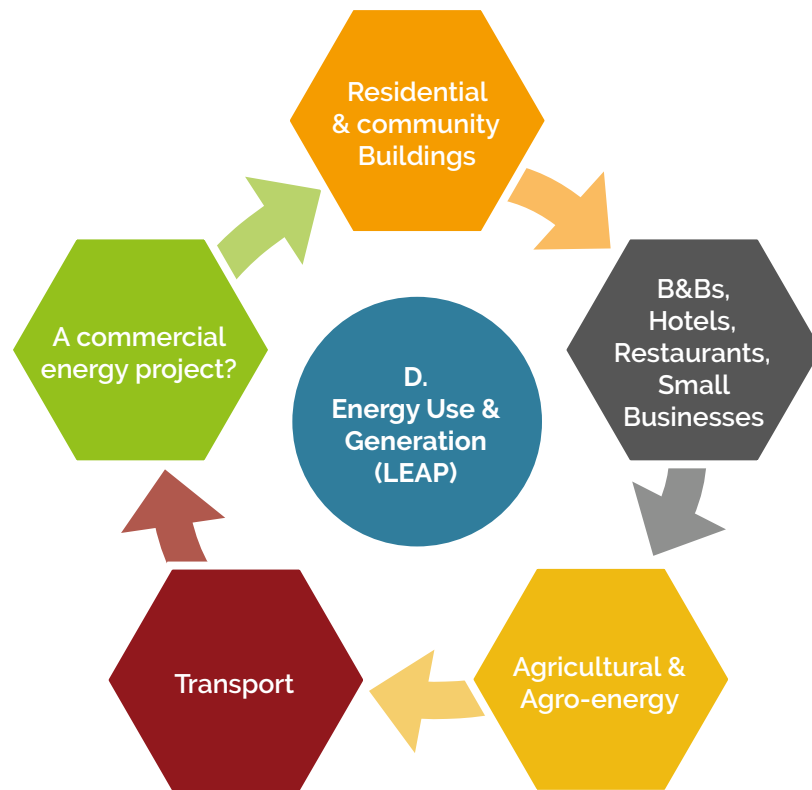
Figure 7: The communities of the Loop Head Peninsula currently spend more than 7 million euros to import energy to do work on the Loop

had with the local authorities and where their mindset is.

From Goals to Development Plan

Once unifying goals are in place, the next effort is to enable focus groups to come together to create the community's development plan. A plan to get from where they are now to where they want to be. The Loop Head Together case study gives insights into this journey.

Any project proposals are then examined within the context of this plan. If this examination motivates the updating or adjustment of the plan then so be it. The plan may be revisited several times to see how a new proposal, previously not considered, might partner with community to

advance towards the community's goals.

For the case of the Loop Head Together initiative, the local development organisations, with the local tourism association, in partnership with the Flensburg University and this RDD programme first developed the Loop Head Energy Action Partnership (LEAP). This group – see the case study for details, chose to focus on the areas outlined in Figure 7.

Partnerships to deliver

For a project to support a community's sustainable development, an accountable, transparent and responsive decision-making process is required. A strong community team is required to help with this. And they

Figure 8: The community goals the CFOAT aim to achieve with their wind energy-based project.

in turn may need help. A welcomed energy project team may provide some of this help. But sometimes they are not deemed independent or objective enough to be really welcomed by a community.

Some communities have turned to the EU's LEADER programme to provide this help. See the Loop Head Together case study to see how the Loop Head community has partnered with the LEADER programme. This is a useful mechanism, but not the only one.

Ultimately, should the community team, in full engagement within the community, decide that they are open to work with a developer to identify a win-win project, a Community-Based Partnership is required. The Loop Head Energy Action Partnership (LEAP) case study shows some of the steps required for such a partnership focusing in on energy generation to function in the best interest of everyone's sustainable development.

The Aran Island's Energy Coop (CFOAT) case study also demonstrates how this integrated approach can work for all parties. Figure 8 shows an overview of the goals they plan to use their wind energy project to address.

11. COMPANY PREPARATION

By far and away, the biggest impact on the ability to earn local support for wind energy projects in Ireland comes from the developers. They, and their investors, following government policy, are driving the wind energy turbines roll-out. They have the biggest motivation to act. How they drive and how they interact with the communities they stop in are very much in their control. The recent ESRI study referred to earlier (footnote 7 above) shows that changes are needed if the Climate Action Plan is to be met. The Situation Analysis (Section 2 of this programme) highlighted some of the desirable improvements needed.

Experience from the extractive industries over the years, and more recently from the tourism and renewable energy industries, highlights that the partnership approach outlined in Chapter 7 above is a desirable, practicable and more certain way forward. Referring to the rugby analysis in Chapter 7, however, both developers and communities need to be ready for this effective, structured and systematic engagement to ensure success.

The required strengthening of each partner's capacities to successfully build, operationalise and optimise the benefits from the partnership approach needs to start at home: inside the developer's team. A model presenting the different levels this needs to be conducted at is presented in Figure 9. As stated in the caption to this model: internal engagement on the components here beforehand is key. Innovations to our current business practices may well be needed. Change to how things used to be done will definitely be needed. The C-suite[9] will have to be involved on a regular basis and will need to keep their Board fully briefed.

This cannot be stressed enough.

This is about recognising, protecting and enhancing value: it is about putting a community-developer team in place to address the community-developer side of the business. Just like we put financial, technical and permitting teams together for those aspects of the business. Looking at current practice, this is more than asking a community liaison officer to 'give them a benefit fund, let them buy shares if they want, and let them object once they pay their 50 euro if they want to'. It is about influencing the design brief and the co-design thinking of the core team.

A quote from a recent Friends of the Earth report clarifies a bit further the above point: "In Ireland, for wind energy developers, the Irish Wind Energy Association of Ireland (IWEA) has developed guidelines on Community Benefit which provide advice on payments or benefits made by commercial developers to local communities. Such payments can be perceived as good will, compensation or "payoffs" and while they can be very beneficial to communities, they continue to treat citizens as passive consumers of energy, rather than active contributors."

As a near neighbour pointed out during the Situation Analysis "there are

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[9] the executive-level managers within a company; e.g. CEO (chief executive officer), CFO (chief financial officer), COO (chief operating officer), CIO (chief information officer) and CSO (Chief Sustainability Officer).

two sides to the current developer-community equation: impacts (noise, property, landscape, etc.) and benefits. Benefits through a community fund are small beans to an impacted person when there is no professionally measured compensation for neighbours first. Money for clubs, jobs or taxes outside the impact zone to keep the larger local population happy do not right a local wrong. Where is the recognition, partnering with, and strengthening of

local economic, social and environmental realities of all concerned? Is the 'Just Transition' for some and not for others?".

To address both the above quotes, and to build a community-developer team to design, communicate and permit a wanted project, both developers and neighbours must first be willing, ready and able to engage meaningfully with each other. Chapter 10 above outlines what this means within a community.
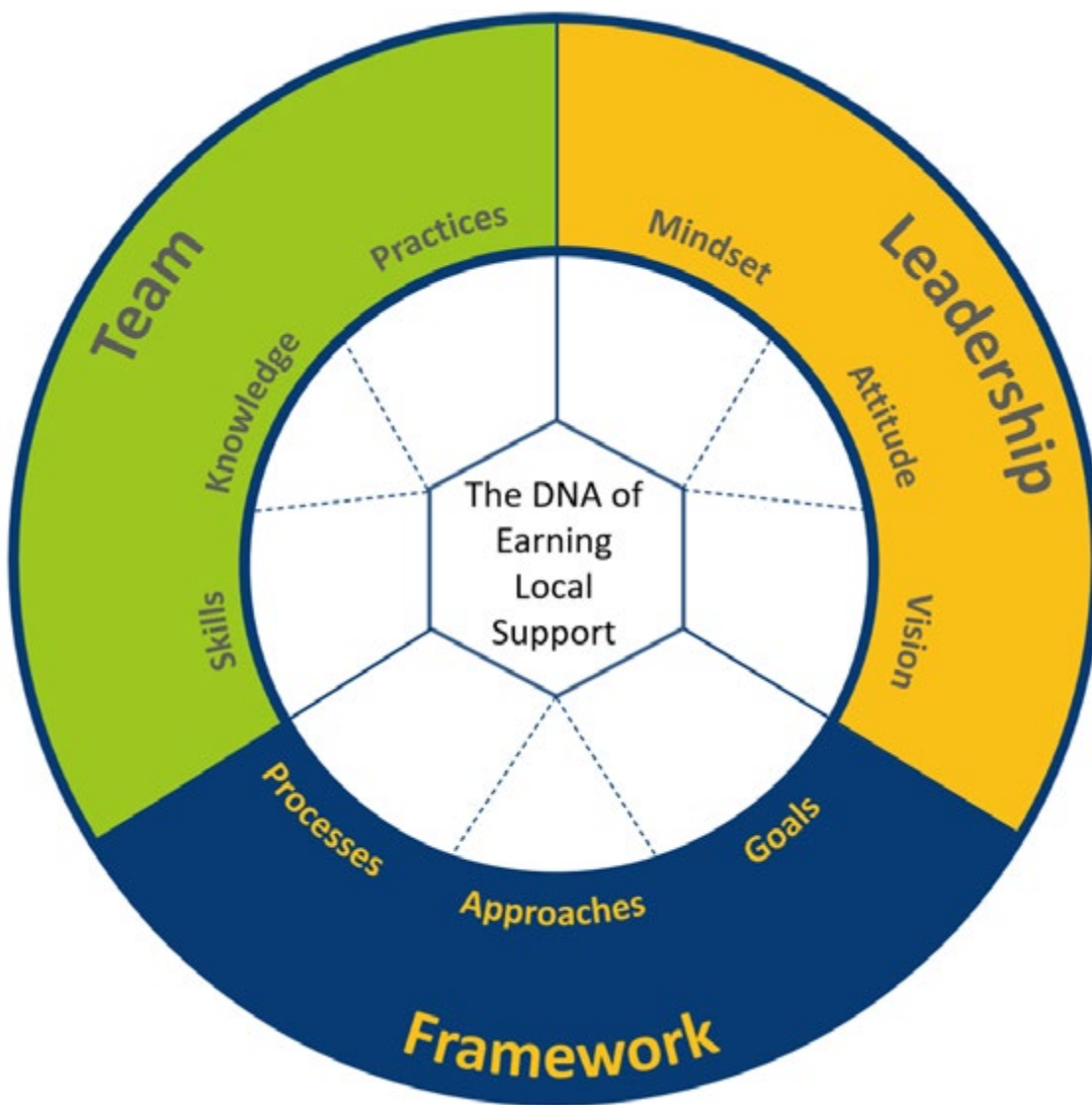
Figure 9: Engaging with neighbours will throw up many challenges. Having an integrated Smart Engagement approach from the beginning significantly simplifies this challenge. Internal engagement on the components here beforehand is key.
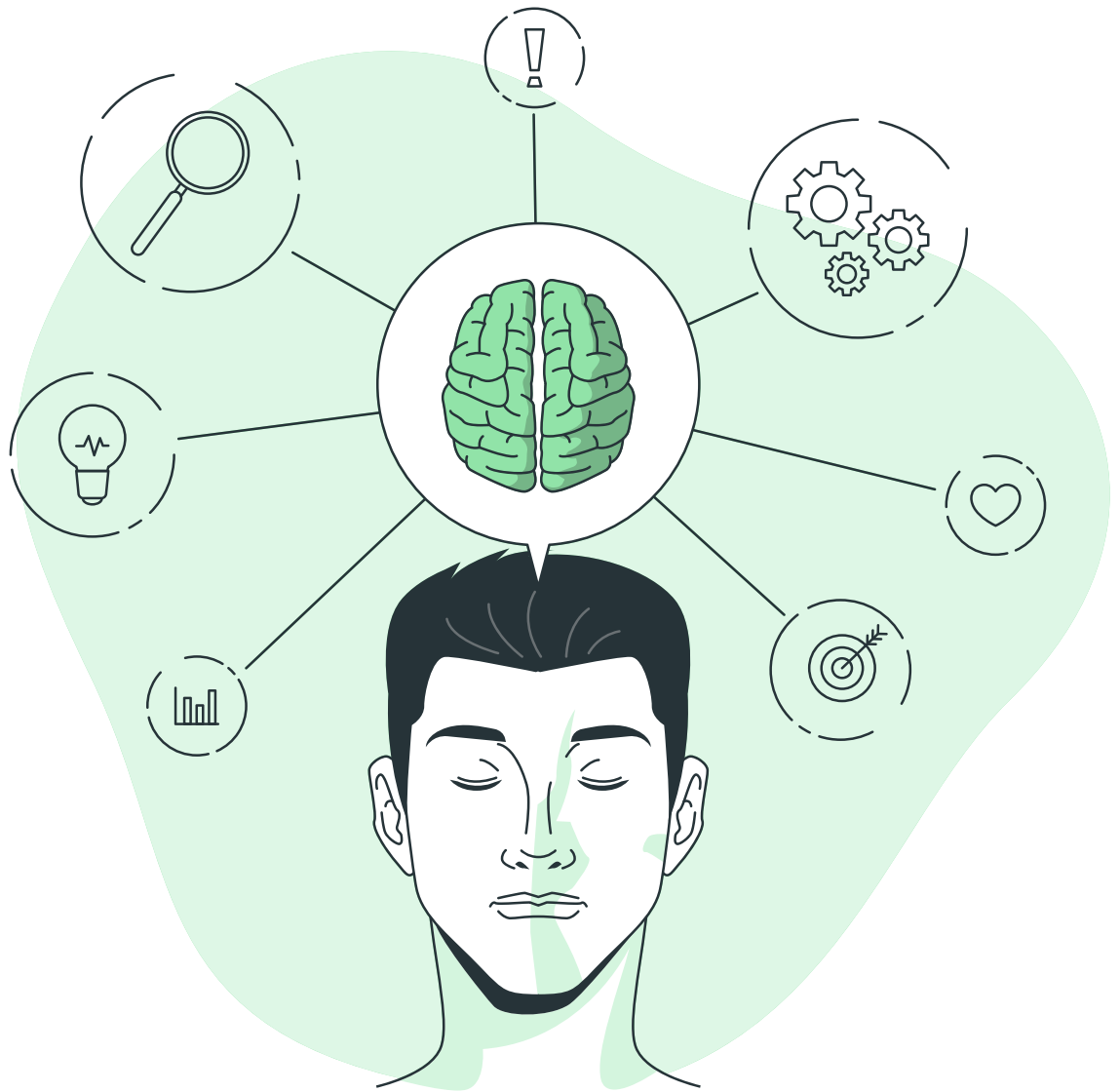
This chapter gives guidance to what is required within a developer's team.

Addressing the legacy of (50% + 1) PR Mindset

The still prevailing popular PR advice of 'keep to a positive message' has its origin in politics and the need for an elected official to win just 50% + 1 of the votes cast. Yet, if you were a neighbour worrying about the impact on your family's health in your home, or about the impacts on your life's savings, you would value the blunt truths, the acknowledgements and the addressing of the 'what if' scenarios. The PR advice mentioned above comes from an era that did not have the current complexities communities, and our society at large, face. Such a PR approach systematically undermines trust and credibility with potentially impacted neighbours.

Importantly, while traditional engagement processes often focus on broadcasting positive messages of benefits to neighbours, the need on the ground is the opposite. People want to know that their concerns are being listened to and addressed before they are ready to undertake a meaningful conversation about what benefits might be present and how these will concretely help all neighbours going forward.

Today's era needs the systematic rebuilding of trust between all parties – a trust that has worn very thin over the past years.

Based on experience in the extractive industries overseas, and on wind farm projects in Ireland, the developer and the community typically need a structured strengthening of their capacities to undertake trust building engagement that will result in constructive, critical thinking, dialogue leading to win-win (rather than win-lose, or lose-lose) projects. This chapter sets out some of the key steps to enable this.

Put bluntly, positive messaging in the absence of addressing negatives first, is equivalent to asking people to turn a blind eye to what are, or are perceived to be, negative impacts. Near neighbours have repeatedly said that the potential negative impacts are the most significant issues when it comes to their immediate concerns. They want these addressed before there is any talk of community benefit funds. And they don't want the related locally impactful decisions to be taken by the developer, or agents of the developer. They want meaningful control over the decisions that impact them. The developer needs to have the mentality, processes and skills to take these decisions together with the neighbours.

The order of what needs to be engaged and focus on is paramount. This order is presented in Figure 10, and includes:

1. firstly, understanding and acknowledging concerns, then

4 Examine benefits

3 Address concerns

2 Co-design and agree engagement process

1 Hear and acknowledge concerns
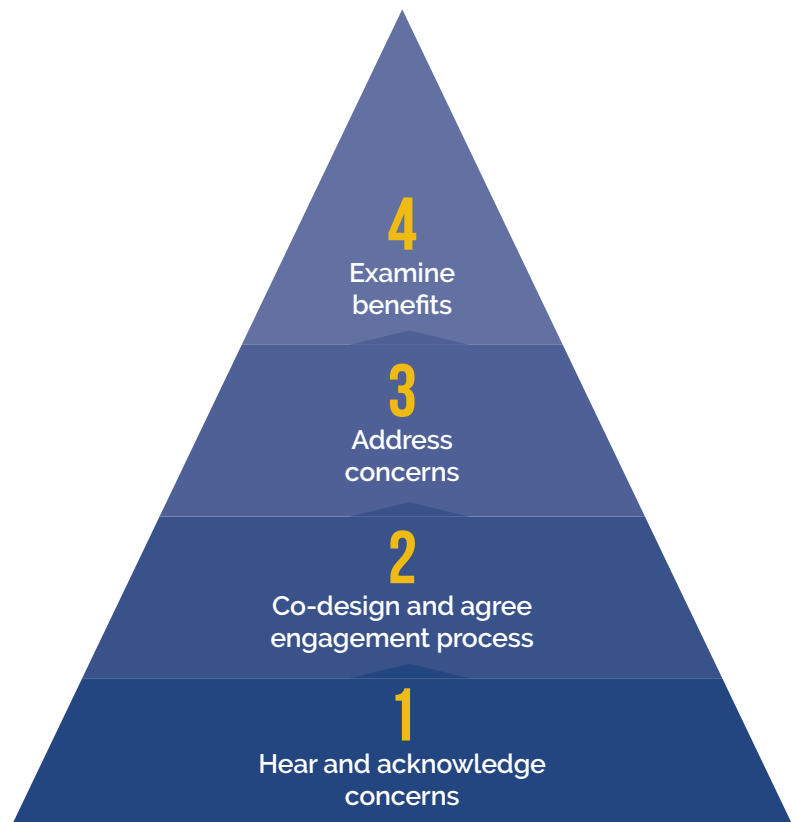
Figure 10: The order for successful engagement

2. agreeing a process through which to engage on them, then
3. working together in the Partnership Zone to assess and address these concerns, and only then
4. examining local benefits & their fair distribution.

After 4, once a win-win project is agreed, then it can be communicated and celebrated.

As a process, these steps are further broken down to a Stage One and Stage Two within a Smart Engagement Process.

Definition: A **Smart Engagement Process** is a set of steps through which all parties involved can effectively listen to and understand each other, address issues, turn challenges into solutions and build locally positive synergies around opportunities that arise.

A Smart Engagement Process: getting the horse back in front of the cart

Due to the pressure on a developer's team to show meaningful progress on a regular basis, many developers, or consultants working on behalf of developers, start a public consultation or public participation process with a clear view of what project the developer wants. They combine this with a check list of the legal steps they need to be able to demonstrate they have completed should they need to defend this in court. The process is not designed to listen to, crystallise and address the concerns of the host community, nor to inform the initiating design brief for the project team. The processes they use do not help them understand, acknowledge and address the concerns, fears and aspirations of those they may impact. It is not aimed at building a healthy foundation for a project that can be easily supported by all concerned. It is all about the developer and their plans.

Very few quality and successful human relationships are built this way. Certainly, win-win relationships cannot be.

Pages 4 and 5 of the **Programme Overview** document highlight the choices that a developer can make to help address this. Figure 11 is a reminder.

Incidentally, 'win-win' comes with the caveat that there is also the option of 'no-deal'. A developer needs to

What type of project do owners and team members want to build?

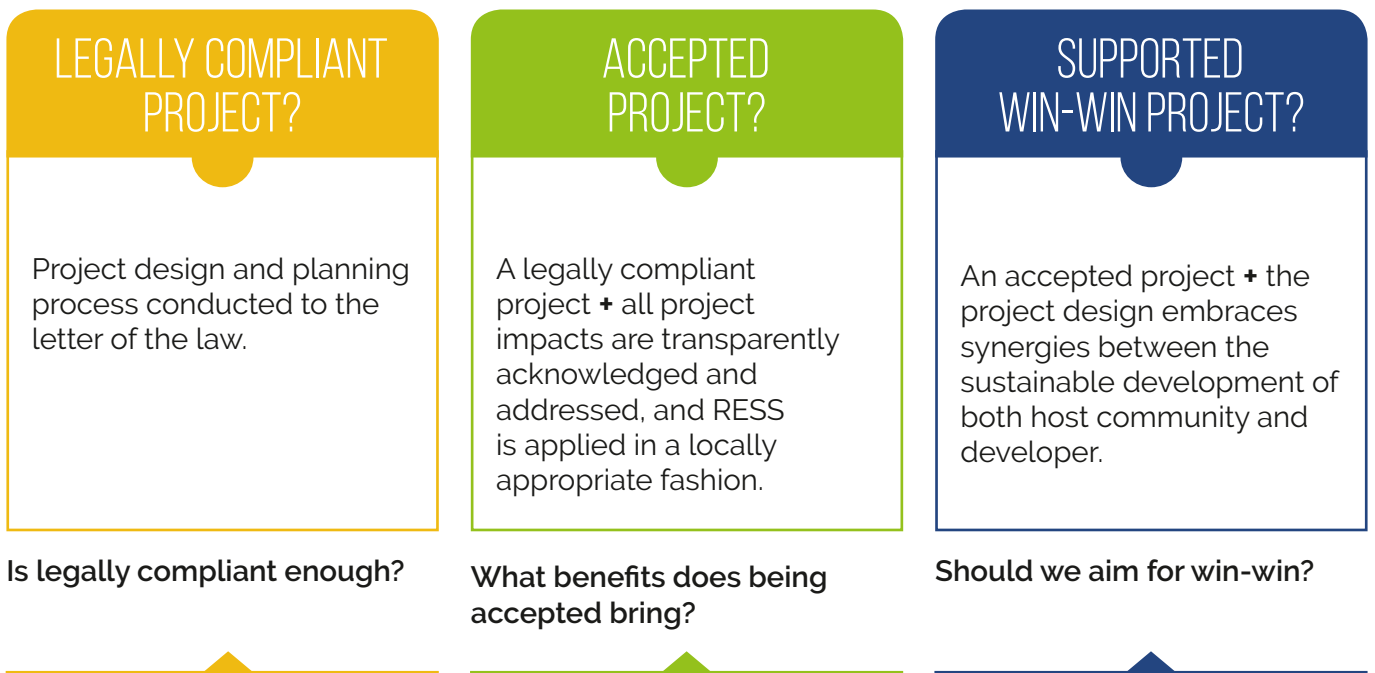| LEGALLY COMPLIANT PROJECT?	ACCEPTED PROJECT?	SUPPORTED WIN-WIN PROJECT?
Project design and planning process conducted to the letter of the law.	A legally compliant project **+** all project impacts are transparently acknowledged and addressed, and RESS is applied in a locally appropriate fashion.	An accepted project **+** the project design embraces synergies between the sustainable development of both host community and developer.
Is legally compliant enough?	**What benefits does being accepted bring?**	**Should we aim for win-win?**

Figure 11: Why should developers be more ambitious than simply creating a legally compliant project? Pages 4 and 5 of the **Programme Overview** document highlight the choices.

have real confidence in their ability to mobilise a project that can harness the wind in a way that is good for them and good for the neighbours. This confidence in turn provides the confidence to offer win-win or no deal. When put in a face-to-face situation, community members can see pretty quickly if a developer is uncomfortable with what they are proposing. In such cases, they can see in the developer's eyes a hint that 'of course the community will be against us given the design we have – we will need to offer them some sweets'.

Before undertaking a Smart Engagement process, a developer needs to do some hard listening and co-design thinking to be ready.

The required response from a developer will only come when the CEO and Board demand that they consciously manage two bank accounts: their financial one, and the one where they store the trust with the host communities of their projects.

All of these issues need to be addressed very early on within the developer's team. They need time and will, and they need senior boots on the ground.

People in communities all over Ireland, and elsewhere, are fed up feeling that others are making their decisions for them. This then gets interpreted as others doing this deliberately so that they can 'make money on our backs'. This can often be a long way from the truth. Many people working for developers and for the government or local authorities, are very much motivated by doing the right thing. But their engagement actions – or lack of them – say a very different thing. To help address this at a strategic level within the developer's team,

Figure 12: Smart Projects are built by teams that manage four key 21st century business risks: 1. financial, 2. technical, 3. environmental and 4. the level and health of the partnership with the host community.

this Guide breaks the engagement process between developer and host community into two stages. Stage 1 is about getting to know each other's fears, aspirations and objectives. Stage 2 is about co-designing a project that can address these.

Let's call the resulting project a Smart Project – one that is financially viable, technically feasible, environmentally compatible and socially supported as presented in Figure 12.

Figure 13 outlines the split between Stage 1 and Stage 2 engagement. The case studies being built in Section 6 of the programme to earn local support demonstrates these two engagement stages happening in practice.

Stage 1: Creating a platform for meaningful engagement.

This is a trust building stage that provides the foundation and glue for all other engagement activities. Includes all impactable stakeholders, full information disclosure, and issues heard & acknowledged, and responded to. This stage needs to deliver (in trust & numbers) the relationships to ensure that future engagement on project design is meaningful.

Stage 2: Focusing on informed and trustful agreement making.

Starts once stakeholders are happy to meet to systematically analyse proposals and strive to take decisions in favour of all present to force a project design supported by both those impacted and the investors. Follows an agreed process, often including a forum. Includes the principles of synergies and win-win or no deal.
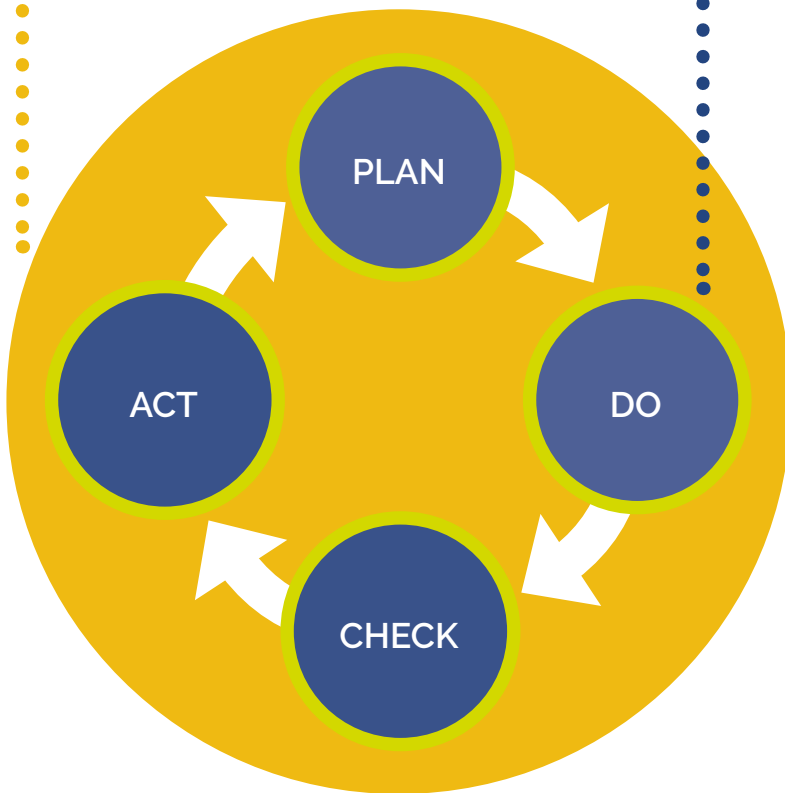
Plan
Plan time, human and financial resources needed to undertake the Engagement Process

Do (Assess)
Help people to understand the potential risks and impacts of the project on neighbours, other stakeholders and the environment.

Do (Manage)
Address negative impacts and work within the Partnership Zone to manage near neighbour and community benefits to optimise project support. Ensure plans are sufficiently engaged on, resourced, scheduled and implemented.

Check
Monitor and evaluate the Partnership activities, process & results to measure progress towards project goals.

Act
Maintain trust & relationship building

Figure 13: Stage 1 engagement provides the foundation and glue for well-planned and predictable progress. Once we successfully build Stage 1 we can move onto Stage 2. In Stage 2, a project is effectively & efficiently designed within the Partnership Zone.

For best results, Smart Engagement is integrated into core business

Many of us know the difference between doing something important to the structure of a new home after it is built and doing it as we lay the foundations.

The current public consultation processes used for planning in Ireland are very much along the lines of the old Decide, Announce, Defend model. At best, people refer to this as DAD – a pretty paternalistic Dad at that. This has been around for years. Way before we

were faced with the far more complex world we live in where we are now essentially competing for space to innovate in.

The DAD process has also become more and more legalistic, perhaps as a response to the need to argue that the Aarhus Convention[10] is met when it comes to defending a project's transparency of assessment in court. But the Aarhus Convention was never supposed to be just about courts. It was an initiative to enable people from all walks of life to protect their local environment and make sure that those who were not doing so while they built new projects could be held to account. The Aarhus convention was adopted in 1998, entered into force in 2001, became ratified by the EU in 2005 and by Ireland in 2012. This timeline shows a time lag; one that can also be traced through the creation of local partnerships for energy projects. Sometimes developers, in order to mitigate business risks before the legislation catches up, adopt practices voluntarily. In the social and community sphere, this is referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility – or CSR for short. A solid CSR strategy often provides a framework for the internal change and preparedness needed to undertake Smart Engagement to an extent that local support came be most reliably earned.

The aim of CSR – or if authorities are also included, social responsibility - was articulated by an extensive international development process under the umbrella of the Geneva-based International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in its social responsibility standard ISO26000 published in 2010 to

▶ "… contribute to sustainable development,

▶ take into account the expectations of stakeholders,
▶ be in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour, and
▶ integrate all of this throughout the organization and practice it in all its relationships…".

ISO26000 states that this is relevant to business because an organisation's performance in relation to the society in which it operates, and to its impact on the environment and community that host it, has become a critical part of measuring its overall performance and its ability to continue operating effectively.

To achieve this requires partnership. Which in turn requires workable, meaningful and constructive engagement between developers and neighbours of proposed projects. This requires a strong leadership, framework and team foundation. Yet, there are already so many aspects of business that senior management need to keep their eyes on. The bad news for them is that this is another. The good news is that, when done systematically and strategically in a way that it becomes part of core business, it adds value in many of the other areas senior management are focused on. The preparation an organisation needs to undertake to mobilise a team that can secure local support for its projects needs to be built on the aspects presented in Figure 8.

The capacity, clarity and joined-up-thinking required to enable this to happen can certainly be captured through a number of management processes, one of the most obvious being through integrating this into a company's CSR strategy.

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[10] https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/environment/environmental_law/aarhus_convention.html

How an integrated CSR approach can help

An organisation's CSR Strategy provides a guide to add social value to the activities within its business as well as the communities in which it operates and its other spheres of influence and interest.

Figure 14: A company's existence within a network of interdependencies. Source: Smart Engagement: Why, What, Who & How, 2014. Published by Routledge.

Every company has a reason for existence and a purpose that inspires its team to commit itself to the company's mission. Companies do not operate in isolation, however; they are inseparable parts of a complex network of interdependencies.

These interdependencies are simplified into Figure 14. While healthy profits are essential for sustainable and responsible business, the impact of a company's activities has to be neutral, or beneficial, along all its points of contact with the communities in which it operates, if it is to reliably ensure sustainable shareholder and community value in today's increasingly complex world.

Within this context, questions that each company's Board is faced with include:

▶ What exactly is it that we should be doing beyond the traditionally understood bottom line of corporate profit or loss, and how must these activities be evaluated?

▶ How can we contribute to the welfare of our host communities through fully addressing the environmental, economic and near-neighbour externalities of our activities and operations to ensure we sustainably develop our business?

▶ What do we need to be tracking to monitor our impacts and contributions (through procedures as rigorous as those we use to assess our technical and economic performance)?

Answering these questions as a team is rightly important. Interacting with neighbours is full of situations where company guidelines can support, but cannot replace, quality personal value judgements. And personal judgements need to be in line with team culture.

A shared vision of who we are and what we need to do in turn informs strategy and ensures the team on the ground gets the support it requires in a timely and predictable fashion.

The 'just' roll-out of the Just Energy Transition cannot succeed without the good will of the communities that host it. By endorsing and adopting full corporate responsibility, the wind industry will build its own sustainability and, at the same time, contribute to that of its host communities.

Success in this field is obtained

through the proactive and responsible involvement of key stakeholders; and as such builds trust and constructive relationships with the same stakeholders.

Some questions to help this process include:

1. Have we a process to enable meaningful engagement and relationship building with all our stakeholders?
2. Do we share a common understanding of the issues, proposals, impacts, perceptions and realities?
3. Are we correctly identifying, acknowledging and addressing all the impacts of our projects?
4. Are we managing, measuring and addressing all the potential synergies where our project can add value to local sustainable development?
5. Have we developed performance indicators to track all this both at management and at Board level?

Our Stakeholder Engagement Plan

To recognise and assume a project's social, economic and environmental responsibility, robust and meaningful engagement is needed with its neighbours and host community so that our design team can create a Smart Project (Figure 12). When done well, this results in:

1. building relationships with potentially impacted people that enable timely feedback resulting in informed, sustainable and optimum decisions;
2. responsibly developing the wind industry in a way that avoids and mitigates negative impacts, and works to generate positive, environmental, economic and social impacts, and;
3. ensuring we design and develop each project in a way that considers, and contributes to sustainable development within its sphere of influence.

Depending on how effective this dialogue is, it can assist or prevent us from achieving our objectives. The relationships our organisation has with the community in which we operate strongly influences
▸ our team's ability to design appropriate projects,
▸ the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations, and

▶ the attainment of our goals.
The absence of effective dialogue can lead to conflicts that may delay or stop our progress and can be costly to mediate. Further, in this age of instantaneous electronic communication (e.g. email, YouTube, Facebook, etc) we need to be proactive in our dialogue as our mistakes, or perceived mistakes, can quickly be made public, and impede our progress due to a weakened Brand.

What support do we have and how do we start?

Professional stakeholder engagement benefits from an extending series of standards, principles, frameworks and experiences.
The stakeholder engagement process developed to work best to deliver the above to a company has significant support, including:
▶ Experience in the team and from practitioners in the field,
▶ Feedback from neighbours in present and past projects,
▶ Governmental and industry standards,
▶ The International Stakeholder Engagement Standard AA1000SES (2015),
▶ Experience from practitioners compiled in, for example, the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2),
▶ Learning, guidelines and standards from the natural resources industry and major financing organisations such as the IFC and the World Bank,
▶ The 2017 OECD Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement Auditing Guide

Best Practice

Each developer will need to develop its own structure by which stakeholder engagement is used to support the everyday planning, execution and management of decisions and activities for the projects it undertakes. Similarly, each project needs its own agreed engagement process. Only this time, the process needs to be agreed in the Partnership Zone. The guidance in this document is designed to support the creation of this.

A Developer's / Company's stakeholder engagement structure should include:
1. team clarity on what our CSR is,
2. team clarity of our vision, mission, values, and goals,
3. agreement on how we identify our community stakeholders, and subsequently build trust to enable constructive dialogue to identify common interests and values, resolve conflicts and maximise opportunities,
4. empowerment, together with required checks and balances, of the team on the ground by senior management and the Board to create and execute strategies and plans to deliver a successful project through ensuring open dialogue with stakeholders to mobilise the required resources and receive timely feedback within the framework of the Company's CSR Strategy.

As a bit of **expectation management:** the process of engagement is challenging, as there is much potential for confusion, misunderstanding and conflict, including:
▶ words meaning different things to different people,
▶ real or perceived differences in power, influence or credibility,
▶ different styles of communication,
▶ different experiences linked to a similar topic,
▶ perceived or real conflict of interest,
▶ successful teams have players with different skills and knowledge: embrace differences and diversity of opinion.

As the old saying goes 'The elephant can look very different relative to where you are standing'. The full elephant is seen by the full team – the team created in the Partnership Zone.

12. THE AUTHORITIES' CORNER

As can be seen from the situation Analysis, the Authorities hold a lot of motivations to support the roll out of wind farms in Ireland. They also have the authority to provide the rules around how this roll out will occur.

As such, they are a major driver for the expansion of the industry, and a maker of rules as to how this should happen.

Authorities and local councillors have an important role to play in improving the conditions available to earn local support for energy projects in Ireland. They too need to fully understand the realities faced by near neighbours to do this fairly.

> Many of the conversations on the ground indicated a strong need that the government – or an independent body appointed by them (or by the community and the developer) – would act independently in the interests of both the neighbours and the developers. There was a request that this facilitates the application of all government sustainable development policy, not just the parts that might bring the fastest benefits to the government of the day through more turbines being erected and connected to the National Grid.

There was also a lot of fear among neighbours that the government was too supportive of developers rather than behaving as an honest broker. Reasons given for this included that wind farms were seen to:
▶ help provide energy for a reduced carbon economy,
▶ help the reduction in energy dependence on imports,
▶ enable some of the technical and financial component of the Just Energy Transition,
▶ provide significant tax revenue.

The challenge placed at the feet of the Authorities was to do the above under a governance structure that the role-out of the renewable energy technology be done in a way that is synergetic to other policies, especially that of meeting the sustainable development goals of all involved.

To a large extent, therefore, the Authorities have responsibility for a combination of the neighbours' and the developers' challenges. In which case, chapters 9 and 10 as a combined programme offer solutions to help the government address inherent challenges above.

APPENDIX 1: CONCERNS FROM NEIGHBOURS

The below are some example questions related to the concerns close neighbours have about a wind farm proposal. The challenges are framed more extensively in the Situation Analysis – Section 2 of this Earning Local Support for Wind Energy Projects programme.

This list combines what people in different counties in Ireland have identified as their main concerns when there is a potential of a wind turbine in the vicinity of their home.

For any given project, it may often be shorter or longer. It is to be replaced / updated by the questions and concerns raised during the engagement process outlined in Chapter 8.

1. What will the level of the noise be coming from these turbines?
2. What impact will this noise have on our quality of life and health, and on our property price should we need to sell?
3. What will the impacts of amplitude modulation and infrasound be coming from these turbines?
4. What impact will these have on our health, and on our property price should we need to sell?
5. How many, how high and what type of turbines will be put in my neighbourhood (and exactly where)?
6. What will the quality-of-life impact of this be on our neighbourhood?
7. What will the effects of flicker during the day and the blinking red lights on top of the turbines during the night be?
8. What impact will this be on our home?
9. What are the impacts of all the above be on local domestic animals and wildlife?
10. Please clearly outline what the impacts on the hen harrier and other rare and enlisted birds are: habitats, breeding and hunting grounds.
11. What are the impacts on flora? (plants)
12. What would the impacts of foundation and road works be on water and sources of our water supply and on our homes?
13. What would the impacts be on aquatic life?
14. What are the impacts on climate and air quality from the gases involved with this project?
15. What are the impacts on local infrastructure and use of local roads?

16. What are the impacts on mobile phone / mobile broadband / analogue (TV) reception?

17. What are the impacts on tourism in an area that needs more tourism?

18. What will the long-term impact be on our local economy?

19. What are the impacts on the value of our local Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, and National Heritage Sites?

20. How do we know if our environment will be safe from landslides?

21. What will the cumulative result of the above be on the value of our neighbourhood?

22. What will the impact of all the above be on the price of my property should I try to sell?

23. How can we trust you that you won't just bulldoze through what you want anyway?

24. How can we trust that things we might agree won't be overturned by your boss?

25. Is it all worth it as we continue to increase rather than stabilise our national energy demand? How does the amount of energy and CO2 involved in making the turbines, and those that they remove due to operating impact our overall carbon footprint?

26. How does
(i) your investment in the wind turbines and
(ii) our investment in sacrificing the countryside as it currently is
contribute to rather than take away from local sustainable development?

APPENDIX 2. A COMMUNITY -BASED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Potential wind projects have potential neighbours within communities in Ireland. Neighbours and their communities have their environment. Neighbours really care about their environment. Potential projects have potential impacts on the environment. Therefore, the national legislation demands an environmental impact assessment for potential wind farms. Such environmental impact assessments don't always get their assessment right. In 2020 alone there was the environmental hit that Donegal and neighbouring Tyrone[11] took from a wind farm construction that had its environmental impact assessment conducted by a reputable consultancy and signed off by the authorities.

Environmental impacts from energy projects happen. Some impacts are acceptable and can be mitigated, others require a trade-off. Others are unacceptable. The related decisions belong as much to the neighbours in the host community as they do to the developers. This demonstrates the interconnectivity that the environment brings within the community – developer relationship.

The required assessment of environmental impacts of any potential project can happen in its own silo – like the current assessments essentially do, or they can happen within a transparent partnership between the developer and the neighbours. There are a number of ways to do this, some more appropriate to a given situation than others. Below shows one such way. The example of following the content of a standard Environmental Impacts Assessment Report (EIAR) is presented to show there is a way to minimise the extra effort a developer would have to undertake to include this innovation in their project development process. Its usability is, however, dependent on the attitude and aptitude of the professionals undertaking the EIAR Process – see Figure 15 below.

Getting ahead of questions.

Community engagement can be quite frightening to a developer as they try to balance all the existing financial, technical and permitting constraints they are working under. Doing it before there is any security that there might well be a project to be built somewhere can feel like pure self-harm, a waste of everyone's time and may even feel counterproductive.

Yet, to successfully deliver a project in time and to budget, a successful developer will want to anticipate the pathways, workloads and timelines to solutions. Understanding the challenge being faced is a part of this. Having gone through this Guide, and the Situation Analysis on which it is based, it is pretty clear that there is

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[11] https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/meenbog-wind-farm-peat-slippage-who-will-clean-up-this-mess/

preparation work to be done before a team can successfully engage with a community to create local support for a wanted project. This preparation work is needed in all the areas outlined in Figure 9. Some organisations have found such preparation work to contribute to success for other aspects of business already, and so it will make sense for some to do it for earning local support and the related sustainable development issues as well. Others will still need some convincing.

The work in Appendix 2 offers an approach that would need minimum change to the existing EIAR work should they assemble a team with the right attitude and aptitude.

For context, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) were first instigated in response to social unease half a century ago due to how developments were impacting the natural world. Within the extractive industries, they are now called Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA). They fit within the environmental-social-economic framework that is sustainable development. Once addressed from this viewpoint, they are simply asking some pretty simple and fair questions. Questions about a windfarm that communities, authorities and developers are likely to ask. If these questions are there already, it makes good business sense to get ahead of them and get them proactively answered in a credible way.

Incidentally, most community members would prefer to see the environmental impact assessment happen within the context of a community sustainable development assessment. As a result, questions linked to this bigger picture normally make their way into a Community-Based Impact Assessment. To help visualise and collect consensus on what needs to be covered for this, the Intersocial Sustainable Wellbeing Framework in Figure 16 is useful.

A Community-Based Impact Assessment

A Community-Based Impact Assessment ("CBIA") is used to identify and analyse the environmental, social and economic impacts of a proposed or an on-going project, and to co-design adjustments to ensure it is acceptable for all concerned. To generate the required levels of trust and community-wide insights, the assessment is co-designed and run in the Partnership Zone.

Background: Legislation requires that there is access to the public in environmental decision-making in Ireland. This ensures that projects (often over a certain size – e.g. 5MW capacity) provide an opportunity to the public to examine and make observations on an Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("EIAR") as per the schematic presented in Figure 15. An EIAR is prepared by the project developer and takes place within an overall Environmental Impact Assessment process ("EIA"). An EIA is an internationally recognized approach to comprehensively assess a potential project's impacts on the environment. Best practice requires that it is scoped and undertaken in open consultation with people impacted or potentially impacted, or whose environment is impacted or potentially impacted. An EIA is supposed to inform the design of a project through the acknowledgement and mitigation of potential impacts.

In Ireland, over the years, there have been quite a few disputes around the adequacy or inadequacy of the EIA process conducted by project developers. The bottom line seems to be that communities feel that EIA consultants, while being competent people, ultimately conduct the assessment, and write the EIAR, with the interest of their client – the developer – at the fore, rather than through a balanced process reporting to both developers and neighbours.

Many community members state that they get answers for questions they have not asked and do not get answers for questions that are important to them.

If our aim is to achieve a win-win project that results from a community-developer partnership, the status quo around an EIAR does not deliver much in terms of a solution.

This Appendix does not address how communities in Ireland could partner with a developer or the State for ownership of a part of a renewable energy project. Such an approach could be based on the recognition that the natural resource that is being harnessed is intrinsically linked with the community over which it blows or upon which it shines; and that they could offer real value through helping with environmental monitoring, permitting and facilitating meaningful local engagement and communication. This Appendix is, however, applicable to all energy projects – be they conducted by commercial or community developers. It could also, in turn, be adapted to help with more complete community partnerships.

A CBIA helps to address the imbalance

The CBIA does not replace the regulatory requirements for an EIAR, nor the professional risk management processes therein. Rather, its aim is to help all parties understand more fully the intended and unintended environmental, social and economic consequences of a proposed wind energy project, and to enable the related decisions to be taken appropriately. Its function is also

to ensure that areas not adequately covered by the EIAR process are addressed.

This offers the opportunity that the aspects of an EIAR process that are already very useful (or can readily be adapted to be so) can be co-designed within the partnership Zone to happen in support of a CBIA.

Issues of importance or concern which are sometimes not sufficiently covered in the EIAR such as impact on property price, fears around infrasound, impacts on sensitive animals such as horses, impacts on sense of place, and overall impact on the local sustainable development are dealt with by the CBIA. It addresses the environmental, social and economic impacts on the long-term viability of local livelihoods, environment and quality of life.

To make sure there is no wasted efforts and that resources are used optimally, it is recommended that the CBIA take place in tandem with, or before, the statutory EIA so that the community can meet the experts and understand the influence the process they are undertaking can have on the overall design of a proposed project.

Ideally, the statutory EIA process would to be designed and run in a way that supports the CBIA.

Components of the environmental impact assessment work that the developer is currently paying for to satisfy the requirements of the planning guidelines can be incorporated into the community-based impact assessment, thereby minimising and optimising assessment costs.

A CBIA example questionnaire

To help with the design of the CBIA, below is an example of how engagement on the chapters of a legally required EIAR can be used.

Once in Stage 2 of engagement (see Figure 13), a project's manager proactively facilitates the scoping of an EIAR. Together in the Partnership Zone, s/he then works with the neighbours to identify what is left to the normal EIAR process and what should be focused on in the CBIA.

Using the EIAR process to support the Community-Based Impact Assessment (CBIA).

A typical EIAR is written following the EPA's 2017 draft guidelines[12] as summarised in Figure 15. (EIAR: Environmental Impact assessment report. EPA: Environmental Protection Agency)

The content below is an example of how these draft guidelines for an EIAR has been interpreted for a wind farm project. The extent this content is used by the CBIA is to be decided in the Partnership Zone between the near neighbours, the developer and the EIA team.

As you consider the content below, please assign a score out of 5 for the importance of each section to you – 1 being most important and 5 being equivalent to no importance.

As more and more near neighbours complete this, and the feedback is considered in the Partnership Zone, the areas of most importance to the Partnership becomes prioritised.

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[12] https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/drafteiarguidelines.html

Section 1. Introduction, Background and Description of the Proposed Development

This contains:

A. The need for the Project **(i)** locally, **(ii)** regionally, **(iii)** nationally.
B. The Project Scope.
C. The Community Report – the concerns, challenges and the opportunities within the area of influence of the project and how they were addressed in the design.
D. The relevant **(i)** planning, **(ii)** renewable energy policies and **(iii)** other legislative context that the proposed project is being designed under.
E. The site selection process outlining how the site was selected and alternative site layouts with their pros and cons.
F. The constraints identified that limit where turbines can go within this site and how they were arrived at.
G. The results of the pre-planning consultation with the relevant planning authority(ies) and statutory stakeholders (e.g. NPWS, Fisheries, etc.). This will also present what information was provided to these authorities as part of a planning application.
H. A description of the project design and layout as they get developed along with the construction methodologies including drainage and other relevant proposals for the site.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 2. Population and Human Health

This contains:

A. A clear location map of local homes and areas of importance to the local community.

B. A socio-economic and supply chain analysis.

C. A preliminary noise model of the site (based on site layout details, existing turbines or other noise sources, and anticipated turbine types (to include the worst-case noise production of the candidate turbines).

D. Existing baseline noise at locations where noise is being measured around the proposed turbines.

E. Site specific predicted noise levels that would be experienced during an operational development for every property within approximately 1.5km radius of the proposed site.

F. A Shadow Flicker impact assessment section for the proposed development.

G. A description of current land uses, including a description of current amenity and tourism use in the area

H. A review of all the health fears[13] linked to wind turbines and wind farm construction.

I. A review of the latest peer-reviewed studies on human health impacts from wind farms.

J. A residential amenity assessment that includes the impacts of overlaps between people's views and where turbines are being proposed

K. A list of all potential impacts and how they are being assessed and the proposed mitigation required for each one

L. A description of the potential positive benefits of the project to the local neighbours (should the health concerns be first appropriately addressed) – as per Ground Rule 9.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

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[13] Ideally to be identified during EIA scoping

Section 3. Biodiversity

A. The results of a baseline Flora, Fauna & Fisheries report including the following; habitats & vegetation, birds, terrestrial mammals, amphibians & reptiles, bats and aquatic ecology, with the provision of a habitat map showing all habitat types and recorded fauna & fisheries activity.
B. A list of all potential Ecology / Flora / Fauna impacts and how they are being assessed and the proposed mitigation required for each one.
C. The proposed biodiversity monitoring programme.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4. Land, Soils and Geology

This contains:

A. The findings of a Land, Soils and Geology impact assessment.
B. A Peat Stability Assessment Report and monitoring system.
C. A Peat and Spoil Management Plan setting out the procedures for the management of materials excavated as part of the construction of the proposed development.
D. A ground restoration plan.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5. Water, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

This contains:

A. An assessment of all relevant hydrological features, such as existing drainage ditches, streams and springs, etc.
B. An assessment for the potential impact of flooding at the turbine sites – to include the likely impacts of climate change.
C. An assessment of risks to groundwater including sources and pathways from within the proposed wind farm development to downstream water supplies. This assessment assumes that every house down-gradient of the development has a private well or surface water source so that all worse case scenarios are addressed. Worse case scenarios are to be clearly identified so that the developer has shown that the risks of them happening have been addressed through removal or through acceptable mitigation.
D. A water monitoring system.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 6. Air and Climate

This contains:

A. A review of all relevant legislation, statutory guidance and best practice with respect to air emissions arising from construction and operation of wind farms & proximity of houses.
B. A project carbon balance calculation outlining the carbon emissions arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development
C. Where risks / potential impacts are identified, a clear description of mitigation measures is made.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 7. Material Assets

This contains:

A. A review of all delivery routes for turbine components.
B. Traffic counts (or estimations if counts are not justified due to very low traffic volume) to determine existing traffic volumes on potential delivery routes.
C. Forecasts of traffic impact on the potential delivery routes during construction and operational stages.
D. An analysis to establish which routes are feasible and which routes are optimum requiring the least impact on third party lands and local community activities.
E. A more detailed examination for B&C above once D is complete.
F. Identification of locations requiring remedial measures and upgrade works, junction design and a preliminary traffic management plan.
G. The results of telecommunications and aviation consultation with relevant telecommunications and aviation consultees, e.g. Fixed and mobile phone operators, Irish Aviation Authority etc.
H. The predicted impacts to agricultural properties, forestry, economic value of natural resources, ESB networks and house prices, and their mitigation measures.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 8. Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage

This contains:

A. A review of all literature from previous studies, where available, sites and monuments record, record of monuments and places and historic site characterisations.
B. An assessment of turbine delivery routes and sites and an inter-visibility and sensitivity analyses of possible heritage site where required.

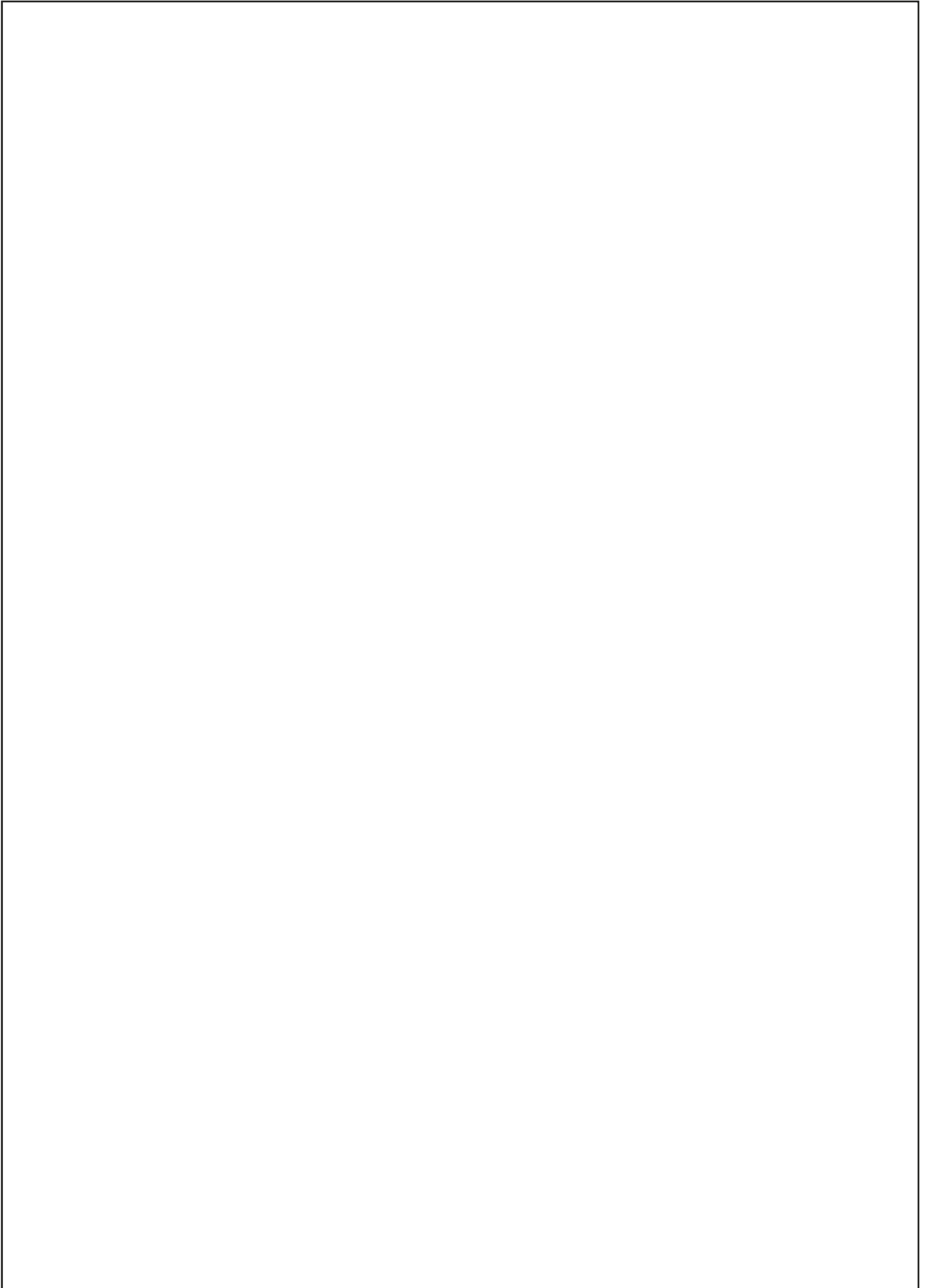| To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 9. Landscape and Visual

This contains:

A. Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps.
B. Wireframes
C. A photographic survey undertaken at a number of representative viewpoints.
D. Photomontages (say 3 to 5) with ranges of 1-5km, 5-10km, 10-15km and 15-20km.
E. A summary of likely significant effects.
F. A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development.
G. A description of the proposed mitigation measures, should these be required, to ensure that the proposal complies with local and statutory landscape amenity protection measures.

To help with the CBIA design – please allocate importance of this chapter from 1 to 5 for you (1 being of highest importance, 5 equivalent to no importance).	1	2	3	4	5

Section 10. Important items that are not addressed above

Please use this section to highlight areas of importance to you that are not addressed in the sections above. To help tease out these issues, the Intersocial Sustainable Wellbeing Framework (SWF) in Figure 16 may be useful. A useful approach is to cross-reference the EIAR categories into the SWF so that you can clearly see the gaps in the current EIAR approach for your community or your project. You will see, for example, that the EIAR assessment of impact on both community and homes is particularly weak.

3.2 — 1. Screening

Is an EIAR required?

3.3 — 2. Scoping

What should EIAR **cover**?

Consultation

Determining significant issues and acceptability of impacts

3.4 — 3. Consideration of Alternatives

3.5 — 4. Project Description

3.6 — 5. Baseline Description

Environmental Factors

▸ Population and Human
▸ Health
▸ Biodiversity
▸ Land
▸ Soil
▸ Water
▸ Air
▸ Climate
▸ Material Assets
▸ Cultural Heritage
▸ Landscape

3.7 — 6. Assessment of impacts
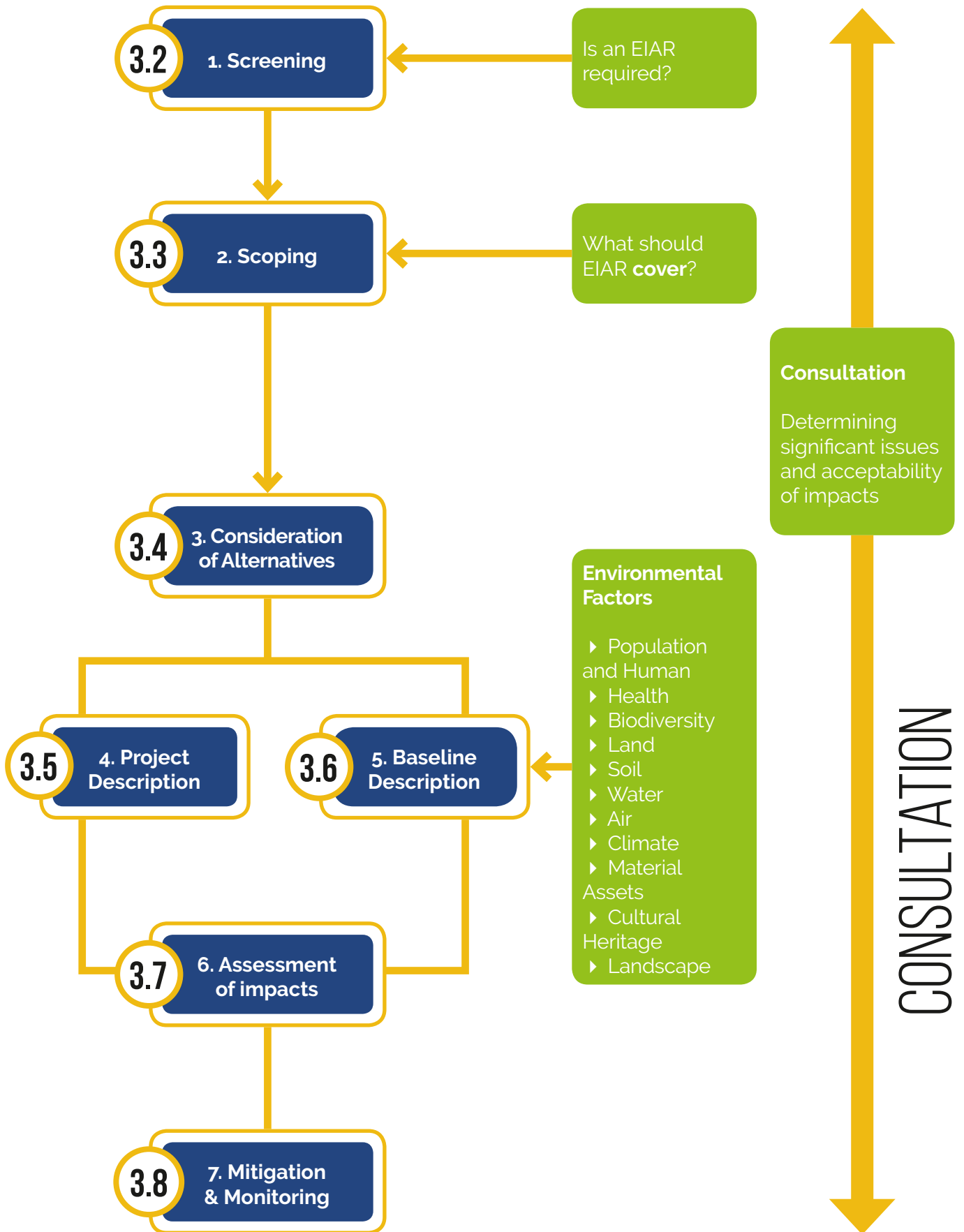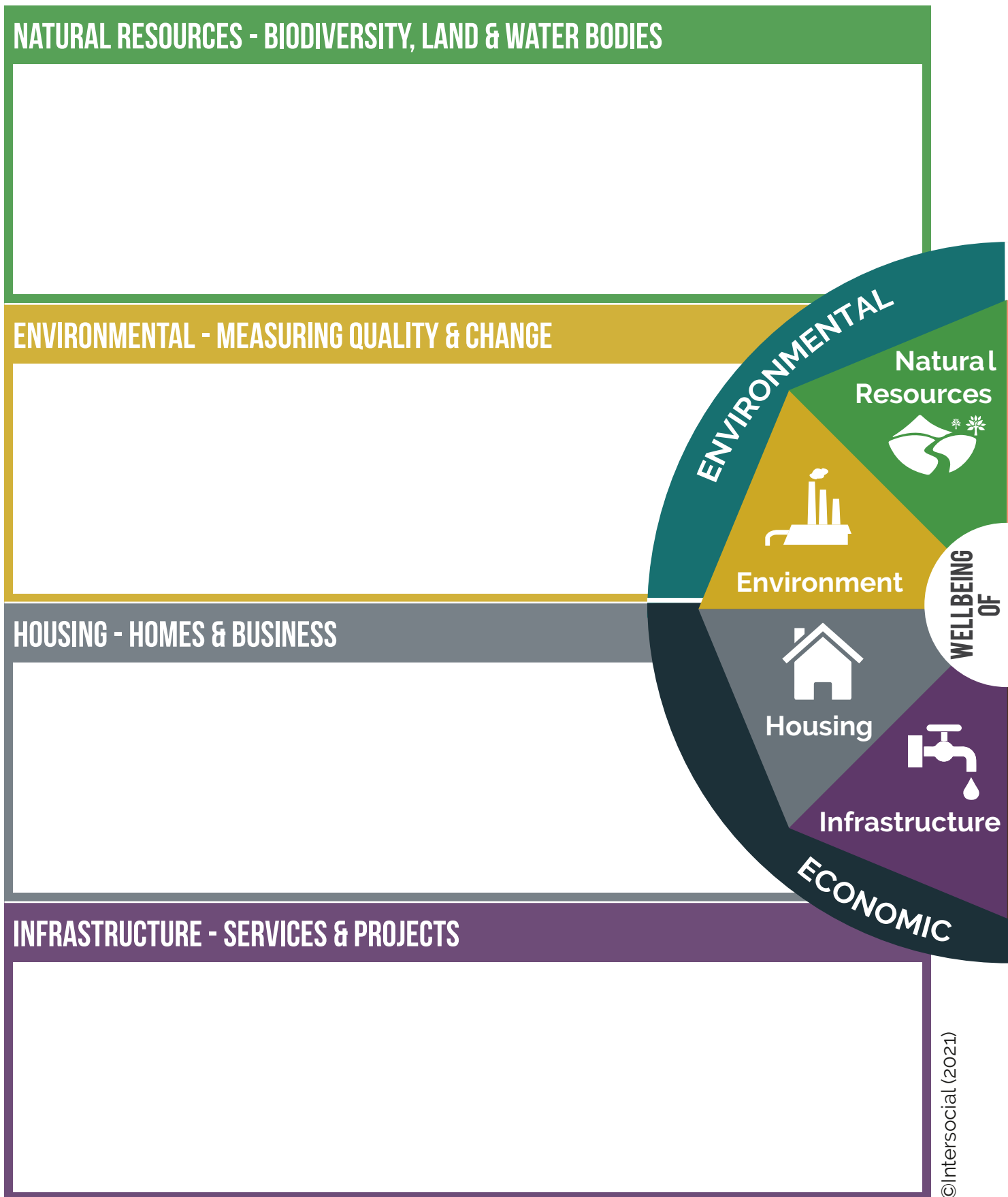
3.8 — 7. Mitigation & Monitoring

CONSULTATION

Figure 15: These seven steps are extracted from the EPA's Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, August 2017, Figure 3.1, page 18.

NATURAL RESOURCES - BIODIVERSITY, LAND & WATER BODIES

ENVIRONMENTAL - MEASURING QUALITY & CHANGE

HOUSING - HOMES & BUSINESS

INFRASTRUCTURE - SERVICES & PROJECTS

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Figure 16: the Intersocial Sustainable Wellbeing Framework

PEOPLE'S CAPACITIES, ABILITIES & FREEDOMS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

COMMUNITY/SOCIAL SUPPORTS & POLITICAL CONTEXT

CULTURE - TRADITIONS & PLACE ATTACHMENT

LIVELIHOODS - ASSETS/ACTIVITIES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

People

SOCIAL

Community

Culture

Livelihoods

PEOPLE & PLANET
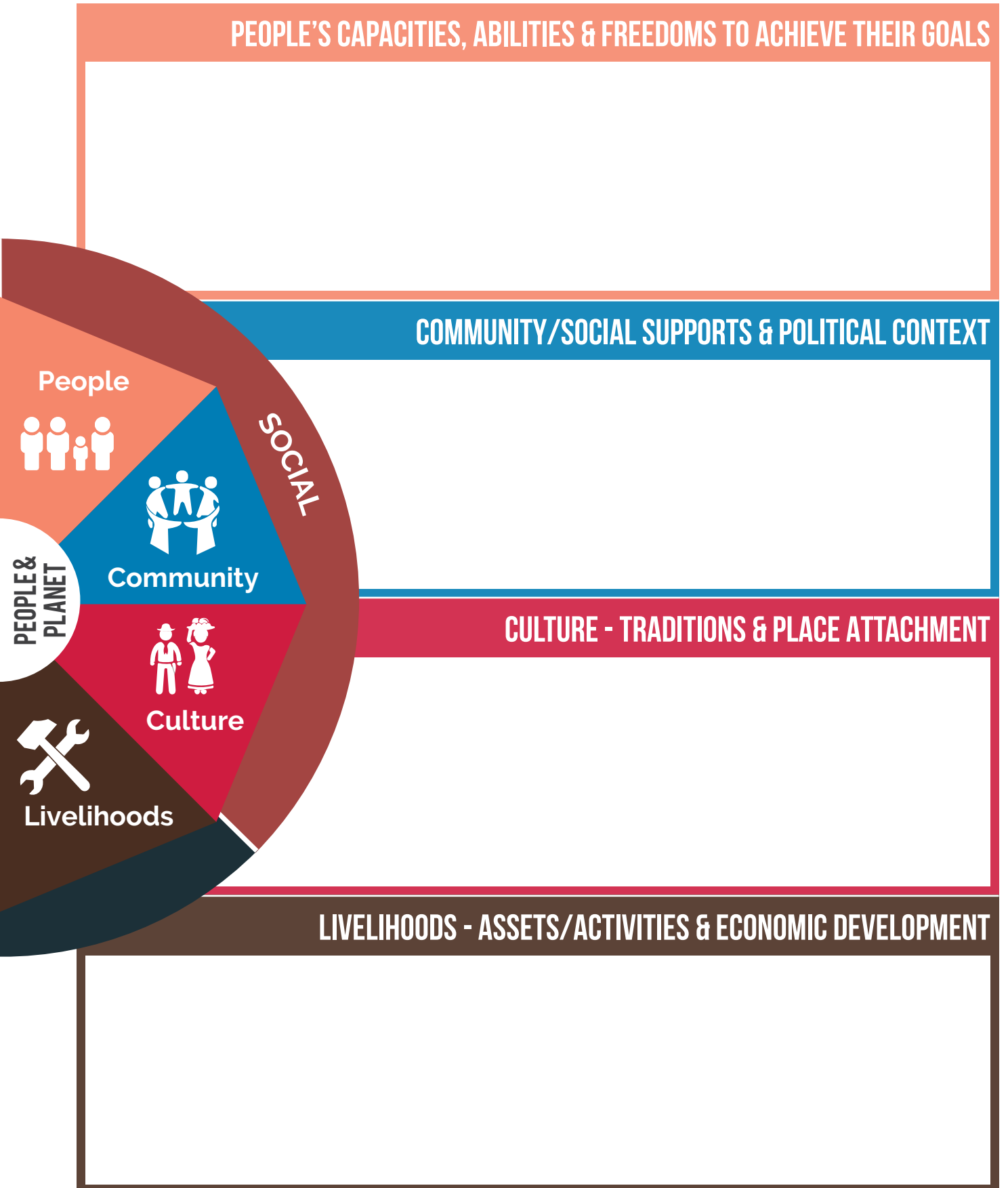
SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 3. BEING CLEAR ABOUT WHICH CSR WE ARE TALKING ABOUT

The terms Social Responsibility (SR) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are used by many people in different ways. Its evolution over time is captured by the graphic from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Figure 17,

from profit focus a company exists only for short term share holder profit

to philanthropy passive donations to charities when requested

to comunity affairs strategic giving linked to business interests (includes cause-related marketing)

to corporate community investment strategic partnerships initiated by company

to Sustainable Business integrated into business functions, goals, strategy

Figure 17: The global evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility to its current position as a core sustainable business enabler – source: UNIDO.

UNIDO go on to outline that CSR is built on three foundations as presented in Figure 18. The first being legal compliance. The second focusing on harm minimisation (the addressing of externalities). The third being the optimisation of value creation – for all potentially impacted people - in the DNA of a project design. You will notice that there are strong parallels between this diagram and the one created by near neighbours and ambitious developers in Figure 11 in Chapter 11 above.
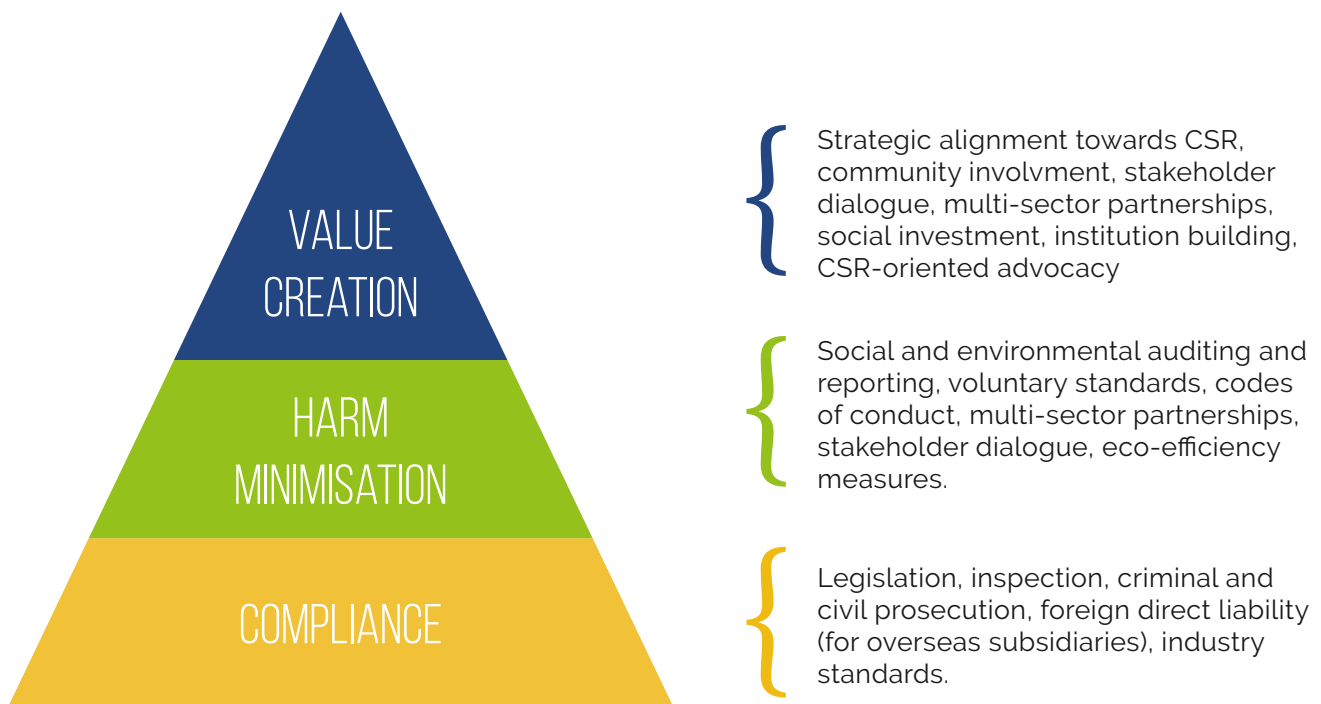
Figure 18: Components of CSR on the macro level – source: UNIDO.

In the end, as each company has a different business model, each company has its own CSR Strategy that captures its team's driving perspective and understanding about the principles and practices of social responsibility most relevant to them.

This, of course, does not replace the legislative, regulatory or institutional requirements that a developer must adhere to, but rather it works to ensure that all aspects of a company's impact – both potentially negative and positive - on a community are responsibly and transparently identified and managed.