

5

# THE CHECKLIST

Summer 2021

# EARNING LOCAL SUPPORT

FOR

# WIND ENERGY PROJECTS IN IRELAND

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



# LOCAL SUPPORT CHECKLIST

There is a lot happening as developers deal with financial, technical, environmental and community issues all at the same time. This checklist provides a quick guide for what is required to earn local support.



**A checklist to earning local support for energy projects  
in Ireland**

Spring 2021

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Experience from projects with potential community impacts – be they renewable energy infrastructure, natural resource developments, tourism, infrastructure, or other – shows

that there are some basic steps that a project developer, and a community, ignore at their peril. This checklist acts as an aid memoire to ensure these steps are taken in time.



Communities and project developers differ from one project to another. The questions below are common questions that help to identify the health of the foundation for earning local support. What then gets built on this foundation can differ significantly

between projects and would need to be assessed on a more tailored basis than can be provided by a common check list. For this reason, the questions for the more mature part of the engagement process to earn local support are left quite open.

THE DEVELOPER 			THE NEIGHBOUR 		
<p>Questions to ask oneself by each member of the developer's team who have power to take or inform decisions that can impact, or perceive to impact, a community member.</p>			<p>Questions to ask oneself by a community member who wishes to be able to take informed decisions regarding the positive and negative impacts of a proposed project on their home and community.</p>		
Question	Yes	No	Question	Yes	No
1. Do I know all the people that our actions or decisions may impact?			1. Have I met the people in the developer's team who can make decisions that may impact my home or my community?		
2. Have I met them?			2. Do we have a clear channel of communication to discuss and address concerns and potential synergies in a timely fashion?		
3. Have I shared a clear picture of what we are proposing to harness with them, and what the negative impacts might be?			3. Have they clearly outlined the proposed project with all real or potential negative impacts?		
4. Have I listened to and acknowledged their concerns regarding our proposal?			4. Have all concerns from our community been acknowledged by the developer in writing?		
5. Have I given each one reason to trust me?			5. Are they addressing all of our concerns or just the ones they feel are justified, or that they are prepared to address?		
6. Have we an agreed and written set of ground rules as required by Section 6 of the Guide to earning local support (the 'ELS Guide')?					
7. Have we clearly identified and agreed the project's potential Impact Zones as outlined in Figure 5 of the Situation Analysis?					
8. Is there an agreed engagement process between us that we are both trustful of? (Figure 4, ELS Guide offers an example)					
9. Have we agreed a project assessment process for the challenges, risks, opportunities and synergies that we both have trust in? (Appendix 2, ELS Guide offers a starting checklist)					
10. Have we negotiated clear and optimised win-win goals for this project?					

11. Have we understood and acknowledged other goals that either of us have linked to this project, and ensured that all potential synergies between us have been harnessed?			
12. Where we have goals that are not shared or synergetic with the other; but that can have an impact on the other: are these clearly understood by both and have we ensured that there is no un-mitigated negative impact?			
13. Do we know what the community's sustainable development plan is and are we working to support it and ensuring we do not do anything to undermine it?		13. Do we have a clearly agreed community development strategy and plan that we can communicate with the developer? (See the Loop Head Peninsula Regional Development Strategy as an example)	
14. Are we effectively partnering with the local development organisations to help with this?		14. Are partnerships that support local development being strengthened through the way the project is being designed/created and how project decisions are being made?	
15. Is there an effective 'Partnership Zone' (Figure 3, ELS Guide) team in place?			
16. Is there an effective 'Partnership Zone' communication process with the whole community in place that ensures all information people want is readily available?			
17. Is there an effective 'Partnership Zone' internal communication and decision-making process in place?			
18. Are roles, responsibilities, processes, and skill sets clear and supported within the 'Partnership Zone'? (See Figure 9, ELS Guide, for all characteristics to be assessed)			
19. Is the community engagement and administration required for the Community Benefit Funds of the RESS fully incorporated into the 'Partnership Zone'?			
20. Has the project's Community Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report been drawn up and signed off within the 'Partnership Zone', under the agreed engagement process with all in the community?			
21. Are success indicators agreed, tracked, reported and acted on?			

**Note:** where there are double questions within a question (e.g. 11, 12, 13), a yes is given only when both are in the affirmative.

For the research, Guide, case studies and recommended next steps that supports this checklist, please see <https://www.astoneco.com/earning-local-support-energy-projects-ireland#>