

## Meeting: Laois Kilkenny Community Forum

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Venue:** Online

### Participants:

Irish Rural Link- Seamus Boland, Brendan Mulry,

EirGrid- Avril Wilson, Eoin Brockert

M-CO- Coleen Savage

Laois Kilkenny Community Forum Representatives - **Michael McEvoy, Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Pat Farrell, Cllr Pat. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Thomasina Connell,**

Apologies – **Juanita Dunphy, Tomas Healy**

**Meeting chaired by Irish Rural Link and draft minutes compiled by Irish Rural Link**

Item	Description
1.	<b>Introduction</b> Seamus Boland (Chairperson) opened the meeting, facilitated introductions and introduced the agenda. As the attendance is short of the full quorum (50% + One) no Forum decisions were taken at this meeting.
2.	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b> Minutes from the previous meeting (December 12th, 2023) will be signed off at the next meeting due to quorum requirements.
3.	<b>Community Benefit Fund Update</b> Coleen Savage (M-CO) update on Phase 2 of the Community Benefit Fund.  Main points outlined. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This fund will be released in three phases:</li><li>• <b>Phase 1:</b> 40% (€<b>204,600</b>) - Starting construction – Most projects have commenced construction but a limited number are yet to commence works. The completion date for these works is in May.</li><li>• <b>Phase 2:</b> 30% (€153,450) - Line stringing/cable jointing – Phase 2 of the fund will be open after easter (late April, early May). Forum Members are requested to pass this information on their community. Two public information sessions will be held when the fund opens for applications. There will be 8 stages in the application process;<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fund Opens</li><li>2. Submit.com opens (The fund will be open for applications for 8 weeks)</li><li>3. Information Evenings (One online and one in person, Details tbc.</li><li>4. Fund closes</li><li>5. Evaluation of Applications (expected to take approximately one month depending on the number of applications)</li><li>6. Notification of Outcomes (expected to be by summer)</li><li>7. Grants Administration</li><li>8. Fund Evaluation and Close</li></ol></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Phase 3: 30% (€153,450) - Energisation (2025)</b></li> </ul> <p>Projects which received grants during Phase 1 of Fund distribution can apply for additional funding under Phases 2 and 3 of the Fund (to be confirmed) however there is no guarantee that additional funding will be secured.</p> <p>The application process will be very straightforward. Applications from new groups and from areas that didn't apply in Phase 1 are very welcome. The Forum will be met ahead of the fund opening. Any applicant who received funding in Phase 1 must have works completed before applying for Phase 2.</p>								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="280 600 839 636"><b>Questions/Queries, Comments</b></th> <th data-bbox="839 600 1401 636"><b>Response</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="280 636 839 1003">Is there any criteria change envisaged to the application process?</td> <td data-bbox="839 636 1401 1003">This will be confirmed but it is very unlikely there will be any criteria change beyond length of time frame. The scoping study was reviewed with the forum after Phase 1 which endorsed the application process. Site visits and PR photos opportunities will potentially be part of the evaluation process of Phase 1.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="280 1003 839 1151">Can historical site works be covered?</td> <td data-bbox="839 1003 1401 1151">Yes, heritage is covered and such applications especially ones which include a tourism dimension are particularly welcome.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="280 1151 839 1375">What do new applicants have to do to apply?</td> <td data-bbox="839 1151 1401 1375">Please pass on the groups contact details to M-CO to ensure they are on the mailing list for when the fund opens. Detailed information sessions will be provided and M-CO is available for individual consultation.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Questions/Queries, Comments</b>	<b>Response</b>	Is there any criteria change envisaged to the application process?	This will be confirmed but it is very unlikely there will be any criteria change beyond length of time frame. The scoping study was reviewed with the forum after Phase 1 which endorsed the application process. Site visits and PR photos opportunities will potentially be part of the evaluation process of Phase 1.	Can historical site works be covered?	Yes, heritage is covered and such applications especially ones which include a tourism dimension are particularly welcome.	What do new applicants have to do to apply?	Please pass on the groups contact details to M-CO to ensure they are on the mailing list for when the fund opens. Detailed information sessions will be provided and M-CO is available for individual consultation.
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4.	<p><b>Project Update from EirGrid</b></p>								
	<p>EOIN Brockert from EirGrid provided a project update since the July meeting and preview of proposed 2024 project activity. Main points outlined.</p> <p><b>STATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COOLNABACKY – Civil Contractor has mobilisation in Q1 2024.</li> <li>• Pre-start investigations, erection of temporary fencing and signage in accordance with relevant construction plans completed.</li> <li>• Site Welfare Compound, laydown and ancillary area complete.</li> <li>• Preparation of commencement notices complete.</li> </ul> <p><b>OHL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ballyragget - Coolnabacky 110kV line on the Kilkenny side works substantially completed.</li> <li>• Ballyragget - Coolnabacky 110kV line on the Laois side, OHL contractor mobilised to start the mmhmjremaining 102 structures.</li> </ul>								

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	Have all the landowners been dealt with on the Laois side of the line, between Timahoe and Ballinakill?	There are three discussions ongoing but the majority have agreements in place.
8.	<b>AOB</b>	
	No items emerged for discussion	
	<b>Questions/Queries, Comments</b>	<b>Response</b>
	Will it be possible to apply for funding under Phase 2 if works funds under Phase 1 have not been completed?	Phase 1 funding will have to drawn down and spend before applying for Phase 2.
9.	<b>Conclusion</b>	
	Seamus Boland (Chairperson) thanked all members for their attendance. The date of the next meeting is June 11 <sup>th</sup> and the third meeting is scheduled for September 10 <sup>th</sup> . Should the forum request an additional meeting this will be facilitated.	