

# Irish **Wind** Magazine

**SPRING** 2022  
EDITION



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**Seizing Ireland's Offshore Potential**

**Green Hydrogen, the next steps**

**Irish Wind Industry Awards**

**Mary Lou McDonald - Leader of Sinn Féin**



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## Welcome to the Spring 2022 Edition of Irish Wind

WEI is the national association for the wind industry in Ireland. This magazine provides updates on news and events in the wind industry in Ireland and is a resource for WEI members in the interests of the promotion of wind energy.

Please contact Lisa-Anne Crookes with comments / suggestions for future editions on [lisa-anne@windenergyireland.com](mailto:lisa-anne@windenergyireland.com)

# FOREWORD

**We are living in one of the greatest energy crises of our times. Irish electricity consumers are under steadily growing pressure as suppliers pass on rising costs driven by increased fossil fuel prices. This pressure on families and businesses will only increase in the months, and even years, to come.**

Last year's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report sounded a 'Code Red' for humanity and, in case anyone wasn't listening, at the end of last month temperatures at the north and south poles were a staggering 30-40 degrees Celsius above average.

And, on our television screens every night, we witness the brutal and unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine. It has created the largest refugee crisis since the end of the second world war, destroyed countless homes, towns and cities and, most tragically, cost the lives of thousands of innocent Ukrainian civilians. Shamefully, this devastation continues to be funded by Europe which has spent as much as \$1 billion a day on Russian oil, coal and gas imports since the fighting began.

Europe is – literally – paying for the rockets and bombs hitting Mariupol and Kyiv.

Spiralling costs for consumers, the terrifying acceleration of climate change and the necessity to end Europe's dependence on imported Russian fossil fuels are coming together to make an indisputable case for speeding up the development of renewable electricity.

## **We are responding.**

At our Annual Conference we are launching our new strategy – Building a Zero-Carbon Ireland – which will drive our activity over the next three years and beyond.

We believe, and in the Endgame report published last year we have shown, that a zero-carbon electricity system is possible by 2035. It will rely chiefly on wind energy, on and offshore, alongside other renewables like solar and an array of supporting technologies like energy storage and green hydrogen.

We do not underestimate the challenge but we know we have the pipeline of projects, on land and at sea, to deliver. We have the investment and the project teams with the funds and the skills to deliver.

But, as we told the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action at the end of February, we have neither an electricity grid strong enough nor a functional planning system to deliver it right now.

EirGrid's Shaping Our Electricity Future must have strong political and public support. Support for it is a litmus test that will identify those who are committed to tackling climate change.

But even if all the reinforcements proposed in that strategy were delivered it would not be enough to meet Ireland's carbon budget targets. It undermines our attempts to connect



**Noel Cunniffe**  
CEO

significant volumes of onshore wind and floating wind energy in the 2020s.

We need to go beyond it and we will shortly be publishing new research showing how that strategy can be developed so we can meet our electricity sector carbon budget target for 2021 – 2030.

But connecting projects to a stronger grid is only possible if we can get those projects through the planning system.

Recent research from MKO shows that An Bord Pleanála is taking more than a year to make decisions on planning applications which are supposed to be reached within 18 weeks.

If we are committed to replacing expensive, imported, fossil fuels with cheaper, indigenous, renewable energy then Minister O'Brien must use his powers under the planning legislation to instruct An Bord Pleanála to prioritise applications for renewable energy and grid infrastructure.

He will also need to greatly increase the resources allocated to the Board. If it is struggling to deal with applications for onshore wind farms today, how will it cope with the volume we expect in the coming years to say nothing of applications of more grid infrastructure and for offshore wind farms from 2023 onwards? We also need the Environmental and Planning Court established – with the funds to make it effective – as set out in the Programme for Government to ensure a swift, effective, judicial review system that adheres to our obligations under the Aarhus Convention.

We cannot decarbonise our electricity system and make Ireland energy independent without wind farms. We cannot build wind farms if we cannot get planning permission to do so. And we cannot get them through a broken planning system. Grid and planning might be perennial challenges for the development of renewable energy but today we have a unique opportunity to make the case to the Government and to other key policymakers that now is the time to fix – finally – a system which is simply not working.

The prize for doing so is nothing less than an Ireland which is energy independent, with warmer homes, cleaner air and with a renewable energy industry employing tens of thousands of people leading the fight against climate change.

We can, indeed we must, deliver.

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS



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Source Energie delivers large-scale renewable energy projects to accelerate the energy transition. The team has extensive experience developing wind, solar and biofuel projects across the globe over the last two decades. Backed by a global infrastructure investor, Source Energie is building a pipeline of large projects across Europe.

These include large-scale offshore wind energy projects in Irish, UK and Norwegian waters. These projects will deploy a mix of fixed foundation and floating turbine technologies appropriate to the location. Offtake strategies are an inherent part of the project development process – in addition to electrical grid connections, Source Energie is developing hydrogen storage solutions to firm up availability of project energy from all its projects. Source Energie is also developing onshore solar projects in the UK, and the United States, and is developing a range of battery storage projects which provide both balancing and grid ancillary services.



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Marsh is the world's leading insurance broker and risk advisor. With around 45,000 colleagues operating in 130 countries, Marsh serves commercial and individual clients with data-driven risk solutions and advisory services. Marsh's Climate and Sustainability team combines global insights with local intelligence to help companies manage the risks of a sustainable transformation and realise opportunities, by focusing on the key issues they are exposed to now and tomorrow.

We work with Marsh clients to measure, monitor, and manage the physical, transition and reputational risks associated with a more sustainable future. Marsh can help articulate your climate and sustainability-related undertakings and commitments to align the needs and risks of your business with both advisory and insurance solutions.



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Wood Group Kenny Ireland is a leading multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy, specialising in renewable energy.

We have the capability to deliver at every phase of a project, from the early stages of site selection, feasibility and design right through to project management of the construction phase and operation and maintenance. Our highly qualified team has extensive Irish and international experience providing consultancy services in over 90 countries across six continents.

Our work includes off-grid power systems, right up to some of the world's largest renewable energy developments with capacities of thousands of megawatts. Our personnel have delivered sustainable engineering solutions to utilities, developers, financiers, regional government authorities and the manufacturing industry for over twenty years.

Our success to date is based on in-depth technical and engineering knowledge, applied in a practical manner to closely match our clients' needs.

We offer expertise in wind (fixed and floating), wave, tidal and hydro-based energy technologies, and also provide a wider range of services, including solar, hybrid, hydrogen and marine technologies.



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Errigal Training Centre is Ireland's first dedicated GWO Accredited Training Provider where you can complete all five GWO Basic Safety Modules and Refreshers under the one roof over consecutive days.

From our base in Co Donegal, we also provide RUK/OGUK/Chester Step Medicals weekly. Our state-of-the-art facility includes a specially commissioned working-at-height area and an indoor heated pool to cater for sea survival & boat transfer training.

We are 30 minutes from Donegal Airport and are here to support the renewables and marine sector across the island of Ireland. Preferential accommodation rates available from our partner hotels.



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dCarbonX Limited is a GeoEnergy company which specialises in the development of subsurface storage assets that enable the energy transition. dCarbonX has an exclusive partnership with ESB, Ireland's leading integrated utility, to develop large scale offshore green hydrogen storage facilities in Ireland and is working with Pentair on carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) projects in Ireland and the UK.

The company is also progressing a number of smaller scale "step-down" onshore subsurface storage opportunities in Ireland and the UK. In November 2021, a Strategic Energy Transition Alliance with Snam S.p.A. was agreed, where Snam has taken an equity interest in dCarbonX and will fund its strategic work programme, with an initial project focus on green hydrogen storage and CCS projects in Ireland and the UK.



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Jones Engineering is a leading engineering contractor operating throughout Ireland, United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East.

Over the last century we have grown sustainably in both size and reputation with a turnover of around €960 million and employing more than 4,200 people worldwide. Our core value is the delivery of engineering through people.

Recruiting, nurturing and developing the best talent has been a cornerstone of our Group's development resulting in repeat work with existing clients forming 80 per cent of our business. This is why we are the contractor of choice for our clients.

Jones Engineering offers a complete range of engineering services in the energy and utility sector up to 220kV, including turnkey and EPC delivery of substations, BESS, OHL & UGC grid connections and modular manufacturing.

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EMEC is committed to supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. EMEC is best known as the world's leading facility for testing and validating wave and tidal energy devices in the sea. It is an accredited test laboratory (ISO/IEC 17025) and inspection body (ISO/IEC 17020) and has hosted more ocean energy converters at its test sites in Orkney, Scotland, than any other site in the world.

Having gained unprecedented experience in demonstrating ocean energy technologies EMEC has expanded activities into other sectors including green hydrogen, floating wind, clean transport and energy systems. As an innovation catalyst, EMEC provides demonstration, technical and commercial support to reduce the time, cost and risk to progress innovative sustainable technologies to market.

EMEC's Irish office focuses on supporting local partners with cross-border projects to help develop the wave, tidal and floating offshore wind energy sectors.

EMEC is supporting the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to develop the Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site (AMETS) in Co. Mayo as part of the Interreg NWE AFLOWT project. EMEC is leading the project and will support with site development, H&S systems and operating procedures. [www.emec.org.uk](http://www.emec.org.uk)

Green Investment Group is a specialist in green infrastructure principal investment, project development and delivery. We have investments or operations in over 25 markets, more than 450 staff and a global development pipeline of 30 GW.

Part of the Macquarie Group since 2017, we were initially launched by the UK Government as the Green Investment Bank before joining forces with Macquarie Capital's renewables team. GIG brings together the unique expertise of the world's first green investment institution, with Macquarie's entrepreneurial mindset and global reach.

We work alongside our partners to create enduring positive impact, using our international experience and local knowledge. GIG, with Macquarie Capital, has invested in ~50 per cent of the world's largest offshore wind market, the UK, and is pioneering offshore wind in Asia.

In January 2022 GIG led the West of Orkney Windfarm Consortium in securing development rights to deliver a 2 GW project in the ScotWind leasing process

Ocean Crest Marine Limited provides marine support and services to the marine and construction sector throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom.

OCM is the largest supplier of Jack-up Barges and modular pontoons in Ireland. With a fleet of five Jack-up Barges, OCM can cater for geotechnical survey, cable installation, wind farm maintenance and harbour civil engineering projects.

OCM can offer Jack-up Barges from 50t right up to 400t deck load, which has the capability to accommodate a 350t crane and supporting equipment. We also provide a wide range of work and safety boats to support our fleet of modular floating spud leg, crane and transfer barges which can be configured to individual project requirements. All of these are road transportable.

With over 20 years' experience in the various marine sectors, OCM provides our clients with experienced, trained, skilled barge & vessel masters to manage the plant throughout each project.

We also provide site-specific technical support during both tendering and construction phases of projects to assist clients with the most suitable plant selection for their projects.

At ASL we provide a one-stop-shop for all of your safety consulting and certified training needs for the on and offshore sectors.

ASL Safety & Training is one of the longest established safety and training consultancies in Ireland, with a background in health, safety, security, environmental, general business training and consultancy dating back to 1994. ASL Safety & Training provides professional safety consultancy and advice to all sectors of industry, voluntary organisations, public and private sector clients across Ireland and Britain.

We have a vast range of knowledge and experience working closely with various sized clients some of which include construction companies, local authorities, State bodies and semi-State bodies, banking, commercial and insurance, both on and offshore.

ASL Safety & Training works closely with each individual client to ensure that they are given the best advice, solutions and training to meet their needs at the most affordable rates.

Ramboll is a global engineering, architecture and consultancy company founded in Denmark in 1945. Our 16,000 experts create sustainable solutions across Buildings; Transport; Water; Environment and Health; Architecture, Landscape & Urbanism; Energy and Management Consulting.

Across the world, Ramboll combines local experience with a global knowledgebase to create sustainable cities and societies. We combine insights with the power to drive positive change to our clients, in the form of ideas that can be realised and implemented. We call it: Bright ideas. Sustainable change.

Ramboll is one of the pioneers in the wind energy industry with more than thirty years of experience. We support clients worldwide in their ambition to create sustainable wind solutions. Our portfolio includes the successful completion of offshore and onshore projects in eighty countries.

With more than five hundred dedicated wind experts, Ramboll is one of the key industry players – delivering services with global perspective yet with local expertise. With our multidisciplinary capabilities we offer a full range of services that cover the entire life cycle of a project, from planning and project development to design, procurement, implementation and optimisation of operation, maintenance, and finally to decommissioning.

# THE STATE MUST LEAD

Targets are necessary, but delivery is key to realising Ireland's green future



## Mary Lou McDonald

*Leader of Sinn Féin*

**In responding to the climate crisis and realising Ireland's greener future, it is the state that must take the lead. The setting of targets for transitioning to renewables is very necessary but hard, tangible delivery is key to delivering our energy revolution.**

The ratification of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment Act) last July marked a historic moment in the state's response to climate change. Sinn Féin worked constructively with the government in shaping this legislation and the party was central to the passing of the Climate Act in the North.

However, we know that targets and legislation alone won't deliver change. This reality was highlighted in Wind Energy Ireland's recent warning to the Oireachtas Climate Committee that the state's target of 80 per cent renewables by 2030 is in real jeopardy. Clearly, we need an intent and an urgency from the government that matches the scale of the climate, energy and biodiversity challenges we now face.

The 2030 renewable energy target is ambitious, as it should be, but it is also achievable. We cannot afford to miss this target or lose any more time. We must see action to capitalise on the positives. Ireland is blessed with a wind resource that is the envy of many. Harnessing the power of this resource makes sense and would dramatically shift Ireland's dependence on importing of damaging fossil fuels.

It can be done. The projects are there, and the sector has made it clear that it is ready and willing to progress Ireland's wind energy transformation at pace. However, the government must step-up and play its part in planning, regulations, grid infrastructure, ports and supply chain strategy. It is a big job, but the benefits are obvious to all. The pandemic proved that things previously considered unachievable could be delivered when the urgent need arose. There is nothing more urgent than developing cleaner, renewable sources of energy for Ireland. Yet, despite dire warnings contained in the IPCC report, the same urgency in the delivery of renewables has remained elusive.

Current events provide a greater impetus for change. The growing energy crunch in Europe further underpins the need to accelerate the transition from fossil fuel. Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine has shone a spotlight on our current source of energy. Europe spends nearly €1 billion a day on Russian oil, gas and coal; revenue that is now being used to fund Putin's brutal invasion.

There is a clear alignment between our economic, environmental and moral responsibilities to move from being importers of fossil fuels from countries with poor human rights records to becoming net exporters of clean energy to Europe.

Our island's vast wind potential also presents a huge opportunity to produce green hydrogen. Sinn Féin introduced legislation recognising the potential of this energy for many sectors of the economy. Wind and green hydrogen can go hand in hand in revolutionising Ireland's energy supply, and we should aim to become a leader in the field.

As we ramp-up renewable development, and increase onshore and offshore capacity, we must strike the right balance between climate action and biodiversity. That means a better planning process and updated onshore guidelines, while the defunct Derrybrien project reminds us of the importance of environmental impact assessments. We must also ensure that our marine environment and ecosystems are protected as offshore infrastructure is expanded.

Quality public engagement is also vital to ensure new developments are done in conjunction with and deliver for local communities. 25th April will see the application window open for Phase 1 offshore wind projects. This is another important milestone and one we hope will generate real momentum.

**For our part, Sinn Féin is committed to the 2030 renewable energy target and will continue to work constructively to see that it is achieved.**

**We have had very good engagements from a wide range of stakeholders in the energy sector to date and look forward to working with the wind industry into the future.**

Realising the full potential of our wind resource can deliver huge social, economic and environmental benefits and if Sinn Féin are in government, it's an area in which we will be very ambitious.





# For what's next in renewable energy.

The leading renewable energy financial adviser.



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# Powering the Rebel County

## Why is wind energy important for Cork?

- To provide secure, clean, affordable energy;
- To deliver jobs, long-term investment and benefits to Cork communities and all of Ireland;
- To meet our climate action targets.

Powering Cork, is a new report looking at what the wind industry contributes to Cork. It also looks to the future and the opportunities associated with wind that are within Cork's grasp. The report by Wind Energy Ireland is being shared with elected representatives, the executive of regional assemblies and local authorities, the media, business and other commercial interest groups in Cork.

**Powering Cork is published as part of our regional public affairs programme which aims to:**

- Influence a more supportive political and economic environment for wind farm development;
- Inform target audiences about the wind industry, and
- Raise awareness of the benefits of wind generated energy and associated technologies with a view to making it easier for Wind Energy Ireland wind farm developers and other members to bring wind farm projects to fruition to meet Government renewable energy targets.

In January and February 2022, almost 90 per cent of County Councillors in County Cork spoke to us about their constituents' feedback on wind farms.

## Did you know?

### Cork Wind Farms Pay €7.2m in Commercial Rates Every Year

The most recent information shows that Cork County Council will receive more than €7 million in commercial rates in 2022. Commercial rates paid by wind farms in Cork have increased by approximately €1.5 million in the last year. The percentage of Cork's commercial rates budget attributable to wind is now in excess of 6 per cent.

With a commercial rates revaluation expected to be applied in Cork in 2025, the contribution from wind farms to commercial rates in Cork is expected to grow rapidly, funding essential local services.

**RIGHT NOW WIND ENERGY MAKES A €33 MILLION IMPACT ON CORK'S ECONOMY**

(Source KPMG)

## Wind Farms Power Cork Jobs

Powering Cork tells the story of a new cluster of wind energy companies forming in Cork alongside established Cork-based companies such as Statkraft and DP Energy. These are now joined by organisations such as Simply Blue Group, EIHZ, Green Rebel Marine and others.

Thousands of Cork jobs in the pharmaceuticals sector are supported by wind generated power both on manufacturing sites and through CPPAs.

In this report we will share the stories of Cork people who work at the cutting edge in a new industry, near home, in Cork. We feature people who've returned to work in Ireland in the wind industry in Cork; and local people with a passion for their community who are working to build understanding and trust between wind farms and communities.

## Environment and Sustainability in Cork

Did you know Cork made sustainability history in January 2022 with the repurposing of turbine blades by the Eir Wind Project into a bridge on the Midleton to Youghal Greenway?

Cork wind farms are also involved in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, doing their bit to create a network of safe places for bees and other insects across many different habitat types and ecosystems surrounding wind farms.

Cork communities are working to improve energy efficiency and progress energy retrofits in homes with the support of a number of wind farm community benefit funds.

## Wind Farms Support Cork Communities

A tourism boost in North Cork has been felt as a result of support for Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Club.



Vital lifesaving services are available to rural Cork because of support for the Irish Community Air Ambulance Service.



Health and community connectedness is being enhanced through support for sports projects, community halls, tidy towns, community playgrounds and gathering spaces.

Cork communities received €437,478 in community benefit funding in 2020 for projects that enhance Cork communities.





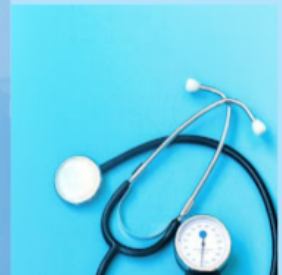
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# Beyond targets: Seizing Ireland's offshore wind opportunity

Author

## Eoin Cotter

Head of Business Development, Green Rebel

**With offshore wind gathering pace in Ireland, we need to look beyond targets and deadlines to realise its full potential, says Eoin Cotter, Head of Business Development with multi-disciplinary marine survey specialists, Green Rebel.**

As Ireland ramps up offshore wind development in a race to hit our 2030 and 2050 decarbonisation commitments, it is crucial we remember the opportunity here transcends meeting targets, hitting deadlines and avoiding penalties.

An accident of geography means our small island nation has phenomenal offshore wind potential. If we get this right, we eliminate our reliance on fossil fuel imports (something recent events have thrown into stark relief), revolutionise Ireland's energy economy, revitalise coastal communities and provide a significant boost to national coffers. Things are moving in the right direction, but Ireland still lags behind her neighbours in offshore wind. That is not necessarily all bad. It allows us to learn from what has worked in other jurisdictions, refine it, and apply it more effectively in an Irish context.

Templates provided by trailblazers like Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind programme offer Ireland a springboard to catapult us onto the global offshore wind stage. The opportunity is there, we just need the vision, courage and commitment, at all levels, to embrace it.

### Where are we now?

We are making progress. The comparatively rapid passing of the Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act last year has injected sorely needed momentum and gives cause for hope. However, it is vital the Government maintains and builds on that urgency through 2022 and beyond.

Significant hurdles still hamper the progression of offshore wind projects in Ireland. While following due process and observing statutory regulation are important, each stage takes far too long.

For example, as a marine survey business, Green Rebel sees developers routinely wait 12-18 months for a straightforward foreshore licence before survey work can start. In the UK, they turn around equivalent licences in 12-18 weeks.

That level of regulatory stagnation frustrates developers and makes it unattractive for Irish investors and entrepreneurs to get involved in the indigenous offshore wind supply chain. If we are to reap the transformational rewards our offshore wind resource offers, this must change, and change quickly.

### Certainty: the vital ingredient

Lack of clarity in Ireland's offshore wind sector is not just holding back progress, it is actively damaging it. We have already seen the departure of Equinor from the Irish market, for the time being at least. Driven by commercial imperatives, it is easy to understand why tier one developers might forsake Ireland in favour of jurisdictions with a more coherent regulatory landscape.

We need certainty to maximise our collective return, as a nation, from Irish offshore wind development.

Certainty for developers so they feel secure investing the sizeable sums of money required for these projects. Certainty for local businesses, investors and entrepreneurs making it viable for them to develop an indigenous offshore wind supply chain, knowing work and revenue will follow. Certainty for local stakeholders and coastal communities so they can start believing offshore wind will deliver the jobs, revenue and benefits promised.

The first step in creating that certainty is proper resourcing. Government departments, statutory and regulatory bodies need enough skilled people, with the right tools and processes in place, to fast-track offshore wind applications. That does not mean cutting corners or slackening regulatory rigour, it just means making sure foreshore licensing and Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications are processed efficiently.

The Government also needs to address the shortfall in both coastal infrastructure to support offshore wind projects, and an indigenous Irish supply chain to service their needs, both during development and throughout their operational life. Investment in these crucial areas needs to happen now to maximise the opportunity and to avoid bottlenecks in the future.

### Looking beyond the targets

Maintaining momentum, and taking action now to streamline Ireland's offshore wind development, is paramount if we are to meet our decarbonisation targets. We are still playing catch up after years of slow progress. We cannot afford more delays.

But it is also vital we do not hobble our ambition with arbitrary numbers. If the scope is there to push beyond the targets – and I believe it is – we should absolutely keep our foot to the floor and drive on.

Ireland has a priceless opportunity to become a global leader in offshore wind over the decades ahead. What do we need to do as an industry, and as a nation, to make that happen?

Everything we can.



# Green Tech Skillnet

*Providing Training, Research and Jobs*

**Wind Energy Ireland is the promoting organisation for the Green Tech Skillnet (GTS). GTS identifies, develops and delivers impactful training to bridge skill gaps to develop the current and future workforce.**

This ensures security of service to the sector and prepares it for future skills requirements. Our remit extends across the energy sector with training, skills research, networking events and green skills advocacy in wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, and electrification of heat and transport.

GTS heavily discounts the cost of courses for companies of all sizes through grant funding which was awarded by Skillnet Ireland. Skillnet Ireland is funded through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. With the support of our members, we continue to push the sector forward, equipping companies and people with the skills required for a green transition.

In 2021, Green Tech Skillnet won funding for research on green hydrogen and for the development of new programmes. GTS also launched the Climate Ready Academy with Skillnet Ireland to deliver free masterclasses on green skills. Find out more here: <https://www.climatereadyacademy.ie/>

The transition in course design from 100 per cent face-to-face delivery of programmes to online delivery was a steep learning curve for us over the past two years. The Green Tech Skillnet has successfully delivered over 180 programmes/training courses to more than 300 businesses and over 1,400 trainees in that time.

We look forward to developing further courses to support the skills, creativity and innovation of our member companies in 2022, and to delivering in-person and hybrid courses where it is deemed to be beneficial as the return to workplace continues.

## Developing Local Talent

Achieving the ambitious targets of 8.2 GW onshore wind energy, 5 GW offshore wind energy and up to 2.5 GW of solar energy set in the Climate Action Plan will require a monumental effort, investment and resources. This will require a tripling of our workforce in this sector at a rapid pace to meet 2030 targets.

Ireland's greatest resource is our people. The sector must invest in the workforce now so that there will be skilled people available for building, operating and maintaining renewable energy infrastructure over the next 20+ years.

We constantly face new challenges and we must act now to mitigate our dependence on importing talent. We can do this by investing in upskilling local workers.

## Supporting Career Transitions

In 2021, Green Tech Skillnet launched unique Skills Connect training and work placement programmes for transitioning unemployed workers to the energy sector. These programmes were jointly shortlisted as finalists for the IITD Best Talent Development Initiatives for two years in succession.

The Wind Turbine Technician programme delivers a suite of GWO safety and technical certified training, overview of the wind sector and communication skills workshops. Technicians obtain the certificates required to go out on site after training.

The Work in Wind programme delivers a wide array of training covering the lifecycle of a wind farm, an overview of onshore and offshore wind; grid; policy; planning; markets; community engagement, and environmental impact management. Graduates of the Work in Wind programme also obtain certification in the fundamentals of asset management for wind farms developed by SEAI and WEI stakeholders for ISO 55001 standards.

Green Tech Skillnet sees this as an opportunity to address the skill gaps and shortages that exist today in the sector and to ensure that we do not face a shortage of skilled workers for Ireland's transition to a zero-carbon future. This is also an opportunity for the sector to be part of Ireland's recovery. The standard of the applications in 2021 was exceptional and we look forward to attracting more talent into the renewable energy sector in 2022.

The next cohorts of Wind Turbine Technician and Work in Renewable Energy are targeted to start in the second quarter of 2022.

Green Tech Skillnet needs your help to support the next generation of skilled workers. We are seeking host companies to give trainees a work placement or work from home project.

Ideally, they would be considered for a permanent position after their work placement, but this is not a requirement. Please engage with us early for work placements. We can work with your company in selecting candidates suitable to your needs in advance of the programme. If you are interested in hosting a work placement, please contact [Ledi Hoxha](mailto:Ledi.Hoxha@windenergyireland.com) at [ledi@windenergyireland.com](mailto:ledi@windenergyireland.com)



### Green Tech Skillnet Supplemental Calls for Funding

Skillnet Ireland obtains further funding throughout the year from the Government and the EU. There may be further calls for funding through the Future Skills Programme (FSP) in 2022 and GTS is interested in identifying proposals that fit with the Skillnet Ireland call themes.

The aim of the FSP is to facilitate the supply of the emerging and future skills required by industry by addressing Skillnet Ireland's three strategic pillars: strategic innovation, workforce design, and people development, by consulting with an industry expert to design a training programme bespoke to a skills requirement and running a pilot programme on that training.

If you have ideas for future skills development projects or essential research requirement, please contact [mark@windenergyireland.com](mailto:mark@windenergyireland.com)

### Green Tech Skillnet Steering Group and Focus Groups

Green Tech Skillnet is governed by representatives of the member companies to oversee, guide, and direct the network. We have monthly online meetings. We are seeking volunteers to be involved in shaping the sector.

We are looking for a balance of business skills in the steering group, for example enterprise expertise in the relevant sector/region and finance, governance, learning and development, HR, marketing, or other relevant functions

GTS is looking to develop training bundles to deliver a rapid transition to new roles in the energy sector for new recruits. If you are interested in participating in a focus group for a particular job role, please reach out to us by contacting Mark at: [mark@windenergyireland.com](mailto:mark@windenergyireland.com).

### Launch of green hydrogen report

Green Tech Skillnet has delivered a range of reports that continue to drive policy forward. January 2022 saw the launch of the report *Hydrogen and Wind Energy – The Role of Green Hydrogen in Ireland's Energy Transition*.

The report shows how Ireland's abundant wind energy resources could produce vast quantities of green hydrogen, which can be used to reduce our dependence on the imported fossil fuels that caused significant spikes in electricity prices in the second half of 2021 and early 2022.

For more information on programmes/courses with Green Tech Skillnet contact Ledi Hoxha [ledi@windenergyireland.com](mailto:ledi@windenergyireland.com)



# Export Potential May be a Hot Topic

but Indigenous  
Demand will be  
Key to Green  
Hydrogen Success

Author

## Shane McDonagh

Senior Engineer and Hydrogen Lead at Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions



**Hydrogen has had many false starts, hailed as the fuel of the future by General Motors as far back as 1966, and generating significant buzz again under US President George W. Bush. Once more it is receiving a lot of attention, but as has been said before, this time it's different.**

Previous generations hoped it would outcompete fossil fuels on cost and energy security. Now though the push for green hydrogen, electrolysis combined with renewable electricity and water as opposed to blue or grey hydrogen derived from fossil fuels, is being driven almost entirely by issues of sustainability. This is why green hydrogen will not fade from the spotlight.

Green hydrogen offers something to which there are very few, if any, alternatives. It is zero-carbon, highly scalable and storable energy that can leverage renewable electricity against areas of the economy addicted to liquid fossil fuels.

Competing with fossil fuels in terms of cost is impractical, they have a 100-year head start and we cannot afford the time to reach price parity, especially as the damage they do is not sufficiently captured in their price. Instead, the focus is, and must remain on, decarbonising the economy and avoiding the worst effects of climate change. Only through the prism of a simultaneous energy and climate crisis does widespread adoption of green hydrogen make sense, but this is exactly the reality we are facing.

It is difficult to underestimate the speed and scale of the change required. Over the five years up to 2021 the share of renewable energy across the economy increased from 9.5 per cent to 13.5 per cent, less than a 1 per cent increase per annum. This rate will need to increase five-fold or more between now and 2030 in order to meet the targets we have set ourselves. Also bear in mind that much of the low-hanging fruit has been eaten. The challenge is enormous.

Although we have had a lot of success with renewable electricity, achieving our 40 per cent target in 2020 and aiming for 80 per cent by 2030, electricity currently meets just one fifth of our overall energy needs. The remainder, heat and transport, is still dominated by petrol, diesel, kerosene and natural gas. Yes, EVs and heat pumps will allow us to meet a greater share of our energy demand via renewable electricity,

but even in our most ambitious scenario for 2050, less than 70 per cent of our national energy demand will be met by wind and solar. And this figure excludes our almost total reliance on liquid fossil fuels in international aviation and shipping. In short, our biggest success has been with the smallest slice of the pie and the rate of progress in other sectors is a small fraction of what it needs to be.


It is with that backdrop that Green Tech Skillnet and Wind Energy Ireland commissioned Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions (GDG) to produce *Hydrogen and Wind Energy: The Role of Green Hydrogen in Ireland's Energy Transition*, investigating the potential of green hydrogen from wind in Ireland to fill that gap between what is achievable with electrification and full decarbonisation, paying special attention to what can be done before 2030 and the impact on job creation. The report, released in January 2022, details the use cases, costs and policy requirements of green hydrogen in an Irish context.

In short, it found that Ireland will struggle to compete in the international green hydrogen market. Our electricity prices are higher, we have very little experience to call upon or existing hydrogen infrastructure to utilise, our complementary solar resources are low, and other countries have already made significant investments and signed agreements with potential partners. Fundamentally, other parts of the world are better placed to capitalise on the export potential and this is unlikely to change over time. That is not say that we should not grasp the opportunity with both hands if it arises, large plants built close to port infrastructure might yet prove feasible, but we should be realistic about our overall positioning.

Instead, indigenous demand will be key to building a green hydrogen industry. Maximising the utility of our wind and growing solar resources, helping to balance the increasingly strained electricity network, increasing energy security, decarbonising difficult sectors and growing our economy with new future-proofed investment. These are the benefits that green hydrogen can bring and they should be the focus of any future hydrogen plans.

Our Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) fleet runs almost exclusively on diesel and demand is growing rapidly. These larger vehicles with much greater daily mileage are more difficult to electrify.





Hydrogen though can offer refuelling practices, range and performance similar to diesel engines. This is also true for buses, for which centralised hydrogen refuelling can match existing practices, even potentially achieving cost parity in Dublin by 2030. Three such hydrogen buses operate in Belfast and trials are already underway in Dublin.

Converting the 25,000 largest vehicles to Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles capable of running on green hydrogen would for example require 1,400 MW of offshore wind and eliminate close to a million tonnes of CO2 emissions each year. Other areas of the economy could be similarly targeted to great effect.

The globalised nature of maritime shipping and aviation mean that worldwide action and policy would be required, but they too could be decarbonised using indigenous green hydrogen. Despite carrying 80-90 per cent of global trade by volume, maritime shipping has until recently represented an emissions blind spot. Similarly, aviation fuel has only recently adopted climate change targets despite being one of the fastest growing sources of emissions.

Initially green hydrogen could be used to increase the quality of biofuels, and even to make fuels that could be blended with or replace their fossil equivalents. Later, as technology develops, it will be possible to power aircraft with hydrogen and generate hydrogen-based liquid fuels such as ammonia or methanol for shipping.

Targeting these indigenous demands would connect previously disparate sectors to our struggling electricity network with massive potential synergies. Curtailment alone will not make competitive green hydrogen, but being able to consume this otherwise wasted energy and turn it in to a useful product provides a boost to renewable generators and can reduce overall costs for stakeholders. By turning on during times of surplus and low prices, and off again when renewable resources are low, green hydrogen can perform much the same duty as large-scale storage. Dedicated generation will also be required to produce significant amounts of hydrogen, but this should be the goal.

Ultimately the extent of this role will depend on there being sufficient demand for the hydrogen produced and, of course, green hydrogen will compete with other solutions such as batteries. In this respect, a switch away from simple energy targets to more holistic carbon budgets is a game-changer, highlighting hydrogen's role as part of overall emissions reductions programmes.

Whilst focusing on the domestic market may be seen as lacking ambition, the potential market is huge and would require several GWs of new wind farms. Plans that include hydrogen are often aspirational, but the time has come for ambitious but realistic policies and targets to support the development of Ireland's green hydrogen industry.



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- Noise and shadow flicker assessments
- Repower, replant & life extension support
- Power system, feasibility and connection studies
- Grid code compliance & power quality assessments
- Technical, environmental and commercial due diligence



## TNEI at the Wind Energy Ireland Conference

Speak to us at the WEI Annual Conference to see how TNEI can help you with your part of the transition.



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# Government must choose Energy Storage over Fossil Fuels to back up Power Supply



Author

## Bobby Smith

*Head of Energy Storage Ireland*

**Energy Storage Ireland's latest pipeline survey shows that there is over 2,000 MW of battery storage projects in development with the majority already through the planning system and looking to apply for a grid connection.**

However, many projects are facing barriers and delays due to the current connection policy process which places restrictions on connection offers for storage and existing market frameworks which favour fossil fuels over new technologies such as energy storage.

On 30 November 2021, the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD, published a new Government Policy Statement to ensure security of electricity supply for Irish homes and businesses. The statement rightly called out that there is a need for significant investment in technologies such as energy storage to ensure security of electricity supply and that additional energy storage needs to be permitted and developed to deliver this. However, the Government at the same time set a target for the development of circa 2,000 MW of new flexible gas-fired generation capacity, which is expected to be primarily procured through capacity market auctions.

While recent capacity market auction results have seen some successful battery projects with multi-hour durations receive contracts, there are still restrictions in terms of the full and equal participation of storage in the auctions and the vast majority of new capacity procured so far has been gas-fired.

Battery storage technologies are a key enabler to a decarbonised electricity system, and their deployment supports climate change and energy security goals by providing a multitude of valuable services. Battery storage can also be deployed relatively quickly compared to gas-fired generators and this is an important consideration when assessing security of supply needs in the short-term.

There will be changes needed to connection policy and new market frameworks to unlock the full potential of battery storage as well as new and emerging energy storage technologies. Where possible, energy storage solutions should be prioritised over fossil fuel gas generation to avoid locking-in fossil fuel generation for many years to come.

**For more information on the work of Energy Storage Ireland or to get details on membership, please contact Bobby Smith at [info@energystorageireland.com](mailto:info@energystorageireland.com)**

# POLICY UPDATE

## Who are we and what do we do?

The policy team currently manages eleven committees – Markets, Grid, Planning, 70by30, Offshore, Offshore Grid, Offshore Consenting, Community Engagement, Health & Safety, Asset Management and FLOSH. We also collaborate on storage policy issues with our colleagues in Energy Storage Ireland and on all-island matters with Renewable NI. Each committee contains several working groups in which cross-committee subject matter experts work together on a range of industry-related issues. These include responding to public consultations, commissioning economic analyses and reports and identifying policy changes which will deliver renewables at lower costs to the consumer. The working groups provide members with an opportunity to influence key stakeholders and policy decision-makers and to shape the direction of energy policy in Ireland. Described below are several key workstreams currently active across various policy working groups and committees. Any Wind Energy Ireland member can apply to join a committee by emailing [eabhin@windenergyireland.com](mailto:eabhin@windenergyireland.com).

## Our 2030 Ambition

WEI welcomed the publication of the updated Climate Action Plan on 4 November 2021, which set out a detailed sectoral roadmap designed to deliver an ambitious 51 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. This doubles the ambition of the 2019 Plan, and will require significant reductions from all sectors. Overall, the increase in ambition from CAP19 to CAP21 is extremely positive and is welcome from a wind energy industry perspective. The plan sets out that Ireland will drastically reduce the amount of carbon in the electricity system from current levels – around 10-11 MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq – to between 2-4MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq.

This will be a huge challenge for the country but we have a solution. The recent Endgame study, from energy specialists Baringa published by Wind Energy Ireland, formed the basis of our inputs into the public consultation on CAP21. It shows clearly that by ensuring the capacity targets set out in the Programme for Government are delivered, alongside zero-carbon system services and essential new grid infrastructure, then delivering on the Climate Action Plan ambition is achievable by 2030.

With CAP21, the Government has given an important positive signal about its commitment to the deployment of renewable electricity and the transition away from fossil fuels. The increase in the renewable electricity target from 70 per cent to 80 per cent by 2030, as announced as part of the National Development Plan, has been reaffirmed in the updated CAP. The capacity targets have been updated to 8 GW onshore and 5 GW offshore, in line with the ambition set out in the Programme for Government.

CAP21 is an important step towards a zero-carbon electricity system by 2035. We look forward to working with Government departments and other key stakeholders to urgently get the needed policies and frameworks in place.

## Bridging the Gap

In November, EirGrid launched its highly anticipated strategy, *Shaping Our Electricity Future*, which sets out how the TSO will reinforce our electricity grid over the next decade and connect large volumes of renewable electricity.

While the launch of the document is to be welcomed, it is unfortunately already outdated as it is based on the old 70 per cent RES-E target and is therefore out of step with the new 80 per cent target.

Furthermore, EirGrid's 2030 scenario expects that only an additional 1,300 MW of onshore wind will be connected from today to the end of 2030. This vastly misunderstands the onshore wind pipeline. In reality, nearly 700 MW is already under construction and there's an additional 1,000 MW with full planning permission set to compete in the coming renewable energy auction with many more projects in the pipeline.

On a more positive note the strategy, if delivered, provides a pathway for the connection of 5,000 MW of offshore wind. This is welcome and sends a much-needed signal to the offshore supply chain about Ireland's determination to deliver on our vast offshore potential, however more grid capacity will be needed to facilitate broader offshore delivery, including floating wind, by 2030 and beyond.

One thing is clear, however, an update to *Shaping Our Electricity Future* is urgently needed to align it with the ambition that the Government has set out in the Climate Action Plan. We have engaged with EirGrid on the next steps to update the SOEF report from 70 per cent RES-E to a system with 80 per cent RES-E which is compliant with the CAP carbon budgets.

## A busy time for offshore

Our Offshore Committees are among the busiest parts of our organisation at the moment, and the work is coordinated across four Committees: Offshore, Offshore Grid, Offshore Consenting and Floating Wind, SuperGrid and Hydrogen (FLOSH).

At our September Offshore Conference, WEI was very clear to government and other policymakers: Ireland's ability to deliver 5,000 MW offshore by 2030 rested on the delivery of the seven urgent actions set out in *Twelve Months to Deliver Offshore Wind Energy*.

Recent months have seen some important progress. Firstly, engagement between EirGrid and Industry has significantly stepped-up on the important technical clarifications that projects need in advance of ORESS 1.

Additionally, CRU has set out the process for the Offshore Grid Connection Assessments for Phase 1 projects, which provides important clarity on how grid connection applications from the first phase of projects will be handled.

Thirdly, DECC recently ran a consultation on the Terms and Conditions of the first ORESS auction, which we expect will open in Q4 of 2022 and get us a step closer to delivering on our 2030 offshore ambition. Perhaps most encouragingly, on 17 December, the Maritime Area Planning Bill passed through all stages of the Oireachtas. This was a key priority for us throughout 2021 and its passing is an....

important milestone, both for the establishment of the new Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) and for the Phase 1 projects to progress towards receiving their Maritime Area Consents.

In March, WEI also responded to the important Phase Two consultation, which aims to set out criteria for the second Phase of offshore wind projects that will deliver by 2030 and bridge the gap to the 5,000 MW target. It will be important to get clarity on the Phase Two process as quickly as possible, including the role for floating offshore wind, to give visibility and certainty to an increasingly busy international offshore wind supply chain.

## RESS 2

May 2022 will see the opening of the second Renewable Electricity Support Scheme Auction (RESS 2), with the final auction results following by mid-June. Originally, the auction date had been set for Q3 2022, however WEI worked with DECC and other stakeholders in the summer of 2021 to bring forward the RESS 2 auction by three months.

The original decision not to have a renewable energy auction in 2021 and to delay the next auction until the third quarter of 2022 surprised and greatly disappointed the renewable energy industry, who had relied on the commitment to annual auctions contained in the Programme for Government.

The decision to bring the auction forward was welcome, as was the publication in December by DECC of a schedule of future RESS auctions. This gives important visibility and certainty to the industry and our strong pipeline of onshore wind projects.

We look forward to the RESS 2 auction in May, where we hope to see several wind projects progress.

## WEI calls for a green hydrogen strategy

In recent months, WEI's Hydrogen and Electrofuels Working Group has been working to identify how Ireland can incentivise the production of green hydrogen to contribute to our decarbonisation goals. In January, WEI launched a new report: Hydrogen and Wind Energy – The Role of Green Hydrogen in Ireland's Energy Transition, authored by Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions Ltd. (GDG) with support from Green Tech Skillnet.

The report concludes that green hydrogen, produced from renewable electricity, can play a vital role in Ireland's transition to a net-zero society, boost our economy and make our energy supply more secure. It shows how Ireland's abundant wind energy resources could produce vast quantities of green hydrogen, which can be used to reduce our dependence on the imported fossil fuels that caused significant spikes in electricity prices in the second half of 2021 and early 2022.

The report also sets out how green hydrogen has emerged as a leading option for reducing emissions in hard to decarbonise sectors of the economy such as industry and transport. It can also be used to provide electricity during periods of low wind or solar energy.

Despite the clear opportunity, Ireland remains one of a handful of EU Member States without a hydrogen strategy. WEI is calling on the Government to accelerate the development of a robust hydrogen strategy so that by the middle of this year we are setting out targets for green hydrogen use across industry, heavy road transport, shipping, aviation and power generation.

Additionally, we need to see the immediate establishment of a high-level cross-Government Group to develop recommendations to cut the price of renewable electricity so we can produce green hydrogen as cheaply as possible if we are to be able to compete internationally.





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# Third Annual Irish Wind Awards

Celebration of innovators and leaders in Ireland's fight against climate change

A large audience of leaders in Ireland's wind energy industry gathered in Clontarf Castle, Dublin in March to celebrate the industry's achievements of the last 12 months. The awards recognised the passionate, committed and growing network of people determined to play their role in leading the fight against climate change.

Noel Cunniffe, CEO, Wind Energy Ireland said:

"I am proud to be part of an industry that is doing so much to tackle climate change.

The quality of nominees and award-winners shows the wealth of talent we have in this space; a growing, passionate, and committed network of people determined to ensure that wind energy leads Ireland's fight against climate change.

"These awards provide a welcome opportunity to highlight the great work being done in the wind and renewable energy industry in Ireland. It shines a light on the innovation and hard work across all areas of wind farm development."





## List of shortlisted nominees and winners in each category:

### 1. Wind Energy in the Community Award

Sponsored by TNEI Ireland  
SSE Renewables

**Winner:** Energia Renewables - Meenadreen Extension  
Bord na Móna - Mountlucas

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### 2. Excellence in Construction Award (Electrical and Civil)

Sponsored by Linxon

**Winner:** H&MV Engineering  
Statkraft

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### 3. Excellence in Operation and Maintenance Award

Sponsored by Height for Hire  
H&MV Engineering

**Winner:** Vestas  
Lagan Energy Engineering

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### 4. Exemplary Health and Safety Performance Award

Sponsored by RWE Renewables Ireland

**Winner:** Adman Civil Projects  
EnergyPro  
Greencoat Renewables

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### 5. Excellence in Training & Development Award

Sponsored by Green Tech Skillnet

**Winner:** ElectroRoute  
Kerry Education and Training Board

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### 6. Outstanding Innovation Award

Sponsored by Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy  
Innovision Media  
LiveDiligence

**Winner:** Dublin Offshore

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### 7. Champion of Renewables Award

Sponsored by Bord na Móna

**Winner:** Paul Deane - UCC  
Seamus Hegarty - Energia Renewables  
Kevin O'Donovan - Statkraft

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### 8. Best Professional Practice Award

Sponsored by Vestas

**Winner:** Ionic Consulting  
MKO  
Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions

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### 9. Best Project Award

Sponsored by Matheson Law Firm  
Capital Dynamics, Castlegore Wind Farm  
Enerpower - Kepak

**Winner:** ESB - Grousemount Wind Farm

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### 10. Young Person of the Year Award

Sponsored by Greencoat Renewables  
Sarah Hayes - Statkraft  
Hannah Mulcahy - Statkraft

**Winner:** Cian Brogan - Energia Renewable Generation

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### 11. Sustainable Development Award

Sponsored by Nordex Energy Ireland

**Winner:** The Nature+Energy Project  
SSE Renewables

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### 12. Overall Winner Award

Sponsored by SSE Renewables

**Winner:** Energia Renewables Meenadreen Extension

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### 13. Person of the Year Award

**Winner:** David Connolly

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### 14. Special Covid Award

**Winner:** Ronan O'Meara, EnergyPro







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# RenewableNI (RNI) UPDATES

Author

## Steven Agnew

Head of Renewable NI



The last quarter has been a busy period for RenewableNI (RNI) and the renewable electricity sector in Northern Ireland.

RNI is pleased to announce the election of Garth McGimpsey, RES, to the role of RNI Chair and Paul Carson, Strategic Power Projects, as Deputy.

After more than six years in their roles as outgoing Chair and Deputy, we would like to thank Rachel Anderson and Peter Bailie for the hard work and extended period in the position. They were invaluable to me when I took up the post two years ago. I am sure they will both continue to be supportive members of RNI's work.

We recently welcomed a new member of staff, Jennie Condon, to the role of Policy & Research Analyst. Jennie will lead on Markets and Grid Policy and support relevant RNI working groups.

### NI Energy Strategy

In December 2021 the new Northern Ireland Energy Strategy was published setting out the path to net zero energy, with a target of 70 per cent renewable electricity by 2030.

It was followed in January with the publication of the first of the Energy Strategy Annual Action Plans. The Plan is essential in giving our industry confidence that ambitious rhetoric will be backed up by delivery.

Key for us in the 2022 Action Plan is the commitment to the delivery of a renewable electricity support scheme in 2023, which RNI called for during the consultation period.

Our preferred option is for Northern Ireland to join the UK Contracts for Difference (CfD) Scheme and RNI is in regular contact with the NI Department for the Economy (DfE) and the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to push for this as soon as possible.

We are also being supported by colleagues in RenewableUK who are raising this in their own meetings with BEIS.

The introduction of this will unlock significant investment in the NI economy. In our *Powering A Green Economy* report, RenewableNI demonstrated the onshore wind sector alone could contribute over £3bn by 2030. I was able to meet Economy Minister Gordon Lyons in January to discuss the report.

Another major development in the strategy is the target for 1 GW of offshore wind from 2030. Onshore wind and solar are well established in Northern Ireland and a doubling of current capacity will be required to get us to 70 per cent renewable electricity. Investment in offshore can push us to the 80 per cent RNI members want to achieve and, ultimately, to a fully zero-carbon power system.

RenewableNI is commissioning an offshore wind study to outline how NI can maximise the economic benefits of this emerging industry. Past investment in infrastructure and skills in Northern Ireland should mean we are well positioned to make this happen.

### Planning System

However, all this can only work if we have a well-resourced planning system.

The performance of our planning system is not reflective of the high planning fees our members are paying and timescales are prohibitive.

Wind farms are spending more than twice as long in planning here than in Great Britain. This is a considerable disincentive to investors who are operating across these islands and globally.

Furthermore, the Department for Infrastructure needs to get a grip on planning policy with local councils moving in the opposite direction to strategic policy.

RNI has raised this issue with several key stakeholders including the Infrastructure and Environment Ministers, their respective committees and the Chief Planner.

The Minister for Infrastructure's review of strategic planning policy for renewables presents us with the opportunity to press for climate change to be a material consideration in all planning decisions.

In addition, RNI's comprehensive response to the Minister's Issues Paper also highlights the need for a planning hierarchy, with a requirement for Local Development Plans to align with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

There are major changes in store for the renewable electricity sector and RenewableNI will ensure our members voices are heard at all levels of government.

RenewableNI launched a new renewable electricity webinar series aimed at engaging, educating and stimulating debate in the renewable electricity industry.

Sponsored by A&L Goodbody, each month a free webinar will cover a renewable electricity theme that is especially relevant in achieving the goals of the Energy Strategy.

We began in February with an Energy Strategy special with a speaker from the Department for the Economy. Our March webinar was entitled Exploring Solar PV with guest speaker Paul Carson. You can watch the previous webinar and find out more at [www.RenewableNI.com/webinars](http://www.RenewableNI.com/webinars).



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# ANNUAL WIND ENERGY SURVEY RESULTS 2021

OVER

**3** IN **4** PEOPLE

are in favour of offshore wind, according to a new study on perceptions and attitudes around wind energy in Ireland.

**76%**

were in favour of offshore wind development.

**78%**

acknowledged that offshore wind development would have a positive impact on Ireland's energy security.

**53%**

of people are favourable towards an onshore wind farm being built in their area.

**JUST 6% OPPOSE.**

**78%**

of people agree that wind power can help with Ireland's energy security.

Of those opposed to wind power, 1/5 felt this way due to storage concerns.

# Committees and Working Groups

## How to get involved

Did you know that Wind Energy Ireland now has 11 committees? each of which has their own set of working groups focused on specific areas? We have two new committees that were promoted to full committee status by the Wind Energy Ireland Council in December 2021. Previously operating as 'working groups' under the Offshore Committee, the Offshore Consenting and Offshore Grid Committees have now launched and are forming their own working groups.

### Offshore Grid Committee

The Offshore Grid Committee is responsible for dealing with the issues around the development of the offshore grid, particularly around the designation of EirGrid as the system operator and asset owner of Ireland's offshore electricity transmission system. The current focus of the committee is working with EirGrid to develop the key offshore grid technical specifications and standards that are required by projects seeking to enter into the ORESS auctions. The committee is chaired by Rory Mullan (Mullan Grid) and its work is divided into five working groups:

- **Offshore Functional Specifications (including issues around commissioning and asset transfer)**
- **Offshore Grid Code**
- **Offshore Grid Availability (including issues around TUoS, TLAf, pass through costs, commercial aspects)**
- **EirGrid Offshore Constraint Reports**
- **Phase 1 Grid (including looking into onshore reinforcements)**

In 2022, the committee also intends to set up separate working groups looking at specific issues for the Phase 2 projects and begin work on the post-2030 enduring grid model, when EirGrid are set to take on a more central planning role as regards offshore grid development.

We would welcome new members who might be interested in inputting into the discussions around these issues. For more information contact [niall@windenergyireland.com](mailto:niall@windenergyireland.com).

### Offshore Consenting Committee

The Offshore Consenting Committee was set up to ensure Ireland develops a fit for purpose maritime planning system. The committee's current key focus is on the establishment of the Maritime Area Consent process, design flexibility issues and legislative/procedural elements of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. The committee is chaired by Tina Raleigh (Statkraft) and the current workstreams are divided into 4 working groups.

- **Design Flexibility**
- **Legislation & Procedure**
- **Offshore Environment**
- **MAC Consultation**

Watching briefs include Marine Protected Areas (MPA), Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAP), Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan 2 (ORED 2) and Offshore Wind Energy Development Guidelines (O-WEDGs).

If you are interested in joining the Offshore Consenting Committee and/or its working groups contact [denis@windenergyireland.com](mailto:denis@windenergyireland.com).

Photo by: Carmel Brennan



## New Working Group Spotlight:

### Biodiversity & Sustainability

What will this group focus on? This new working group sits under the Community Engagement Committee but the discussions and outputs will also be relevant for other committee areas such as Planning, Consenting & Asset Management. The working group will look at all areas of biodiversity and sustainability in the wind industry. We will continue to engage with relevant environmental stakeholders, share and discuss best practices within the industry, and showcase the initiatives being undertaken by our members to wider audiences.

Who should join this group? We are looking for members from a variety of backgrounds to ensure we can cover all relevant topics within the broad scope of the working group. Developers, landowners, asset managers, consultants, surveyors, ecologists, CLOs and anyone with an interest in biodiversity and sustainability are all very welcome to join. Contact [eabhin@windenergyireland.com](mailto:eabhin@windenergyireland.com) for more information.

### Electrification

What will this group focus on? Our new Electrification working group puts the focus on how we can ensure that wind energy can play a part in the decarbonisation of the wider economy. While much of the work we do at WEI focuses on how we can move to an electricity system based on renewable electricity, transport and residential heating, for example, collectively make up close to a third of our emissions profile. Electrification of these sectors will allow us to decarbonise more sectors of the economy with clean renewable energy from wind.

Who should join this group? We are looking for members with a range of backgrounds that would be interested in joining this working group. The work will aim to promote electric solutions in heat and transport such as Heat Pumps and EVs, and those with any relevant experience would be particularly welcome. Contact [niall@windenergyireland.com](mailto:niall@windenergyireland.com) for more information.



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Skills Connect provides free expert-led training while facilitating work placements for technical and office-based jobseekers reskilling for the renewable energy sector. Our Skills Connect programmes were jointly shortlisted as finalists for the IITD Best Talent Development Initiatives for two years in succession.

In 2021, 138 participants with a diverse background (ranging from trade to PhD) took part in the bespoke programmes designed by Green Tech Skillnet and its members. Over 70% of the candidates who participated in our bespoke Skills Connect programmes have gone on to secure full time employment in the renewable energy sector. In 2022, we look forward to attracting more talent into the renewable energy sector through our 2 programmes:

- **Work in Wind – Graduate level programme**
- **Wind Turbine Technician – accelerated apprenticeship programme**

Thank you to the host companies involved in this initiative.

We are actively looking for companies to host work placements for our upcoming programmes.

Contact [ledi@windenergyireland.com](mailto:ledi@windenergyireland.com)

for more information on participating as a host company.



# Education Resources

## Putting energy into education

### Education resources – Putting energy into education

Wind Energy Ireland's education programme is continuing to go from strength to strength with a number of exciting projects to be rolled out in the next few months.

We are building a toolkit of information on wind energy and climate change in Ireland that can be used in classrooms and homes across the country.

**Did you know that we have an Education section on our website where you can download lots of FREE information and activities for children?**

We also have educational videos and animations on our YouTube channel: <https://windenergyireland.com/learning-hub/education>

These tools for schools are so important to meet the appetite for information on climate change and wind energy among young people in Ireland. Wind Energy Ireland is also making every effort to ensure this information is available in the Irish language as well as in English. The recent youth movement around COP26 shows the huge desire among young Irish people for action on climate change and for cleaner, greener alternatives. Education on this is needed for society at large and we are proud to promote what we are doing in wind energy to meet these climate change targets.

### School visits

So far this year we have supported several Climate-Change-in-a-Box workshops for schools in Mullingar and Taughmaconnell in county Westmeath.

This was an initiative of Midland Science for Engineers Week. Midlands Science is a not-for-profit company which works to create greater interest in STEM subjects, education and skills among students, teachers and members of the public in the midlands.

We also have exciting plans to support, via STEAM Education, further school visits with workshops on climate change and wind energy planned for Kerry, Laois and Westmeath in March and April 2022.

**Find out more:** <https://www.steam-ed.ie/about-us/> and <https://www.midlandsscience.ie/>

### Member activities

Thank you to the Galetech Group for sending in these gorgeous photos of a recent school tour they hosted for children from Laragh National School, Cavan, to Carrickallen Wind Farm. It is great to see people out and about enjoying their local wind farms.

The photos coincided with International Women's Day in March 2022 – lots of potential wind energy colleagues of the future here!



# New Research Strategy for Wind Energy Ireland

Author

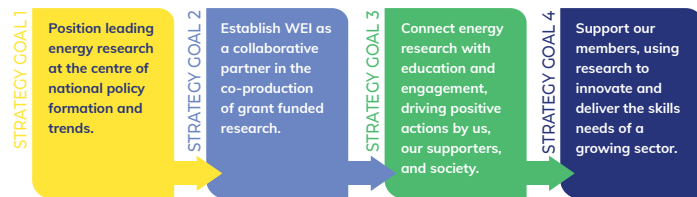
## Dave Linehan

Head of Research, Wind Energy Ireland



**Did you know that Wind Energy Ireland recently created a new Research Strategy to map out the pivotal role research is going to play in helping Ireland deliver its decarbonisation targets?**

Our research vision statement outlines how the organisation can contribute to the research eco-system over the coming years. Our strategy identifies four strategic goals.



1. The first goal is about policy development. It builds on WEI's track record of undertaking research to drive forward important policy goals. We will double down on our influential role to date, continuing to deliver evidence-building research to address important climate goals.
2. The second goal is about partnerships. It is rooted in the co-production of energy research. We will increase our presence in Ireland's research eco-system, supporting essential research for industry, collaborating in proposals and generating funding to deliver on our plans.
3. The third goal is about education and engagement. It is focused on dissemination of research. We will use communication and education tools to steer positive sentiment towards wind energy as a solution for a zero-carbon society.
4. The final goal is about industry supports. It is centred on innovation and skills growth opportunities. We will encourage the application of research across industry to deliver new technology, while also supporting skills and talent development in our sector.

### Developing Policy that is Rooted in Research

Wind Energy Ireland has a solid track record in publishing game-changing industry research, regularly undertaking studies with our partners to support government in setting national policy. Our 70by30 report with Baringa Partners was a pivotal publication which set out ways to deliver the Government's Climate Action Plan.

Our research with MaREI in *Our Climate Neutral Future: Zero by 50* showed how Ireland can achieve a net-zero energy system by 2050. And in *Endgame: A zero-carbon electricity plan for Ireland* with Baringa Partners we set out a pathway to achieve less than 2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year in the electricity system in 2030, with a zero-emissions system possible in 2035.

We see a compelling need for the research eco-system to continue delivering policy-priming research, which addresses key national decarbonisation questions. Focus areas for 2022 include grid capacity, ports assessment and supply chain, hydrogen development, EU market design and planning reform. The WEI team is liaising with our committees and working groups to feed into and inform this work.

### WEI Collaborating in EU Research Projects

**Alongside delivering evidence-building research to deliver Wind Energy Ireland's policy goals, we have identified opportunities in grant funded research, both at European and national level.**

The European Union is committing significant funding to decarbonisation in the period to 2030. The EU's flagship Horizon Europe is the biggest and most ambitious programme of its kind with a budget of over €95 billion. Other European programmes such as the LIFE programme and ERASMUS+ programme also offer funding for clean energy schemes.

In September 2021 WEI joined a consortium with thirteen industry and academic partners across the EU for an ERASMUS+ funding application. The proposal was called TSHORE, and it aims to establish centres of vocational excellence in offshore wind across Europe, bridging the gap between skills needed in the sector and the training opportunities provided.

In February 2022 it was confirmed that the initial application has been successful, with the project now moving to grant award stage. Also in February 2022, we submitted our first applications to the EU Horizon programme, in response to a funding call for proposals about wind energy in the natural and social environment. We expect feedback on these applications later in the year.

### Academic Outreach & Engagement

WEI is committed to supporting the sector to develop leaders and specialists through graduate and re-skilling training programmes. With third level partnerships we aim to develop talent and the next generation of employees for our industry. We recently collaborated with Technological University of the Shannon on their new Masters in Energy Infrastructure Programme, providing guest lectures for their modules in grid and planning. We are currently exploring further initiatives with a number of Irish colleges.

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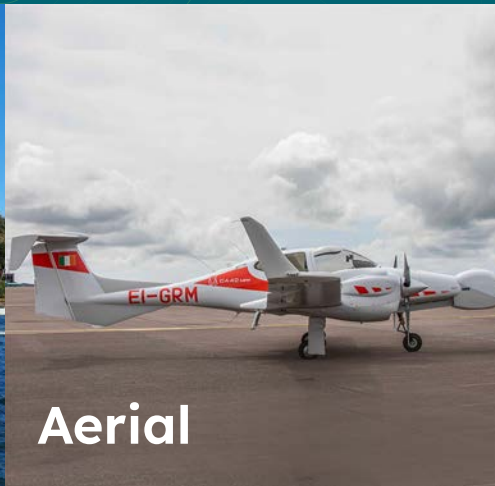


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# Upcoming Events

## ESI Annual Conference 2022



Save the date!  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May  
Radisson Blu, Golden Lane, Dublin

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Statkraft

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## 2022 Offshore Conference



Save the date  
21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022  
O'Reilly Hall, UCD, Dublin

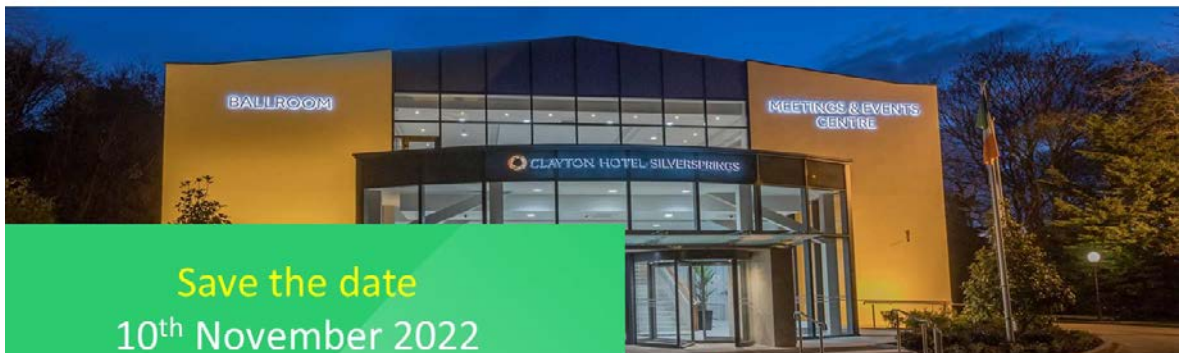
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## 2022 Renewables in Ireland Conference



Save the date  
10<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
Clayton Silver Springs, Cork

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