



NEW HORIZONS

IRELAND'S OFFSHORE WIND

INTRODUCTION

It is more than 14 years since Ireland's only operational offshore wind farm, Arklow Bank, was fully commissioned.

For a generation we have seen some of the world's best offshore wind energy resources go unused. While other countries have forged ahead, using offshore wind energy as a core part of their transition to low-carbon economies, Ireland has fallen behind.

But in June 2019 the Irish Government published an ambitious Climate Action Plan that, for the first time, sets out a vision for how we will decarbonise Ireland's energy system.

Offshore wind energy is at the heart of a plan that will cut CO₂ emissions in the electricity sector by two-thirds and increase the renewable energy share of electricity demand to 70 per cent by 2030 from its current 35 per cent.

Already we have an offshore wind energy pipeline of more than 12 GW at various stages of development off Ireland's coast

Working together – coastal communities, industry, Government, system operators and regulators – we will build an Irish offshore wind industry that will attract billions of euro in investment in clean energy, create thousands of skilled jobs and regenerate Ireland's coastal communities.

THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

For more than a decade Ireland has lagged behind much of the rest of the world in rising to the challenge presented to us by climate change.

Determined to change this, the Government published a comprehensive Climate Action Plan in June 2019 setting out how we will decarbonise our economy and our society over the next decade.

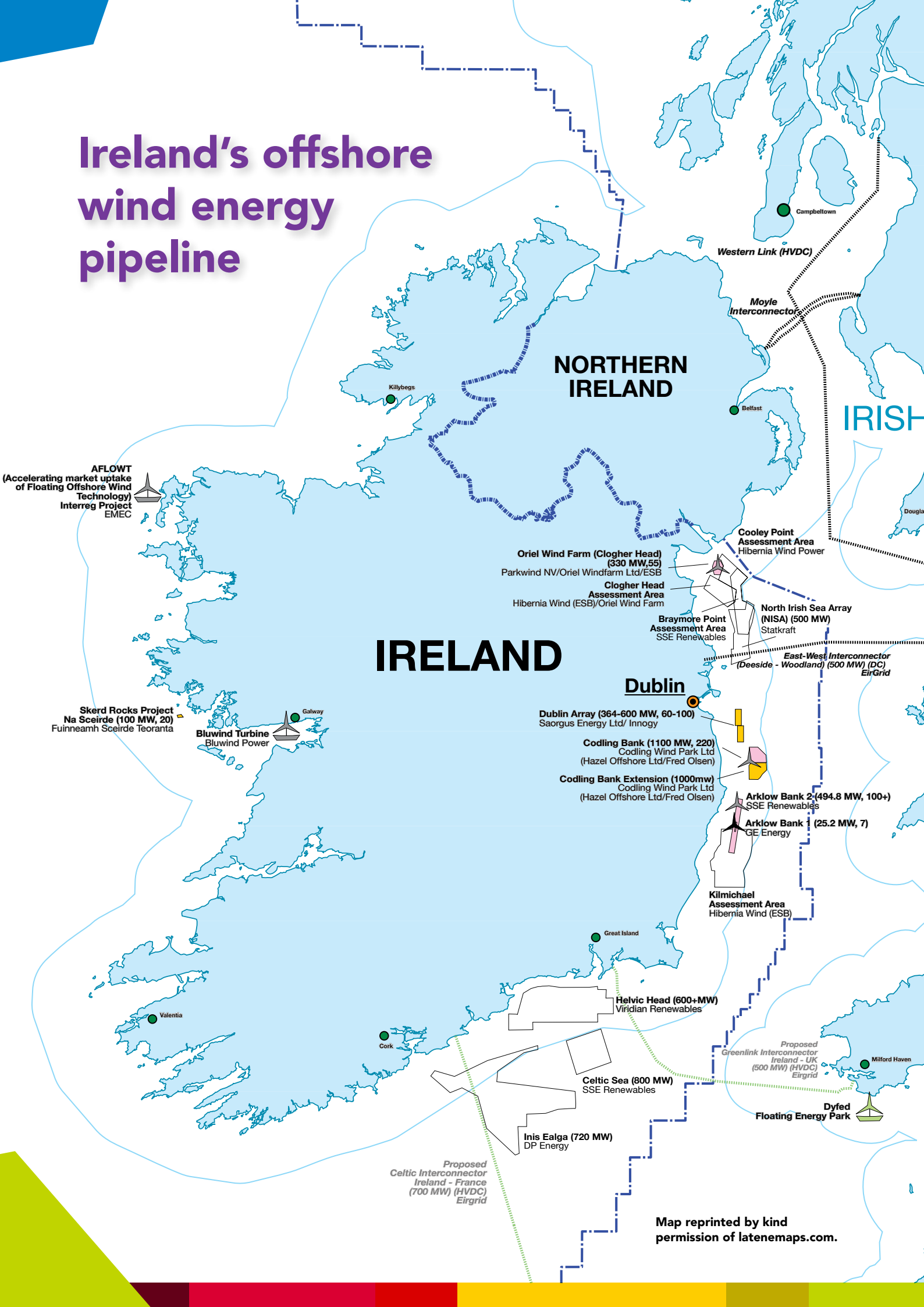
It aims to reduce emissions from the electricity sector from its current annual 12 million tonnes of CO₂ to 4-5 million tonnes.

It will do this by building on the success of Ireland's onshore wind industry by doubling its capacity to 8.2 GW, developing up to 1.5 GW of solar energy and building an Irish offshore wind energy industry that can deliver at least 3.5 GW of electricity by 2030.

The plan brings together multiple Government departments and State agencies who will report every quarter on their progress in delivering almost 200 actions.

The development of offshore wind energy is one of the most detailed parts of the plan, mapping out what is needed and identifying those responsible.

Ireland's offshore wind energy pipeline



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First steps to 3,500 MW by 2030

PLANNING

- Publish Marine Planning and Development Management (MPDM) Bill – Q4 2019
- Develop and enact secondary legislation to implement the MPDM Bill – Q3 2020
- National Marine Planning Framework drafted and to be finalised – Q4 2020

GRID

- EirGrid, the TSO, to set out options paper on centralised versus decentralised approach to grid connections – Q1 2020
- Grid connection offers made to **Legacy** projects – Q2 2020
- Government decision on offshore grid framework for **Enduring** projects – Q2 2020

MARKET

- Secure Government approval for Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme Auction – Q3 2020
- Open qualification process for Offshore RESS Auction – Q2 2021
- Complete first Offshore RESS Auction – Q2 2021
- Two further Offshore RESS Auctions to follow

LEGACY PROJECTS AND ENDURING PROJECTS

Ireland's offshore wind energy projects generally fall into two categories called **Legacy** and **Enduring**.

Legacy projects have already received planning consent under the existing Foreshore Acts. They are ready to move forward once it is clear how their projects will be treated if they need to change their consent – to allow for larger, more modern, turbines for example.

Enduring projects are at an earlier stage of development. They have not received planning permission but they have identified potential sites, started seabed and bird surveys, and may have begun to engage with the local community.



READY FOR THE CHALLENGE

Climate disruption is the greatest challenge facing us all, writes Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment Richard Bruton TD.*

Every generation wants to leave the world in a better place than they found it. We have a short window of opportunity to act and we must act now and leave a better, healthier, more sustainable Ireland for the next generation.

The Climate Action Plan is our roadmap for the future. It sets out a clear pathway which will ensure we reach our 2030 climate commitments and put us on a trajectory to reach net zero emissions by 2050. It requires a major transition which can only be achieved if we can motivate and empower individuals, communities, enterprises and the public service to take action.

The renewable energy sector is central to delivering on these ambitions. In 2030, we will have five times the amount of renewables on our grid that we have today (requiring capacity to peak at 95 per cent electricity generation from renewable sources). This will include at least 3.5 GW of offshore wind and onshore wind capacity of up to 8.2 GW.

This will be delivered primarily through the RESS Scheme which will have a strong focus on community and citizen participation. Local communities must be centrally involved if we are to be successful in delivering on the scale that is needed.

MOVE AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Such a radical step up will require significant changes – to our grid, to the existing infrastructure, to our legislation and regulatory framework. These changes are necessary and crucial, if we are to move away from fossil fuels and towards a more sustainable energy system.

The relevant legislation to allow for offshore wind development beyond foreshore will be published by the end of the year, in accordance with action 25 in the Climate Action Plan. The qualification process for the first RESS auction is also expected to begin by the end of 2019.

By 2030, we will be living more connected, healthier lives. Our air will be cleaner. Our homes will be warmer. We will have enterprises able to compete and create jobs in a very changed world.

Achieving the ambitious target of 70% Renewable Electricity is central to all the changes we are making and will not be possible without a strong partnership between Government and industry.

* This is an edited version of an article by the Minister which first appeared in Irish Wind, the trade publication for the Irish wind energy industry.

IRELAND IS READY FOR OFFSHORE WIND



"ESB has developed an ambitious Brighter Future Strategy which will significantly increase the size of our renewable generation portfolio in Ireland. Development of new offshore wind in Irish waters will be a key part of this strategy.

"Ireland has significant capacity to deliver cost effective offshore wind energy given the availability of suitable sites, particularly along the east coast, and the natural wind resource in our waters." – **Pat O'Doherty, Chief Executive, ESB**



"SSE Renewables has an unrivalled track record in the development of offshore wind in the UK, making us the leading offshore developer and operator in the largest offshore market in the world.

"Now, with an unrivalled pipeline of both near and medium-term projects in Irish waters, we stand ready to build on our experience to support the Irish Government in delivering its ambition of 3.5GW of offshore wind by 2030." – **Maria Ryan, Director of Development Ireland, SSE Renewables**



"The recent publication of the Climate Action Plan has provided a much needed shot in the arm for Ireland's nascent offshore wind sector. The coming months will see a series of long awaited regulatory and legislative reforms designed to support the growth of Irish offshore wind.

"When you combine these reforms with a series of proposed offshore RESS auctions from 2021, I predict we're in for a busy decade ahead." – **Ainsley Heffernan, Head of Energy & Natural Resources, Beauchamps**



"Offshore wind energy, which exists in abundance around our coastlines, has significant potential in the relatively short term. In a recent report prepared for the IMDO, the ability of Irish ports to facilitate the development of a marine renewable energy industry was identified.

"It is clear that Irish ports are ready, willing and able to respond positively to commercial opportunities that arise from the development and rollout of marine renewable energy infrastructure." – **Liam Lacey, Director, Irish Maritime Development Office**



"Offshore wind is widely accepted as a central pillar of Ireland's energy security, low carbon transition and future sustainability.

"The market has huge potential and, with the support of state, regulators and industry, can build on the lessons learned from developments across Europe to become a market leader. It's an exciting time to be involved in shaping the industry to meet Ireland's 2030 commitments." – **Moira Walsh, Offshore Wind Lead Ireland, Arup**

Find out more about Ireland's offshore wind opportunity at iwea.com.