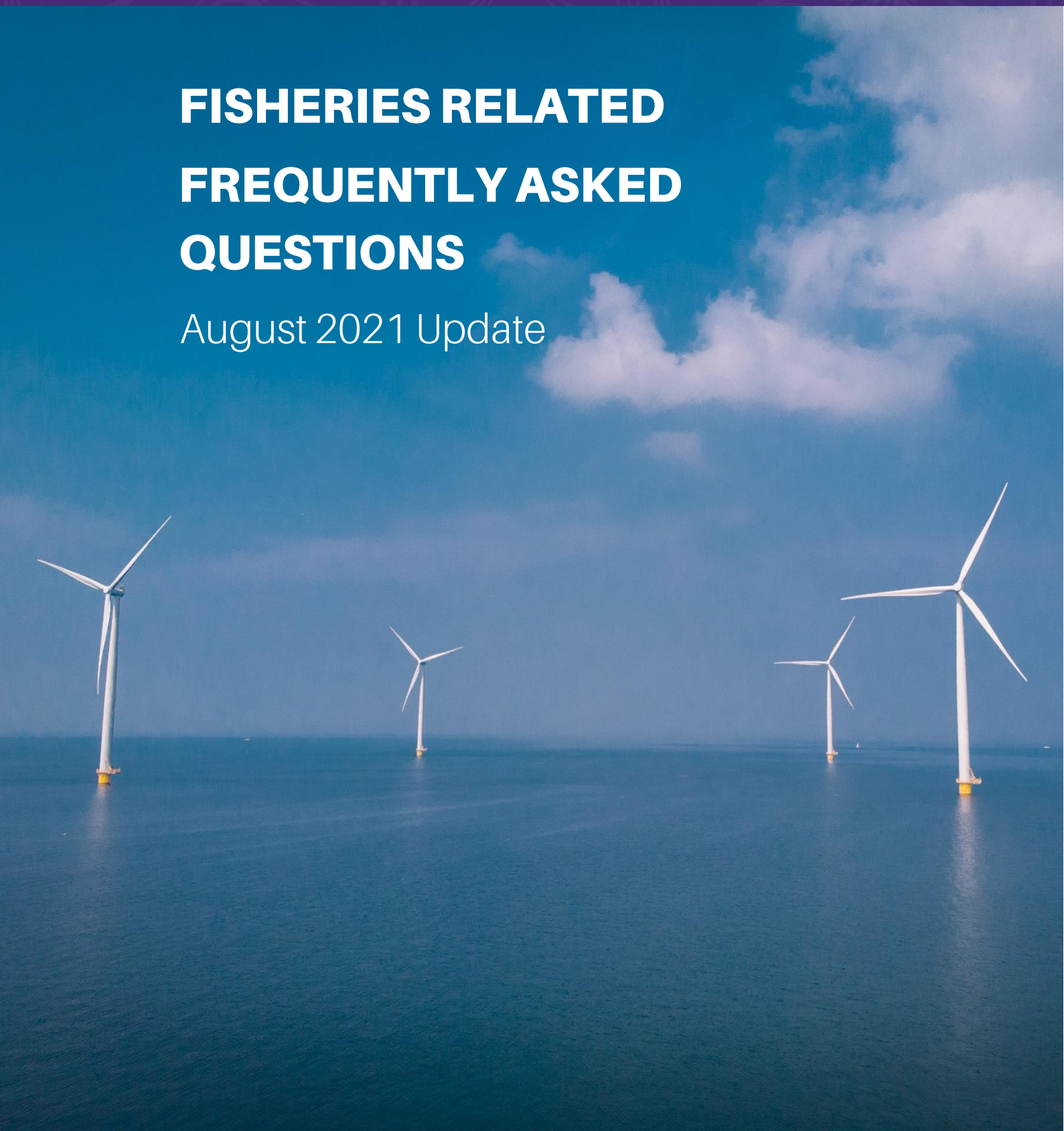
North Celtic Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

FISHERIES RELATED FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

August 2021 Update



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1. ENGAGEMENTS TO DATE

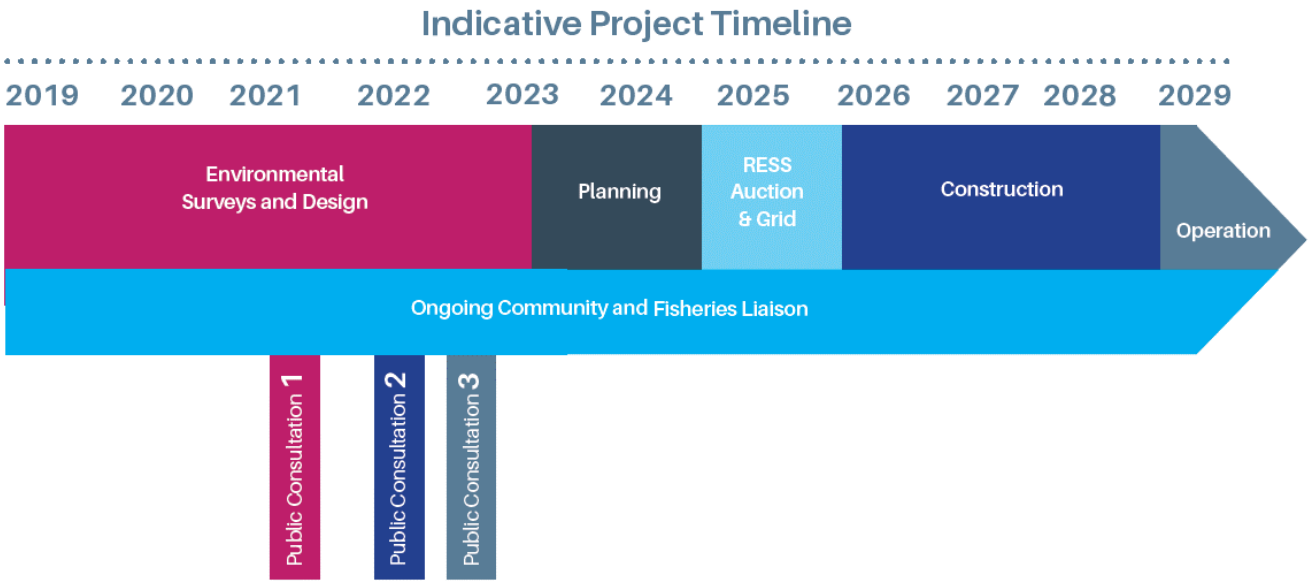
Energia and the project Fishery Liaison Officers (FLOs) have undertaken a series of formal and non-formal engagements with the fishing industry over the past 18 months. These engagements, which form a key part of the ongoing project consultation, are summarised below:

- South East Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum in New Ross on the 13th February 2020
- Industry level meeting in Dungarvan on the 21st February 2020
- Industry level meeting in Dunmore East on the 4th March 2020
- Industry level meeting in Kilmore Quay (via video conferencing) on the 20th March 2020
- Pier visit to Ballycotton Pier on 6th October 2020
- Pier visit to Dunmore East 6th October 2020 and 26th May 2021
- Pier visit to Helvick Head 6th October 2020, 3rd June and 21st July 2021
- Pier visit to Annestown/Boatstrand 3rd and 16th June 2021
- Pier visit to Kilmore Quay 26th May and 29th June 2021
- Pier visit to Duncannon 26th May 2021
- Pier visit to Youghal 21st July 2021

This document contains general project information and responses to the questions frequently asked of the project team during these engagements

2. PROJECT TIMELINE

The current indicative project timeline is shown below:



The Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") has commenced for the North Celtic Sea Project, and this will include a comprehensive impact assessment of locating a wind farm at the proposed site.

The Site Investigation (SI) works described in the SI Briefing Document will be carried out as part of this process and upon grant of a Foreshore Licence. The suitability of the site will continue to be studied throughout this period, a minimum of two years, and following completion of the EIA, a planning application will be submitted in 2023.

Consultation forms a key part of the project development process and will enable everyone to provide feedback on the design of the project.

There will be three non-statutory consultations held between now and 2023, the first of which will take place in September 2021. These consultation periods provide an opportunity for anyone interested to learn more about the project and provide feedback to the project team. Once a planning application is made, the Planning Authority will hold a statutory public consultation period.

Further to planning permission, the project would also require a grid connection agreement and would need to be successful in a Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) auction before being able to progress. Currently, we do not expect construction would commence before 2026.

3. ENERGIA'S FISHERIES ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Energia appointed a team of Fisheries Liaison Officers (FLOs) in 2019 and have been engaging with fishermen and marine interest stakeholders in the area for over 18 months.

We are committed to continuing this engagement and to co-existence with the fishing community throughout all stages of the proposed project. Input from the fishing community will play a key role in the survey planning process, the wind farm design process and the identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

Over the past 18 months, we have been carrying out pier visits in the locality to hear the views, concerns and needs of the local fishing communities and to gain an appreciation of their fishing activities.

In addition to the knowledge gained during these discussions with fishermen, monthly AFLOAT surveys (survey carried out with the assistance of local fishermen to determine level of fishing activity and gear in the area) are currently being carried out to better understand the level, pattern and seasonality of fishing in the area.

In relation to the survey planning process, this data will help us to plan our survey operations in a way that can avoid or reduce the levels of interaction we would have with day-to-day fishing activities. As part of this ongoing engagement, fisheries will be informed well in advance of the surveys commencing, through advance meetings with the project FLO to ensure that fishing can continue where possible and where not, to ensure only minimal levels of interaction between survey and fishing activities takes place.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will include fish and shellfish ecology, commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture as key components and these will be assessed by highly experience, independent specialists. Existing data and current / on-going Marine Institute surveys will be accessed where available and feed into the EIA. The EIA will assess the impacts of the construction,

operational and decommissioning phases of the project and where significant impacts are identified, measures must be put in place to mitigate these impacts.

A longer-term co-existence strategy will be developed and agreed with local fishing interests and will identify reasonable measures to mitigate any potential impacts once the project is further progressed.

Further to our ongoing project level engagement, we look forward to playing a key role in the industry level engagement to be facilitated by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the coming months. This group aims to establish a Seafood ORE Working Group to develop a framework for communication and a set of guidelines for interactions between both industries, to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial co-existence and to agree best practice measures for harmonious and safe operations at sea.

4. SITE INVESTIGATION (SI) SURVEYS FAQs

4.1. WHY ARE SI SURVEY WORKS REQUIRED?

The SI works are required to determine the conditions at the sea surface (wind, wave and currents), throughout the water column and both on and beneath the seabed. This will help determine whether the area under investigation, at a high level, is suitable and if so, the most suitable turbine positions, potential foundation types, potential areas for cable routes to shore and installation methods.

4.2. HAVE SIMILAR TYPES OF SI SURVEYS BEEN PREVIOUSLY UNDERTAKEN?

Some information is available from surveys previously carried out by the Marine Institute for major state projects such as INFOMAR. Energia have undertaken a technical assessment of this data to determine its suitability for use as part of this project. Due to the broad nature of the previously undertaken INFORMAR surveys, further studies, as set out in the Foreshore Licence Application will be required.

4.3. WHEN WILL THESE SI SURVEYS TAKE PLACE?

A number of the site investigation surveys require a Foreshore Licence before they can be carried out and as such, these particular surveys have not yet been undertaken. An updated timeframe will be discussed with the fishing industry when the Foreshore Licence is granted and a survey contractor has been appointed. The optimal months of the year for suitable weather conditions to conduct these surveys extend from March to September.

4.4. SIZE OF SURVEY VESSEL AND EQUIPMENT?

Indicative examples are detailed in the SI Briefing Document for the North Celtic Sea project.

4.5. WILL ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE SI WORKS BE GIVEN?

If a Foreshore Licence is granted for the Site Investigation works, notice of all SI works will be given to the fishing industry, through the project FLO, sufficiently in advance of any works commencing. Engagement with the relevant departments and issuance of marine notices will be undertaken following this engagement with the fishing industry and other stakeholders.

In advance and following completion of these SI works periodic engagement with the fishing industry, through the project FLO, will continue to ensure that all stakeholders are kept up to date as the project progresses.

4.6. WHAT EFFECT WILL THE SURVEYS HAVE ON EXISTING FISHERIES?

The Marine Institute through their INFOMAR programme have undertaken each of the proposed types of surveys set out in the Foreshore Licence around the Irish coast including in and around the proposed areas. Specific to the North Celtic Sea area, the Marine Institute undertook surveys in 2001, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2018.

Geophysical

The high frequencies associated with multibeam echosounder and side scan sonar will not be heard by even the most sensitive fish species. The low frequency noise associated with sub-bottom profiling may be heard by some fish species and may also induce particle motion that may be detected by the bottom dwelling molluscs and shellfish species. However, the employment of mitigation measures, the mobile nature of the survey vessel and the short-term temporary nature of the survey will ensure no significant impacts on fish, mollusc and shellfish populations.

Geotechnical

The geotechnical SI works will introduce noise into the marine environment throughout their limited duration. However, given that only one location will be surveyed at a time and given the nature and duration of the overall campaign and timing of the proposed surveys, impacts are expected to be minimal.

Met Ocean

The floating lidar will be stationary and fixed to the seabed using an appropriate mooring system. It will be lit and marked in accordance with the requirements of the Commissioner of Irish Lights and it's presence will have no significant impacts on fish, mollusc and shellfish populations.

In addition, the presence of the survey vessel will not pose a risk to the safe navigation of a vessel engaged in mobile or static fisheries.

In summary, the proposed SI works will be short-term, temporary and localised and are not expected to have any significant impacts for the fishing industry or marine navigation and adherence to the conditions attached to the survey licence will ensure this.

4.7. WHAT EFFECT WILL SI WORKS HAVE ON SUSPENDED SEDIMENTS IN THE AREA?

Small quantities of sediment will be mobilised during the intrusive works. The volume of sediment released into the water column while surveying will be minimal and, given that only one location will be surveyed at a time and the sediment will settle very close to the individual drilling/coring location this will not cause a notable increase in suspended sediments. Levels of suspended sediments in the water column fluctuate naturally from low to high levels during storms. The slight increases due to the intrusive works will be well below naturally occurring levels and will have no significant impact on marine species or communities.

4.8. WHAT IMPACT WILL THE PROPOSED SURVEYS HAVE ON SPAWNING AND NURSERY GROUNDS?

Based on a review of research to date, impacts from geophysical surveys on the early life stages of commercial fish species are not considered to have any (significant) negative impact on recruitment to populations. Given the scale and duration of the proposed surveys, it is not believed that the proposed SI surveys would have a significant negative impact on spawning and nursery grounds in the area.

4.9. WHAT IMPACT WILL THE PROPOSED SURVEYS HAVE ON AQUACULTURE OPERATIONS SUCH AS OYSTER AND MUSSEL OPERATIONS?

No SI works will be carried out within or in the vicinity of licenced aquaculture operations.

The proposed marine surveys will be short-term, temporary and very localised and are not expected to have any significant impacts for the aquaculture industry and adherence to the conditions attached to the survey licence will ensure this. Surveys of this nature are common all around the Irish coastline.

Measures to avoid/minimise any potential impacts of the survey works will be a condition of the foreshore licence if granted. Energia will fulfil all conditions of the licence.

4.10. HOW WILL THE DATA BUOYS BE MARKED?

All buoys will be marked in compliance with IALA-A Buoy system in accordance with Commissioner of Irish Lights ("CIL") requirements.

4.11. WHAT ENGAGEMENT IS ONGOING IN ADVANCE OF THE SI WORKS?

Energia commenced engagement with the fishing industry in early 2020 and are currently liaising closely with the community to understand fishing patterns and levels within the area. This data will help us to plan our survey operations in a way that can avoid or reduce the levels of interaction we would have with day-to-day fishing activities. As part of this ongoing engagement, fishermen will be informed well in advance of the surveys commencing, to ensure that fishing can continue where possible and where not, to ensure only minimal levels of interaction between survey and fishing activities takes place. The proposed marine surveys are not expected to have any significant impacts for the fishing industry and adherence to the conditions attached to the survey licence will ensure this.

Energia are fully committed to co-existence and co-operation with the fishing community throughout all stages of the proposed project.

4.12. WHAT FISHERIES SURVEYS WILL BE CARRIED OUT?

Monthly AFLOAT surveys are currently being carried out to understand the level and pattern of fishing activity across the site. This data will help us to plan our survey operations in a way that can avoid or reduce the levels of interaction we would have with day-to-day fishing activities.

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment process is underway and fish and shellfish ecology and commercial and recreational fisheries will be a key component of this. Existing data and current / on-going Marine Institute surveys will be accessed where available and feed into the EIA.

4.13. WHERE WILL THE GENERATED POWER COME ASHORE?

The power generated from the wind farm would connect to the Irish National Grid. The connection points are unknown at this early stage and will largely depend upon where onshore the project can connect to the National Grid.

It is not known yet where the cables will come ashore. A number of factors need to be considered in determining where the cables will come ashore such as stakeholders in the area, population density, seabed substrate, proximity to grid connection, other developer activity, fishing activity in the area and the environment nearshore, at landfall and further inland. Consultation will be carried out with all stakeholders including the fishing and aquaculture industry during the cable corridor assessment phase.

Energia are investigating a number of potential grid connection options onshore and will work closely with EirGrid to refine these options and identify the optimal solution taking all of these factors into account. This will involve site surveys and investigations, the results of which will assist us in identifying and assessing potential routes and connection points to the existing transmission grid.

It is our intention to provide further information on this area in a subsequent public consultation phase.

4.14. WILL THE CABLES COMING ASHORE BE BURIED?

It is Energia's preference that the cable(s) to shore would be buried to a depth of c. 2m along their entire length, a suitable cable corridor will be required to achieve this.

4.15. WILL THERE BE A COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND?

A community benefit fund will be established for the benefit of the communities closest to the projects. Guidance on how this will work will be set out in the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). Under RESS, a typical 600-800MW wind farm will provide a multi-million euro community benefit fund annually for local projects. This funding would provide significant financial support for local projects.

Energia will work with local communities, the fishing community, and other stakeholders to identify suitable projects which can be supported through the funds, ensuring that local communities benefit in an optimal way.

Energia have a long history of supporting the communities in which we operate.

Examples of the types of benefits directly applicable to fishing communities include:

- Stock or hatchery enhancement programmes and research grants

- Scientific research activities into fish stocks
- Port & Pier Infrastructure and equipment upgrades (e.g cold stores, lighting, security, lifting equipment, pier ladders etc.)
- Health and safety training & equipment
- Upskilling and diversification grants
- Grants for fisheries or seafood micro enterprises

Additional questions were raised which relate to the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the projects. The impacts of all of these phases on fisheries and aquaculture will be assessed in a robust and detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which would be required to accompany any planning application. The EIAR would also examine topics such as landscape and visuals, noise, health and safety, socio-economics, recreational activities, marine ecosystems, seabirds and marine mammals, electromagnetic effects, cultural heritage and archaeology, coastal processes and shipping and navigation as well as all onshore elements.

A comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement plan will be enacted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment ensuring that all stakeholders, including the community, have the opportunity to provide feedback, discuss any concerns and keep up to date with the project progress.

In addition, the project website (www.northcelticseawind.ie) is updated regularly and information on project development and key facts can be found there.

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