North Celtic Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

Public Consultation Report No. 1

February 2022

energia
Renewables

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1 INTRODUCTION

We are facing a global climate emergency and must act now to harness the power of nature and address climate change.

Ireland's Climate Action Plan is targeting a reduction in carbon emissions of 51% and the generation of 80% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

Offshore wind energy projects are needed to decarbonise our energy supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions – protecting our environment for current and future generations. At least 5GW of this electricity will need to come from offshore wind, providing clean, affordable, and reliable energy that communities and businesses need to grow and thrive sustainability.

In Ireland, we are heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels. The estimated cost of all energy imports to Ireland in 2019 was approximately €4.5 billion[1]. Ireland did not achieve its 2020 carbon-reduction targets and is liable for fines and carbon credit purchases amounting to hundreds of millions of euro, increasing year-on-year[2].

Ireland has a positive opportunity when it comes to offshore renewable energy. Favourable wind speeds and sea conditions provide an ideal environment for generating green electricity offshore. We must develop this vital natural resource to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 and to put Ireland on the path to becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

As a leading Irish provider of renewable energy projects, Energia is proposing the North Celtic Sea as part of the solution to Ireland's climate action needs, to provide security of supply and to reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels.

1.1 Introduction to Energia

Energia is a leading Irish energy company and developer and operator of renewable energy across the island of Ireland. We currently supply approximately 20% of Ireland's total electricity requirements and approximately 25% of wind power. We're the power behind schools, hospitals, public lighting, and every aspect of life that needs energy to make things happen.

As part of our Positive Energy initiative, to date we have invested over €1 billion in the Irish energy market. We employ over 900 talented people and are committed to empowering our team to support community activities and initiatives thereby creating change for social good. Our ambition is to remain a strong force for positive change within the energy industry and society in Ireland.

As a leading Irish sustainable energy provider, Energia already has strong links in the south-east region. Energia is the Sustainable Energy Partner of Waterford Chamber of Commerce and supplies green electricity to homes and businesses across the City and County. The company is a long-standing partner of Waterford based Grow it Yourself Ireland and is also the national sponsor of Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia. In sports, Energia is the sustainable energy partner of the IRFU and sponsor of the Energia All Ireland Leagues.

1.2 North Celtic Sea Project Overview

North Celtic Sea is a proposed renewable energy development off the south coast. The project will supply clean electricity for Irish homes and businesses – making a major contribution to achieving Ireland's carbon-reduction targets. The project is at an early investigation stage. The study area is located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km out to sea off the Co. Waterford coast. Energia applied to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for a foreshore licence to carry out studies to determine the feasibility of this location and this was granted in September 2021. The data from the feasibility studies will help determine the proposed size of the wind farm, its location, the number of turbines and the distance from shore. North Celtic Sea will make a positive contribution to decarbonising our energy supply and reducing emissions. The project will generate green electricity to power the equivalent of over 500,000 homes.

[1] https://www.seai.ie/publications/Energy-Security-in-Ireland-2020-.pdf

[2] https://greennews.ie/climate-inaction-seven-bn-greens/

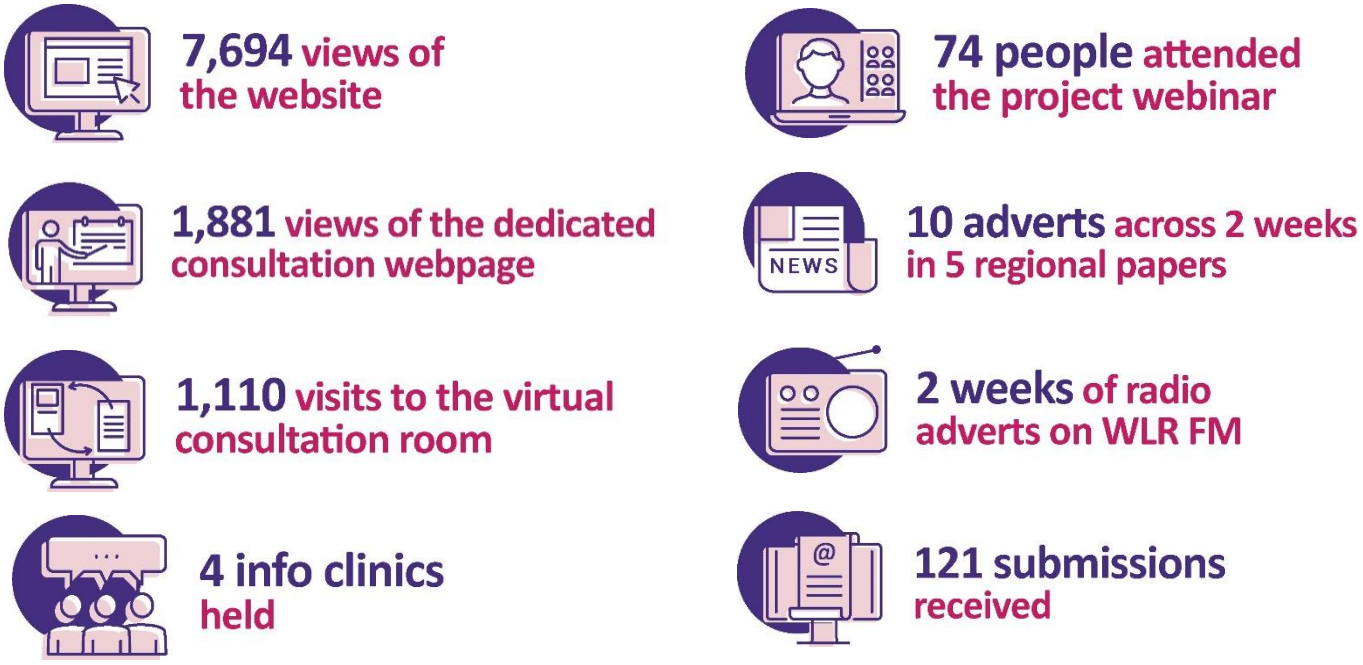
Figure 1 – North Celtic Sea Survey Area Map

2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

Consultation with local communities, the fishing industry and all interested stakeholders forms a key part of the North Celtic Sea project.

A first public consultation for the North Celtic Sea project was held from 22nd September – 29th October, 2021. This was an early opportunity to learn about the North Celtic Sea project, meet the team, and provide feedback. We wish to thank everyone who took part in the first consultation. Your feedback is important and can help to shape the development of the North Celtic Sea project.

The appointment of Community and Fisheries Liaison Officers, for the duration of the project lifecycle, provides local communities and fisheries stakeholders with dedicated persons to contact to discuss the project.



2.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to detail the public consultation process and to record the feedback given during the first non-statutory public consultation for the North Celtic Sea project. This early public consultation aimed to generate awareness of the project with local communities in coastal areas, the fishing community and other interested stakeholders and open a dialogue with them. This dialogue will continue throughout the development process and over the lifetime of the project. The feedback received from all stakeholders will help shape the development of the project from this early stage.

3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 Overview

A first public consultation for the North Celtic Sea project was held from 22nd September – 29th October 2021. This section outlines the consultation process and the tools and channels used to generate awareness of the consultation. The various opportunities for engagement with the project team are described below.

3.2 Communications Channels

3.2.1 Project Website

The project website www.northcelticseawind.ie was established in 2020 to facilitate the publishing of project information to all stakeholders in one centralised location. During the lifetime of the project, the website will be maintained and updated accordingly. The project website enables access to the virtual consultation room, the general project factsheet, and the dedicated fisheries factsheets, published in English and Irish, due to the Gaeltacht within the project area. The website allowed for registration to the online project webinar, a frequently asked questions section, and an online feedback/contact us form. During this first early public consultation and for the future, the community and fisheries liaisons officers contact details will be available for stakeholders to access. The information documents published on the project website in English and Irish can be found in **Appendix A** of this document.

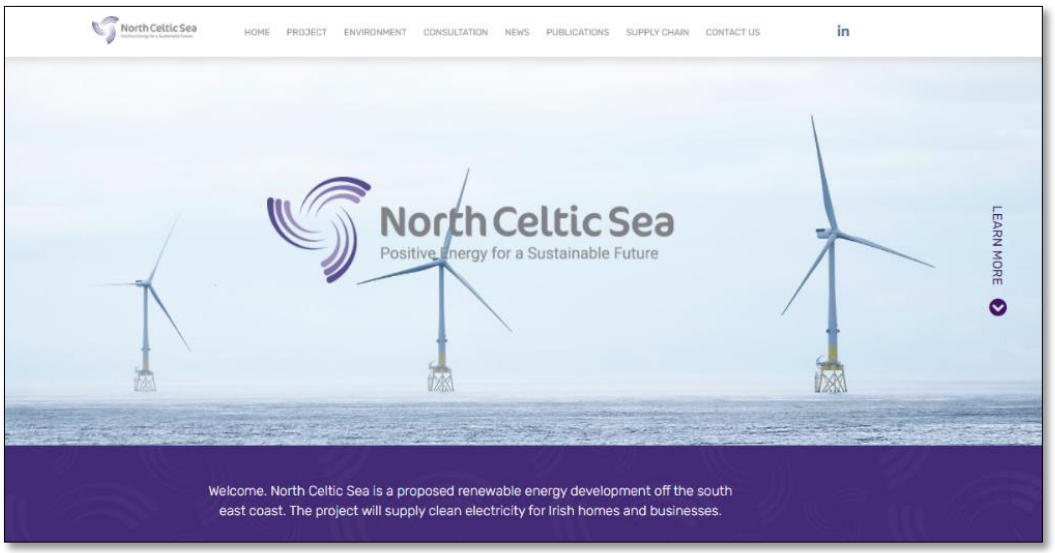


Figure 2 - Project Website Homepage

Over the course of the consultation period, the project website had 7,694 total views. This includes 2,128 users who viewed the website 3.62 times per user. The consultation page of the website received 1,881 views over the course of the consultation period.

3.2.2 LinkedIn

LinkedIn was used to further promote the public consultation. The Energia Group page on LinkedIn has over 2,000 followers. A LinkedIn post (as seen below) was used on 22nd September 2021 to make followers aware of the public consultation.

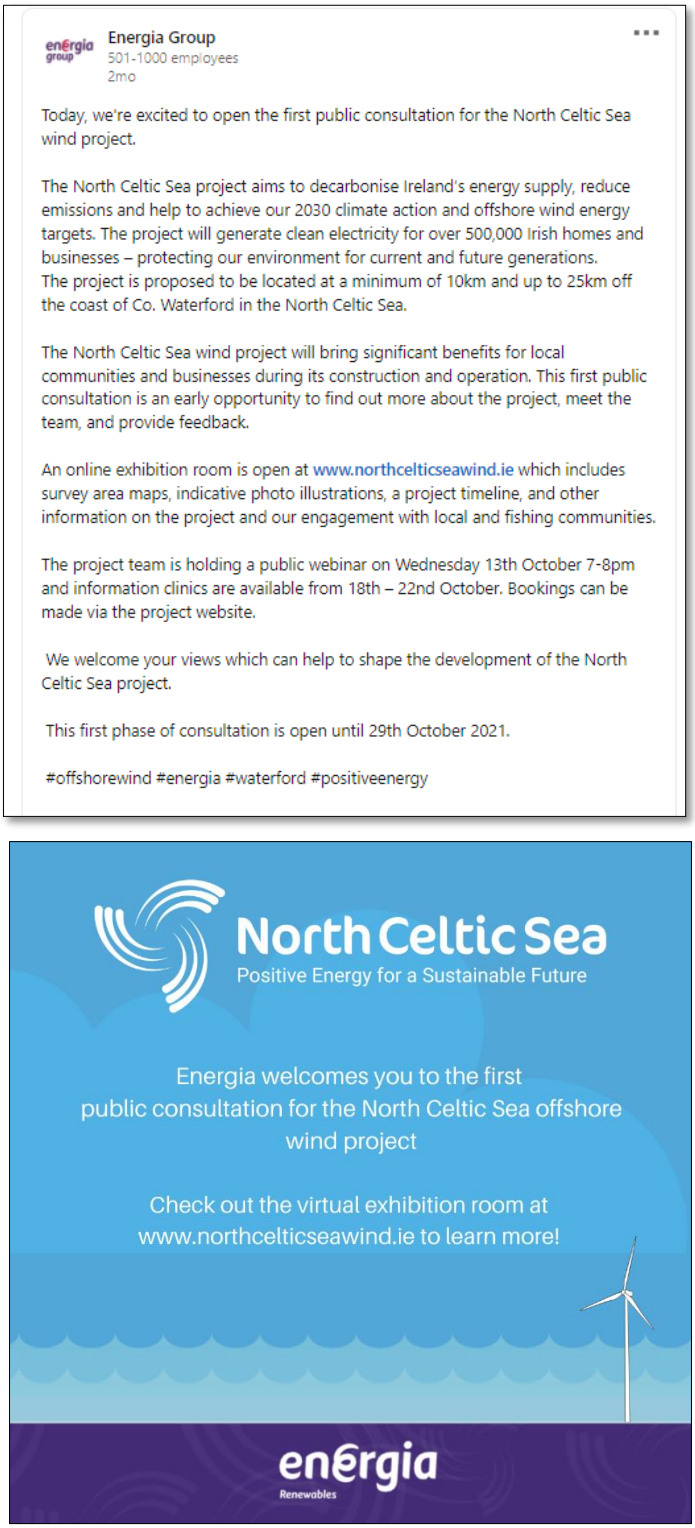


Figure 3 - LinkedIn Post

3.3 Virtual Consultation Room (VCR)

A dedicated Virtual Consultation Room (VCR) was opened to exhibit all public consultation materials in an interactive virtual setting. The online consultation room contained relevant information displays, project maps, a feedback form and early photo illustrations. This VCR will be updated throughout the development and planning stages of the project to ensure all project information is accessible to stakeholders. Over the course of the consultation the VCR had more than 1,100 visitors.

Figure 4 - VCR Landing Page

3.4 Press Releases / Media Coverage

Press releases were issued to local and national news outlets for the launch of the public consultation. Following the release, several online and local media outlets covered the launch of the public consultation including WLR FM, The Munster Express, Waterford Live, Waterford News & Star, RTÉ and two renewable energy websites; reNews and 4coffshore. Reminder press releases were also issued for public webinars. The main press release can be found in **Appendix B** of this report.

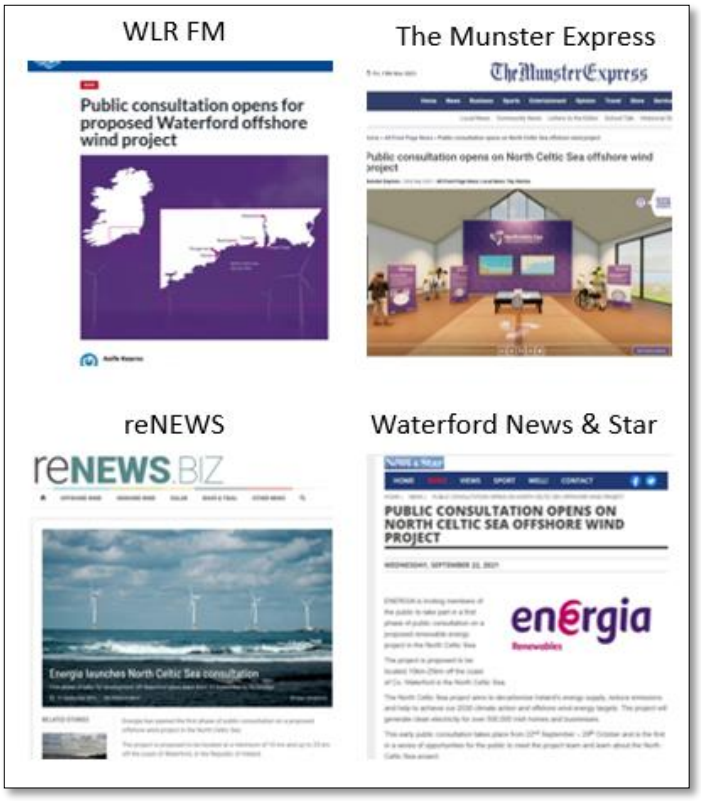


Figure 5 - Sample Media Coverage

3.4.1 Social Media Coverage

The project team sent information about the NCS project and the consultation to a wide range of stakeholders and organisations in Waterford. Public representatives informed constituents of the project through social media posts. News outlets shared the consultation information on their social media, as well as promoting their articles on the project. Sample social media posts can be seen below.

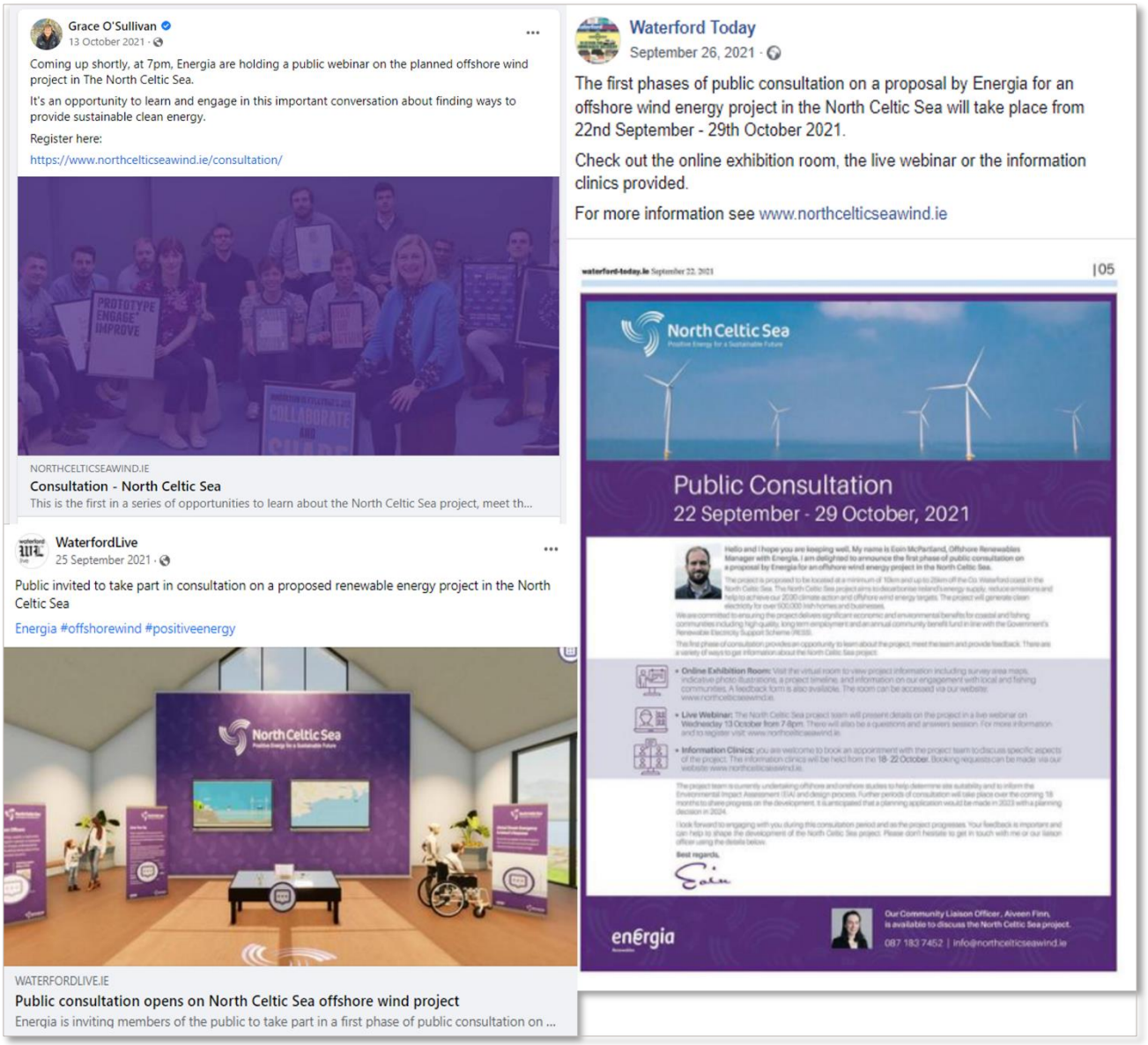


Figure 6 - Sample Social Media Coverage

3.5 Newspaper / Radio Adverts

A two-week local media advertising campaign was commissioned to promote awareness of the North Celtic Sea project introductory public consultation. Full page adverts were published in the following publications week commencing 20th September and week commencing 27th September:

- Waterford Today
- Dungarvan Observer
- Dungarvan Leader
- Munster Express
- Waterford News & Star

A copy of the published advertorial is contained at **Appendix C.**

A two-week prime-time radio advertising campaign was undertaken on WLR FM week commencing 20th September and week commencing 27th September.

3.6 Public Information Webinar

As part of this consultation, Energia's project team held a public webinar on Wednesday 13th October 2021 from 7pm to 8pm. The webinar provided an overview of the North Celtic Sea project and a Q&A session. In total, 121 stakeholders registered in advance of the webinar and 70 persons attended.

Figure 7 – Project Webinar Image

In total, 42 questions were submitted to the project team in advance of and during the webinar. Response to the questions asked were provided during the second half of the webinar. Written responses to the feedback received are provided in Section 4.

A dedicated briefing was also held for all relevant elected representatives, where the project team provided an overview of the project and the attendees were invited to ask questions. One MEP and four councillors attended this dedicated briefing.

3.7 Online Public Information Clinics

With regard to the ongoing COVID-19 situation/restrictions and the need to conduct public consultations safety, the project team held online one-to-one consultation opportunities with interested stakeholders wishing to discuss specific aspects of the project. Stakeholders could book information clinics via the project website with the ability to choose a date and time that suited them between the 18th and the 22nd of October 2021. In total four information clinics were held. Feedback from the information clinics and the project team responses are contained within Section 4 of this report.

3.8 Community Liaison Officer (CLO)

At Energia, we understand the importance of building long-lasting relationships with the communities we serve and support. A dedicated Community Liaison Officer for the North Celtic Sea project was appointed in 2020. A CLO will be available for stakeholders to contact through every stage of the project and planning process, as well as during the operational life of the wind farm. The CLO operates a dedicated phoneline which is operated Monday to Friday during normal business hours. The contact details for the CLO are listed on the project website and were promoted in press releases and advertisements for the public consultation. The CLO engaged with local community groups, elected representatives, landowners, and other key stakeholders leading up to the first public consultation. This proactive outreach will continue throughout the planning process and over the lifetime of the project.

3.9 Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO)

A Fisheries Liaison Officer was appointed in 2019 and began engaging with the fishing community in the area. From the initial engagement to date the FLO has visited all ports in the area multiple times and has engaged directly with industry stakeholders at local, regional and national level. A summary of the engagement to date can be found in **Appendix D.**

The fishing community and other marine stakeholders are a key group that will be consistently engaged with over the entirety of the project. Similar to the CLO, the FLO contact details are listed and were given out during press releases issued to highlight the public consultation. The FLO has and will continue to undertake pier visits with the fishing community to understand their needs, potential concerns regarding the project and anything else they may wish to discuss about the project. These pier visits and outreach to fisheries stakeholders will continue throughout the planning process and lifetime of the project.

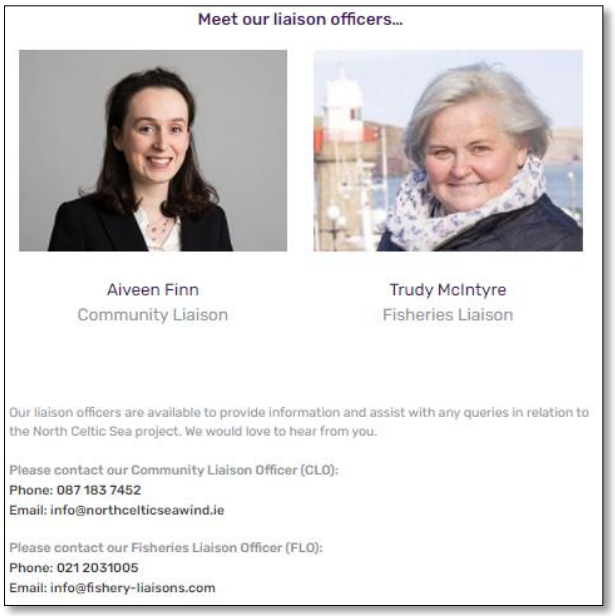


Figure 8 - Liaison Officer Contact Details

4 FEEDBACK AND RESPONSE

4.1 Overview

This section of the report outlines the submissions received during the first public consultation which ran from 22nd September to 29th October 2021. Feedback was received via the feedback form, email, telephone and provided to the project team during project briefings.

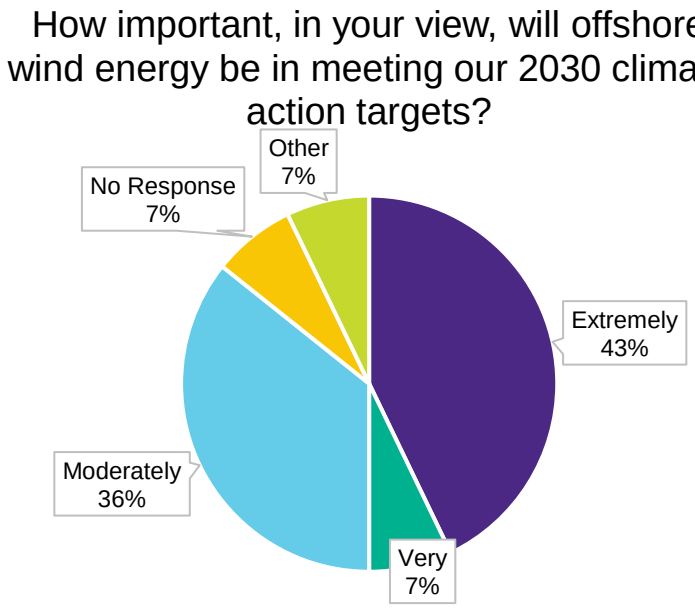
The number of submissions received to the public consultation, which are summarised and responded to later in this section, can be seen below:

Table 1 - Consultation Submissions Received

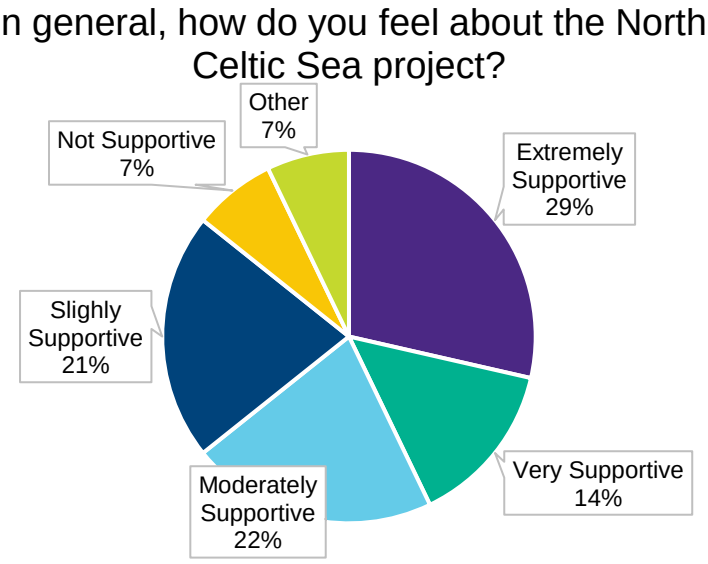
Feedback Method	Submissions Received
Email	27
Feedback form	14
Webinar queries	42
Project phone line	15
Information clinics	4
Total	**102**

4.2 Online Feedback Survey Form

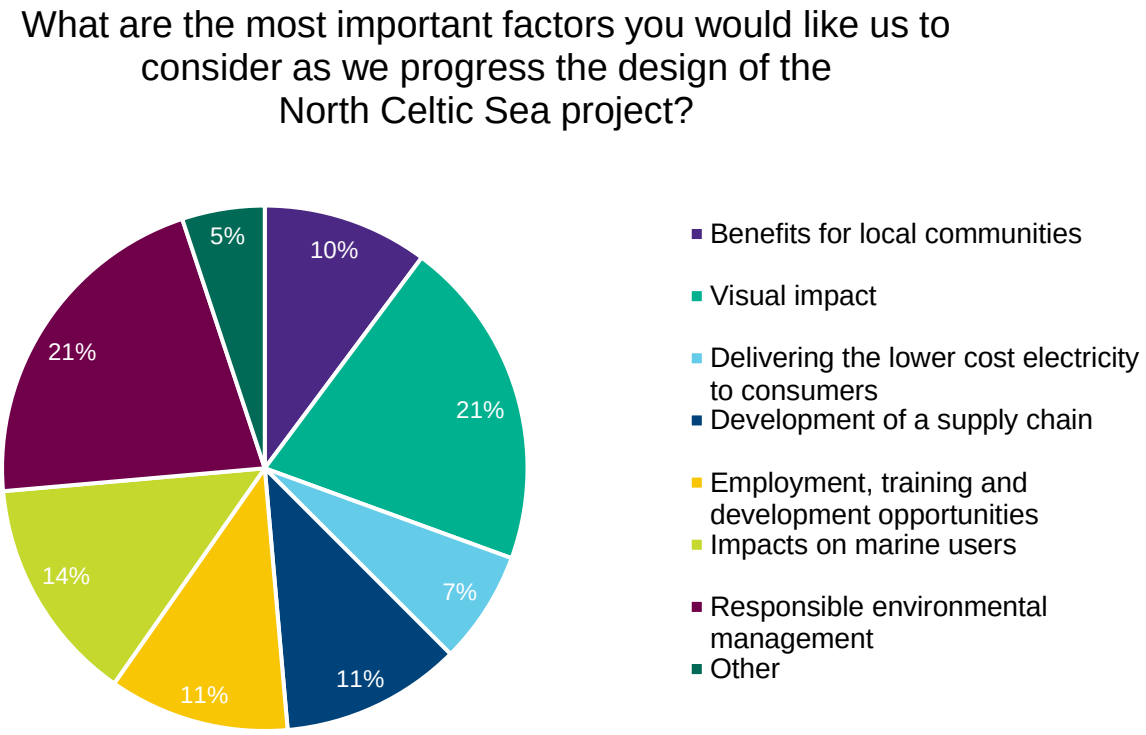
An online feedback form was made available within the Virtual Consultation Room to enable stakeholders to submit their views directly to project team. The feedback form asked respondents for their views on their support for renewable energy; their thoughts on climate action targets; their thoughts on the North Celtic Sea project and gave them an opportunity to give detailed feedback for the project team to consider. In total, 14 feedback forms were received. The results of some questions asked in the feedback forms can be seen below:



Graph 1 Feedback Form Question 1



Graph 2 Feedback Form Question 2



Graph 3 Feedback Form Question 3

4.3 Consultation Feedback

This section acknowledges the submissions received during the consultation and provides responses from the North Celtic Sea project team. For completeness, we have included feedback provided via all channels and provided answers to the questions asked below. We thank all of the respondents for taking the time to learn about the North Celtic Sea project and for submitting questions.

In compliance with data protection regulations, the names of persons who submitted questions have not been published. Feedback on behalf of companies, groups and organisations is attributed.

4.3.1 Climate Change

Several submissions noted the impacts of climate change and supported alternative energy generation stating, “we have no choice due to the environment”. Some submissions stated that it is not enough for Ireland to develop environmentally friendly energy, if countries like China are building coal/peat burning factories. Furthering the point, submissions noted that Ireland produced “clean beef without cutting down trees, while Brazil destroys a football pitch every day for cattle”.

Submissions noted that the ability to work together for the benefit of society and the environment is needed and big companies shouldn’t have to come in and make the changes necessary.

4.3.2 Climate Action

Feedback received from Waterford City and County Council noted a climate policy of Waterford City becoming a Decarbonising Zone by 2030 on the path to becoming carbon neutral by 2040. Stakeholders noted the importance of Ireland reaching its 2030 climate targets but noted that contributing projects should be given appropriate consideration for their impacts.

4.3.2.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Climate Change and Climate Action

We are facing a global climate emergency. The human, environmental and economic costs of global warming will be felt in all countries and most acutely by coastal communities. We must act now to harness the power of nature and tackle the climate crisis.

Ireland’s Climate Action Plan aims to reduce carbon emissions by 51% and to generate 80% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030. At least 5GW of electricity will come from offshore wind, providing the clean, affordable, and reliable energy that our communities and businesses need.

Ireland has a positive opportunity when it comes to offshore renewable energy. Favourable wind speeds and sea conditions provide an ideal environment for generating green electricity offshore. Offshore renewable energy is needed to decarbonise our energy supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

North Celtic Sea is a renewable energy project by Energia proposed to be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the Co. Waterford coast. The project is aligned with local regional and national energy and environmental policy which aims to decarbonise our energy supply and reduce emissions – protecting the environment for current and future generations.

4.3.3 Project Need

The need for offshore renewable energy projects as part of the climate action response was acknowledged in many of the submissions received.

4.3.4 Project Location and Visual Impact

A key consideration for stakeholders in the area is the visual impact of the turbines on the seascape.

Several submissions, including from the Blue Horizon group, called for the project location to be moved to a minimum distance of 22km from shore. Stakeholders queried if the use of alternative turbine foundations could increase the distance from shore.

It was questioned why the project location couldn't be nearer a populous where the demand for electricity is greater. It was also queried whether the location of the windfarm was inefficient as it was suggested that the possible loss of electricity through transmission could be as high as 30%.

4.3.4.1.1 Project Team Response to Project Location Feedback

Energia recognises the importance of sensitive development and will undertake a thorough environmental assessment and engineering design process for the North Celtic Sea project.

The survey site location was identified following an extensive feasibility study, considering environmental and engineering constraints, which assessed a range of potential locations using criteria including water depth and wind resource. The identified area was found to be potentially feasible for a renewable energy development that will benefit the local, regional, national and global environment and economy.

This project is at an early stage. The surveys to be undertaken under the Foreshore Licence will provide information to determine the feasibility of the site, the project size and location.

The location of offshore windfarm projects is largely determined by factors such as water depth and seabed type, as well as by the availability of suitable technology.

Fixed foundation offshore wind turbines can be installed in water depths of up to 65 metres (210 ft) which is the approximate water depth at the southern extent of the North Celtic Sea survey area. A similar shelf exists around the coast of Ireland and will play a significant role in the development of all projects that will contribute to Ireland's 2030 offshore wind targets.

In European waters, the vast majority (in excess of 99%) of operational and in construction projects are fixed-foundation. The average for projects in construction in European waters in 2020 was 36 metres. These projects are typically located in average water depths of less than 40 metres[3] which can range from 10km to 60km from shore. Ireland does not have the available seabed areas at the water depths necessary to enable fixed-foundation projects at similar distances.

Any proposed offshore renewable energy project will be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the south coast.

A detailed Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) will be carried out as part of the environmental assessment.

[3] Wind Europe 2020 Offshore Trends report P19 & 20.

4.3.5 Consultation

The importance of a proactive public consultation process was highlighted in submissions. Early engagement with the coastal communities was cited as being important to respondents.

Some submissions queried what community engagement had taken place to date for the North Celtic Sea project.

Submissions questioned what the impact the new Marine planning framework legislation will have on the consultation process.

Stakeholders requested that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) reports be published widely as part of the public consultation process to make the public aware of the possible

impacts of the project. Submissions also requested that a recording of the public webinar, and briefing documents be made available online for those who may not have been present.

One stakeholder outlined the “opposition to onshore and offshore wind developments in the Council and by the public”. Another respondent stated that the project will divide the community, destroy the area, livelihoods, and overall happiness. Another submitter stated that there should not be a monopoly on wind energy and that there should be a fair electricity price for Irish consumers.

4.3.5.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Consultation

As a long-term owner and operator of renewable energy projects, Energia understands the importance of sustainable development and building lasting relationships in the communities where we operate. We have a strong record of ensuring best environmental practice in our renewable energy projects and are fully committed to open engagement and consultation.

The North Celtic Sea project team has been available to liaise with all interested stakeholders. In 2019, we published information on the NCS project on a dedicated webpage at https://energiagroup.com/renewables/ and we appointed Fisheries Liaison Officers who began engagement with the fishing industry. The NCS project team also briefed public representatives in November 2019. Earlier this year we appointed a Community Liaison Officer for the NCS project. We also published a dedicated project website. (https://www.northcelticseawind.ie/). Interested stakeholders can sign up to our newsletter via the website to ensure they are aware of any project updates as soon as they are announced.

For this first consultation an online virtual exhibition was opened to make a wide range of information on the project available including indicative photo illustrations of the project. The project website was updated to include a recording of the public webinar, and frequently asked questions.

This first consultation, which has been advertised widely in local media and notified to stakeholders, for the North Celtic Sea project is an early opportunity to share information about the project and to seek your views. Our Community and Fisheries Liaison Officers are available to meet with stakeholders on an ongoing basis throughout the project. The project information service is available for anyone with questions on the project 087 183 7452 / info@northcelticseawind.ie

Once public health measures are lifted, our intention is to hold in person meetings and public information events as the project progresses. A number of briefing requests from local schools and educational organisations were received and will be facilitated by the project team.

The environmental studies, engineering design, and consultation process will take a minimum of two years and, if an application is progressed, a further period to go through the planning process. A planning application for the North Celtic Sea project would be made under the new Maritime Area Planning legislation. The new legislation will provide a single planning process for the onshore and offshore infrastructure.

If the site proves feasible, it is anticipated that a planning application could be made in 2023 with a decision by An Bord Pleanála likely in 2024. The application will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and will take into account the feedback received during the non-statutory consultation process. All planning reports will be published for public inspection and observations/submissions.

4.3.6 Environmental Impact Assessment

Potential environmental impacts of the project were cited in the submissions received. Stakeholders questioned when and how the project surveys and investigations will take place.

It was further questioned whether survey reports would be published for the public to view and if local experts will be employed and stated that that they are in a particular position to confirm the impacts of the project.

Concerns vary from impacts on marine life, to erosion, to impacts on marine leisure activities. The following sections summarise comments made by stakeholders about the environmental issues to be considered by the project team.

4.3.6.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Environmental Impact Assessment

Energia has commenced the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the North Celtic Sea project. The purpose of EIA is to gather information on the receiving environment and to assess all impacts of the proposed development. To obtain baseline data, we are currently undertaking bird and marine mammals surveys, fisheries, archaeological, navigation and grid assessments within the study area.

Energia was awarded a Foreshore Licence by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the North Celtic Sea project. The foreshore licence will enable environmental and technical surveys and investigations to be carried out over the coming years. Beginning in 2022, it is anticipated that the geophysical survey will take up to 3 months and the preliminary geotechnical survey up to 2 months, but these indicative timeframes are weather dependent.

The purpose of these surveys is to provide information to determine the feasibility of the site location to accommodate an offshore wind farm.

It is not possible to determine the size of the wind farm at this stage but an indicative capacity of between 600-800MW may be feasible. An underground connection to the electricity grid would also be necessary at an onshore location to be determined.

Thorough environmental investigations will be undertaken by qualified and experienced experts as part of the EIA process which will involve extensive public consultations over a period of two or more years. These assessments will consider the impact of the project across a wide range of environmental and social factors, including visual impact. Reports detailing the assessments will be submitted as part of the application for planning permission and published for public observations and submissions.

4.3.6.2 Coastal Erosion

Submissions noted that there is cliff degradation and erosion from Lady's slip to Benvoy in Tramore. Stakeholders feared that further erosion of this cliff will take place as a result of the project and questioned if the environmental report will assess the area for any mitigating measures that could be enacted to prevent further erosion.

4.3.6.2.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Coastal Erosion

We thank respondents for the information provided relating to coastal erosion.

Given the considerable distance from shore (10-25km), it is not anticipated that the project will have any impact on coastal erosion. However, potential impacts on coastal processes, including sediment transport, will be assessed within the EIAR, supported by detailed coastal processes modelling. The project team will engage with Geological Survey Ireland to access and review information on this topic and will consider all available information as part of the coastal processes chapter of the EIA.

4.3.6.3 Birds

Stakeholders queried the process for assessing impacts on bird life. One respondent asked if a local ornithologist will be assessing birds that may be nesting on the cliffs in the area. Stakeholders stated that they do not have faith in the integrity of the assessments to be undertaken by the developer, commenting “we do not consider that the studies will be unbiased”. It was suggested that Birdwatch Ireland becomes the sole body to undertake any assessments into birds in the area, as submitters believe “this will provide objectivity and consistency of approach”.

4.3.6.3.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Birds

We thank respondents for their feedback in relation to birds. Comprehensive environmental studies and assessments are being undertaken by experienced ornithologists to assess all potential impacts of the project. Once we have identified the level of interaction based on the type of construction activities and the species known to be present we can identify appropriate mitigation measures if required. There are a variety of avoidance and mitigation options that can be used during construction and operation.

The results from these assessments will be reported in an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The project will also produce a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) which will consider potential impacts of the project on protected sites and species.

We will be conducting further survey campaigns over the coming years. Where potential impacts are identified, all appropriate avoidance and mitigating measures will be employed to protect habitats for birds, and to remove any negative impact on local bird species wherever possible. The project will be required to comply with environmental legislation in this area.

4.3.6.4 Fish, Shellfish and Marine Mammals

Stakeholders highlighted their concerns for the marine life within the project area and the impact the project may have. It was noted that there are dolphins, porpoises, whales, basking sharks, and various other marine wildlife within the vicinity of the project area. Stakeholders asked how will potential noise impacts on marine life be assessed.

4.3.6.4.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Birds, Fish, Shellfish and Marine Mammals

The noise generated by the construction and operation of the windfarm and the potential effects this may have on the receiving environment will be modelled and assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The project will be required to comply with environmental legislation in this area.

The impact of underwater noise generated by the construction and operation of the offshore wind farm on fish, marine mammals, and other marine fauna will also be assessed and modelled as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Once we have identified the level of interaction based on the type of construction activities and the species known to be present we can identify appropriate mitigation measures as required. These assessments will be prepared by highly experienced noise experts and the assessments will be made available as part of the EIA.

4.3.6.5 Cultural Heritage and Tourism

Stakeholders submitted concerns about the impact of the project on tourism in the area. An area of high tourism, noted by submissions, is the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark. Some respondents believe the project will impact on seasonal tourism, devalue local amenities such as the Waterford Greenway and ultimately, impact livelihoods. Respondents stated that the impact on tourism should be considered and measures be taken to minimise any possible impacts.

In relation to cultural heritage in the area, submissions noted that any materials published should accurately reflect the culture and heritage in the area and be tailored to it. Speaking specifically about An Rinn Gaeltacht and the placename for Helvick, which according to submissions should be referred to as Heilbhic.

4.3.6.5.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Cultural Heritage and Tourism

We recognise that coastal communities around our shores are learning about offshore windfarm developments for the first time and that there are concerns in relation to impacts on tourism.

Waterford has established a strong tourism industry based on environmental and sustainability credentials such as the greenway, the copper coast, the geopark etc. An offshore renewable energy project is in keeping with this clean, green image and will reinforce the county's sustainability credentials, help to decarbonise our environment and demonstrate our efforts to address the climate crisis.

UNESCO Global GeoParks seek to mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce natural disaster related risks while supporting sustainable development. Offshore renewable energy represents these same principals and can help to decarbonise our environment by reducing emissions, while protecting and enhancing our environment for current and future generations. Both should be able to co-exist and complement each other. This can be seen in Denmark where authorities have recently made an application to obtain UNESCO certification for one of their geoparks, within which there are a number of windfarms along the coast and a consented offshore wind farm 8-9km from the coastline.

The experience in other countries which have long established offshore wind industries has shown that opportunities exist for eco-tourism development, for example by offering vessel tours to visit offshore wind farms and sustainability exhibitions centres.

All potential impacts of the construction and operation of the offshore wind farm on cultural heritage features will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will result from this process and will from part of the planning application. Detailed consultation and stakeholder engagement will be carried out throughout this process and ideas in terms of how tourism in the region can be enhanced through the project will be assessed.

4.3.6.6 Electric and Magnetic Fields

Submissions questioned the risk and implications that power cables and associated electric and magnetic fields may have on fish, marine mammals and all aquatic species in the area. Stakeholders expressed concerns about marine life and their ability to migrate in and out and traverse the project area.

4.3.6.6.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Electric and Magnetic Fields

Electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) occur both naturally (e.g. from the sun) and everywhere we use electricity. When electric current flows, electric and magnetic fields are produced. EMFs are generated by everyday commonly used appliances such as computers, electric blankets and hairdryers as well as by wind turbines, power cables and all other forms of electricity generation.

Based on all the available evidence, the power frequency electric and magnetic fields encountered in normal living and working conditions do not cause adverse health effects in humans when properly designed and constructed.

With regards to underwater cables, there are certain species of fish, molluscs and crustaceans that can detect magnetic and/or electric fields. The impacts on these sensitive species will be assessed as part of the EIA.

This is a topic that has been extensively researched and monitored in other jurisdictions and all will be reviewed and assessed as part of the EIA. The evidence to date suggests that protection and burial of the cable reduces the EMF to a level that will not have any significant impact. It is our intention to bury all cabling where possible and where not to protect it using appropriate means. Undersea electricity cables are common in Irish waters, connecting the offshore islands, running across the Shannon Estuary and in Cork harbour. There are also interconnectors between Ireland and the UK with no reported impacts.

Like other aspects of man-made technologies, extremely low frequency EMF are measured, researched and closely monitored by national and international agencies tasked with safeguarding the public. These agencies set the health and safety standards which must be adhered to.

4.3.6.7 Marine Leisure Activities and Navigation

Concerns from stakeholders were expressed regarding possible impacts on waves in the project area, which it was cited would have unfavourable consequences for the local surfing community. Calls for a dedicated survey on wave height and formation to be carried out at all project development stages were received. Feedback was also received from respondents seeking further information on navigation and safety issues.

4.3.6.7.1 Project Team Response to Marine Leisure and Recreation

We thank respondents for making us aware of surfing activities in Tramore and Bunmahon and other coastal locations in Co. Waterford.

As part of the environmental impact assessment process we will be collecting data on wind speed, current speed and direction and wave height.

This data will then be used in a coastal processes modelling study where we will examine what the wave climate is like in the area and what they would be like once the wind turbines have been installed. We would assess both typical (annual) wave climate and more extreme events for each directional sector to see the potential range of impacts.

There are some situations where adding new infrastructure to the marine environment can affect waves and currents. This is typically associated with large solid structures like harbour walls or pier extensions where current patterns change around the structure, wave energy gets absorbed and sediment deposition patterns can change. Although this will not be quantified until the study is undertaken, from experience, it has been noted that, unlike with large solid harbour walls/pier extensions, the wave disturbance caused by wind turbines is generally quite small and this is due to the size of the support structures in relation to the surrounding environment, the distance between the structures and the distance from shore.

With regards to navigation, a detailed navigational risk assessment will be prepared by navigation safety specialists and will form part of the EIAR taking account of best international best practice. The project team will be consulting with all relevant stakeholders including the Maritime Survey Office and the Commissioners for Irish Lights.

4.3.7 Fishing

The sections below outline the feedback to the public consultation which related to the fishing industry. It was stated that the proposed offshore renewable energy project may have impacts on local fishing activities and that the fishing community are a key stakeholder group with whom the project team must engage. Stakeholders communicated that the fishing industry must be kept informed of progress and developments and brought along on the journey with proactive engagement by the developer.

4.3.7.1 Fisheries Liaison

Submissions from some local fishers stated that the project will only have negative consequences for them as "they have heard scary rumours and are worried for the outcome of the project on their livelihood." Some stakeholders suggested that their voices are not being heard, stating that the project is "hiding behind government policy" and climate change for "profiteering purposes."

One submission suggested that "a pad is installed in the wash area so that fishers can say when they will be on pier/available for meetings with FLO."

4.3.7.2 Impact on Commercial Fisheries

Stakeholders in the fishing community relayed concerns about the impact of the project on fishing grounds in the area. Commercial fishermen are fearful that ground disturbance could impact fish and shellfish lifecycles or migration patterns and the natural ecosystem in the area. Some fishers believe that this could disrupt their business, their ability to earn a living and this would be unacceptable. One submission noted that his family has been fishing in the area since the year 1290.

Submissions specifically referenced a wind farm off the Co. Wicklow coast, stating that the development of turbines has "decimated fishing in that area and that the area around the turbines cannot be fished." Stakeholders further questioned "in what way would the proposed wind farm be mutually beneficial to the fishing industry". It was queried if there was an international example of an offshore renewable energy project and fishing co-existing.

4.3.7.3 Aquaculture

Submissions questioned the impact of the "surveys and construction on sediment dispersal and aquaculture sites". A submission from Dungarvan Shellfish Ltd. expressed concerns about potential impacts of the NCS project on its commercial aquaculture fishery in Dungarvan Bay.

4.3.7.3.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Fishing

We thank respondents for their feedback on fishing. As a long-term operator of renewable energy projects, we understand the importance of building lasting relationships with the communities we serve.

Our consultation with the fishing industry is a key part of the project development process. We appointed a team of Fisheries Liaison Officers (FLOs) in 2019, who have been engaging with industry in the area for over 18 months. We have been carrying out pier visits to understand the views, concerns and needs of the local fishing communities and to gain an appreciation of their fishing activities. The fishing activity surveys and the 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.

Energia will continue to liaise closely with the fishing community at the pre-survey stage, well in advance of the surveys commencing, to ensure that fishing continues during the survey works and to ensure that we can avoid or reduce the levels of interaction we would have with day-to-day fishing activities.

The interaction of the construction and operational phases of the wind farm with fisheries will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

Energia is fully committed to mutually beneficial co-existence and co-operation with the fishing community throughout all stages of the proposed project. We would like to see both industries thrive and complement each other and we will be exploring ways to achieve this, in consultation with the fishing industry.

4.3.8 Project

Several aspects of the project and the development process were raised by stakeholders in their submissions as key considerations for the project team. The sections below outline the comments and issues raised.

4.3.8.1 Planning Process

Submissions questioned the planning process, specifically through An Bord Pleanála and the new requirements of the National Marine Planning Framework.

Submissions questioned the new National Marine Planning Framework and what it meant for offshore renewable energy projects and specifically if the public consultation process has changed. The consent process and the Marine Area Regulatory Authority was also queried.

One submitter stated that the project was being railroaded through the planning process and that the COVID-19 situation was benefiting this.

Submissions questioned if Energia plans to pursue all their proposed projects on the Southeast coasts.

4.3.8.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on the Planning Process

A planning application for the North Celtic Sea project would be made under the new Maritime Area Planning legislation. The new legislation will provide a single planning process for the onshore and offshore infrastructure.

The environmental studies, engineering design, and consultation process will take a minimum of two years and, if an application is progressed, a further period to go through the planning process. If the site proves feasible, it is anticipated that a planning application could be made in 2023 with a decision by An Bord Pleanála likely in 2024. The application will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and will take into account the feedback received during the non-statutory consultation process.

Once the application is submitted, there will be an opportunity for the public to make observations on the proposed development directly to An Bord Pleanála during a statutory public consultation.

If approved, construction would commence in 2026 at the earliest and the project would take between two and four years to complete.

4.3.8.2 Project Benefits

It was acknowledged by stakeholders that the project may result in employment and supply chain opportunities for the local area and region. Two ports, Belview Port and Dunmore East were mentioned as potential locations to be considered for the establishment of an operation and maintenance base. It was noted by stakeholders that it was key that as many jobs as possible be created within the locality to benefit the community.

The Community Benefit Scheme was mentioned in submissions as a notable benefit of the project, but some stakeholders questioned the process by which local projects would be selected and how much funding the scheme will delivered over the lifetime of the project.

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board contacted the project team to investigate the possibility of a partnership to prepare local persons with the skills needed to benefit from the employment opportunities.

4.3.8.2.1 Project Team Response to Project Benefits

The achievement of Ireland's 2030 climate action targets will benefit all individuals, communities and businesses in the south east region and across Ireland.

In addition, the North Celtic Sea project will deliver the following economic benefits:

- €2bn investment delivering €500m into the regional and national economy
- Offshore wind energy can be a key enabler to unlock new infrastructure investment in Ireland's ports and maritime businesses
- Approximately 800 jobs during construction
- Between 70-100 full-time local jobs during operation for 25 years
- A local operations and maintenance base with many local supply chain opportunities
- A multi-million Euro community benefit fund for local projects.

The North Celtic Sea project represents a €2bn investment by Energia in the decarbonisation of Ireland's energy supply and the achievement of Ireland's 80% renewable electricity target by 2030. Our aim is to retain as much of that investment as possible in the Irish economy.

The operations phase will bring between 70-100 direct, high-quality, long-term, employment opportunities and these will be provided at the local operations and maintenance base for operational life of the wind farm.

These roles will include management, engineering, technicians, administration and maritime transport positions. In terms of available skillsets this is something that we need to increase and fortunately, we have time to do so.

We are working both at local level and at a wider industry level to investigate increasing the numbers of training places for offshore wind related skills but also given our strong maritime heritage there are a lot of Irish companies and Irish people abroad who are looking at the opportunity that offshore will bring in the coming years. Our intention is that we maximise the number of these positions that are filled locally.

A community benefit fund will be established for the benefit of the communities closest to the project. The North Celtic Sea project will provide an annual multi-million Euro community fund for local projects. Guidance on how this will work will be set out in the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).

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.

4.3.8.3 Project Technology

Project technology such as turbines, foundations, cables, substations, and the existing electricity grid were highlighted by respondents.

Concerns regarding the height and size of the turbines were raised by stakeholders as they question the impacts on the local environment, birds, and fishing. Clarity on turbine size was sought.

One detailed submission noted that the local area experiences grid outages on occasion and questioned if the project would lead to enhancements in the local grid. Questions regarding where the power will go were also asked given that the projected output of the project far exceeds the local usage requirements.

The turbine foundations were noted as a contentious issue. As stated in previous sections, submissions requested the project location to be moved further from shore. Floating foundation technology was listed as the solution that would allow this as submissions noted that "surely floating wind farms would have less of an impact on the environment, local wildlife and surf conditions" and would negate the need to drill into the seabed. The floating wind farm off the coast of Scotland was used to demonstrate the technology of floating foundation successfully in use and submitters questioned why this technology couldn't be used in this instance.

The vulnerabilities of the turbines at sea and the recent issues of wind turbines freezing in the USA concerned some responses.

The production of hydrogen from electrolysis was noted as a method of furthering the energy sources that could come from the development.

Waterford City and County Council noted to the public consultation that they would prefer the landfall for the project to be made within the Waterford area. Local residents noted they would prefer underground cables to be employed when the project comes ashore and connects to the grid. Other submitters also questioned the cable routes and the connections to the grid that will be required.

4.3.8.3.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Project Technology

We are currently studying a number of potential grid connection points and will be working closely with EirGrid to determine the optimal solution for cable routes and the connections to the grid that will be required.

The connection of the offshore windfarm to the grid will be via submarine / underground cable technology which will be buried at a suitable depth along the entirety of its length.

The electricity produced by offshore wind turbines is transferred to an offshore substation via submarine cables. The power is then delivered to the shore, to a transition point, with a submarine export cable(s). From the transition point, the electric power is transferred to the electricity grid via underground cables to an onshore substation.

Water depths in the area range from 45 to 65m. As we are at the environmental survey and design stage, we do not know what type and size of turbines would be suitable for the development.

Projects today are currently using turbines in the region of 14-16MW and the trend is that this will likely increase which would result in a reduced number of turbines being required. The height of these turbines range from approximately 260 to 280m tip height.

For the photo illustrations which are available to view on the project website, we have used 320m tip height as a realistic indication of future turbine size. As the project develops, further photomontages will be produced to show what the wind farm will look like from multiple locations all along the coast and further inland.

Significant advances in wind turbine technology combined with considerable reductions in the cost of energy from offshore wind means that fewer, larger wind turbines can be used to achieve the maximum installed capacity.

North Celtic Sea is being developed as a stand-alone offshore wind farm. While there are currently no plans to incorporate hydrogen into this project, Energia currently has a number of hydrogen projects in development and we are building up significant expertise in this area.

Innovations such as the integration of longer-term energy storage (e.g. through the production of hydrogen fuel) will offer new opportunities to increase renewable energy production across the island of Ireland and Europe.

4.3.8.4 Project Cost and Funding

The project cost came into question by submissions as they responded to the public consultation. Stakeholders queried who is providing the funding for surveys and if it was Government funded. One respondent noted that the project surveys would be a waste of expenditure as the project would not receive planning consent in its current location and the project should cease at this early stage.

The project location and its proximity to the shore was questioned, as responses noted that floating wind turbine technology is possible further out to sea and should be utilised here. They questioned if “the only difference here the project margin for the companies involved.” The project location and its proximity to other proposed wind farms was also mentioned by those who submitted their views. They suggested that the company “team up” with the other proposed projects to reduce supply chain costs.

4.3.8.4.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Project Cost and Funding

The North Celtic Sea project represents a €2bn investment by Energia in the decarbonisation of Ireland's energy supply and the achievement of Ireland's 80% renewable electricity target by 2030. Our aim is to retain as much of that investment as possible in the Irish economy.

Energia is one of Ireland's leading energy companies, providing electricity and gas to over 800,000 homes and businesses across the island. We employ over 900 people across Ireland and are 1 of 40 companies across Ireland to have been awarded the Business Working Responsibly mark from Business in the Community Ireland.

Offshore wind energy can be a key enabler to unlock new infrastructure investment in Ireland's ports and maritime businesses.[4] Local coastal areas and communities will benefit in the short, medium and long term.

The achievement of Ireland's 2030 climate action targets will benefit all individuals, homes and businesses across Ireland.

[4] Harnessing our potential: Investment and jobs in Ireland's offshore wind industry March 2020

4.3.8.5 Decommissioning

Stakeholders asked about decommissioning of the installation at end of life and provision for this decommissioning cost should the company become insolvent or sell off this arm of the business.

4.3.8.5.1 Project Team Response to Decommissioning

Energia is a leading energy supplier. We not only develop projects but we are a long-term operator of renewable energy across the island of Ireland. We currently supply approximately 20% of the island of Ireland's total electricity requirements and approximately 25% of wind power on the island.

Planning permission for projects of this type would usually be in the region of 25-30 years – at which point either a further planning application would be required or the project would be decommissioned. Decommissioning costs are built into the project budget and are borne by the project owner. In onshore projects, we know there are many cases a bond is put in place to cover decommissioning.

Modern turbines have an operational life of approximately 25-30 years. A rigorous servicing and maintenance programme will be put in place and administered from the local operations and maintenance base.

5 NEXT STAGES IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Overview

This is the first of at least three non-statutory public consultations that will take place as the project develops. The publication of this report marks the finalisation of the introductory consultation phase. Following the undertaking of engineering and environmental studies, the next consultation will outline emerging options for the proposed project. A third consultation will publish details of a refined proposal for the proposed project in advance of the planning stage. The public will have a further opportunity to submit views on the project at the statutory public consultation, which will happen when the official planning application is submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

Throughout the project, the Fisheries Liaison Officer and Community Liaison Officer will continue to be available to discuss the project with the community. They can be contacted at any stage of the project using the contact details which are available on the project website www.northcelticseawind.ie.

Energia wishes to thank everyone that has provided feedback during this round of public consultation. All feedback provided has been fully considered by the project team and will inform the development process.

5.2 Project Timeline

The graphic below outlines the indicative timeline for the North Celtic Sea project. This timeline will be updated as the project progresses. The environmental studies, engineering design, and consultation process will take a minimum of two years and, if an application is progressed, a further period to go through is the planning process. If the site proves feasible, it is anticipated that a planning application will be made in 2023 with a decision by An Bord Pleanála likely in 2024. Construction would commence in 2026 at the earliest and the project would take between two and four years to complete.

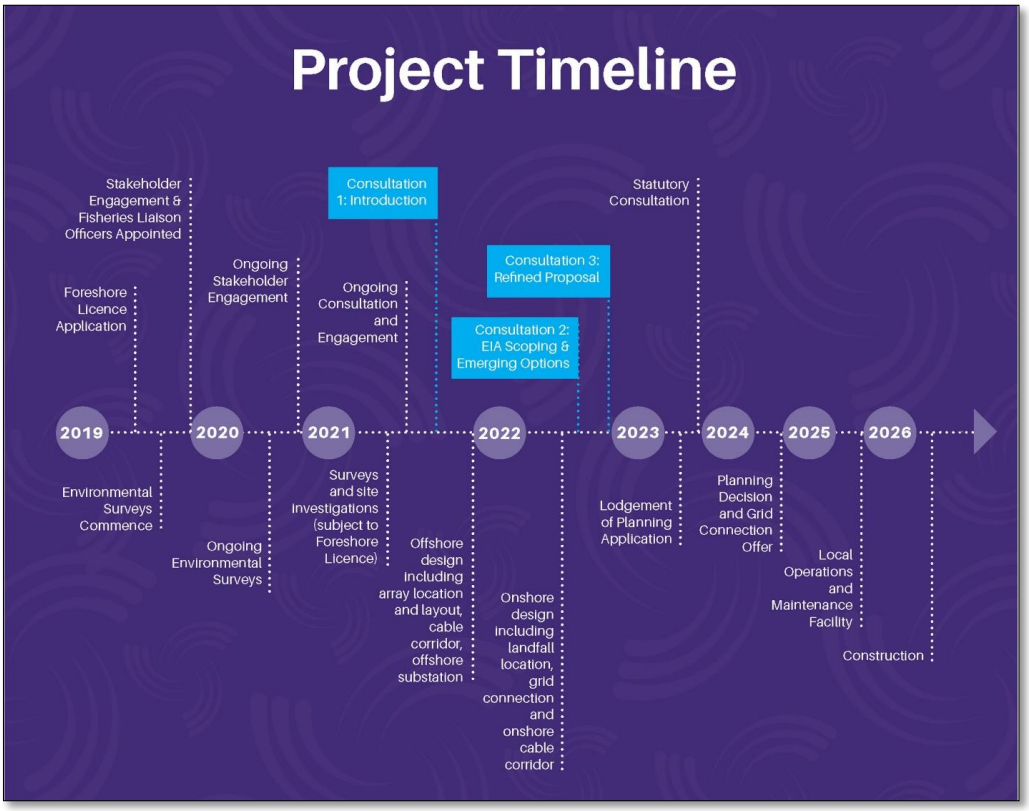
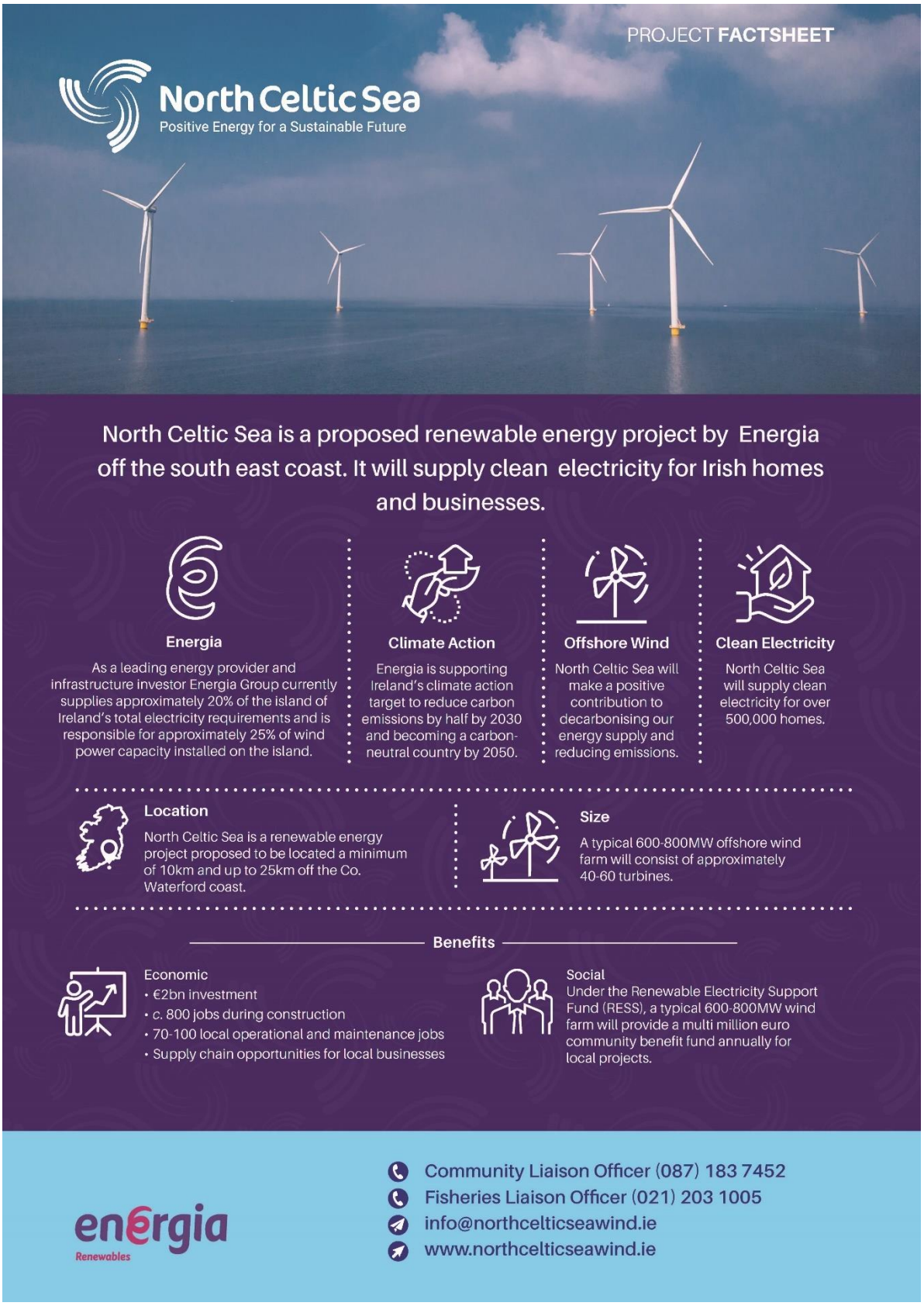


Figure 9 Indicative Project Timeline

Appendices

Appendix A Materials Published on the Project Website

A.1 Project Factsheet



North Celtic Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

Current Stage

Energia has commenced the environmental assessment process for the North Celtic Sea project. The feedback, information and local knowledge you can share can help to inform the development and design of the project.

Project Components

Indicative Project Timeline

energia
Renewables

Community Liaison Officer (087) 183 7452
Fisheries Liaison Officer (021) 203 1005
info@northcelticseawind.ie
www.northcelticseawind.ie

A.2 Project Factsheet As Gaeilge

Is forbairt bheartaithe fuinnimh in-athnuaite amach ón gcósta thoir theas í Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh. Cuirfidh an tionscadal leictreachas glan ar fáil do thithe agus do ghnólachtaí in Éirinn.

Energia

Mar cheann de na soláthraithe fuinnimh agus infheisteoirí bonneagair is mó dá bhfuil in Éirinn, soláthraíonn Energia thart ar 20% de riachtanas iomlán leictreachais na hEireann agus tá sé freagrach as isteach agus amach le 25% den toilleadh iomlán fuinnimh gaoithe atá suiteáilte ar an oileán.

Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide

Tá Energia ag tacú le sprioc gníomhaíochta aeráide na hÉireann le hastaíochtaí carbóin a laghdú faoina leath faoi 2030 agus le bheith ina tír atá neodrach ó thaobh carbóin de faoi 2050.

Fuinneamh Gaoithe Amach ón gCósta

Déanfaidh Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh a cion féin lenár soláthar fuinnimh a dhícharbónú agus astaíochtaí a laghdú.

Leictreachas Glan

Cuirfidh Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh leictreachas glan ar fáil do bhreis agus 500,000 teach.

Suíomh

Is tionscadal fuinnimh in-athnuaite i Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh atá beartaithe le bheith ar a laghad 10km, agus suas le 25km, amach ó chósta Phort Láirge.

Méid

Bheadh thart ar 40-60 tuirbín i gceist le gnáth-thionscadal gaoithe amach ón gcósta 600-800 MW.

Buntáistí

Geilleagrach

- Infheistíocht €2bn
- *c.* 800 post agus an obair thógála ar bun
- 70-100 post oibríochta agus cothabhála sa cheantar áitiúil
- Deiseanna slabhra soláthair do ghnólachtaí áitiúla

Sóisialta

Faoin gCiste Tacaíochta Leictreachais In-Athnuaite (RESS), cuirfear ciste sochair pobail is fiú na milliúin euro ar fáil do thionscadail áitiúla gach bliain mar gheall ar ghnáthfheirm ghaoithe 600-800MW.

energia Renewables

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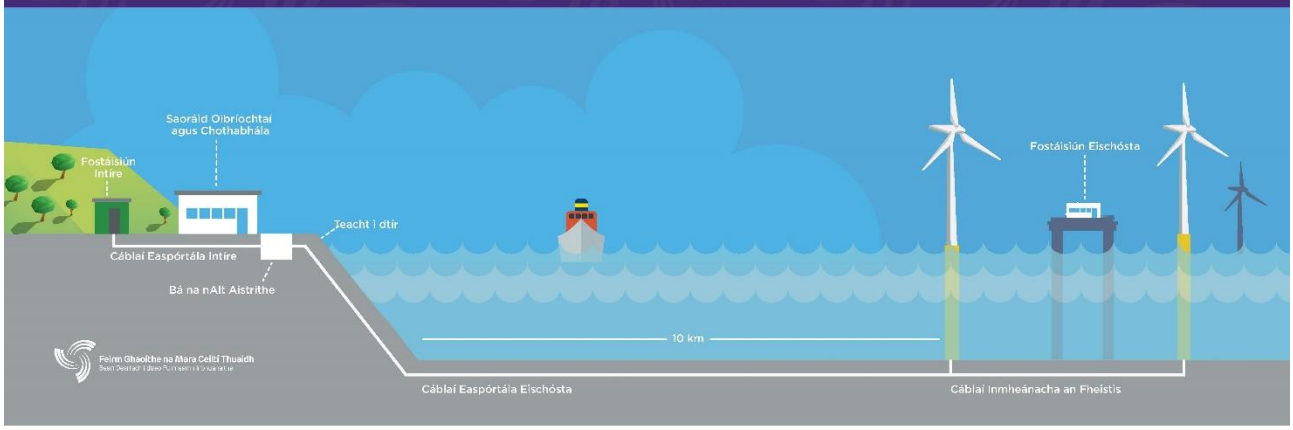
Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaithe

An Chéim Reatha

Tá tús curtha ag Energia leis an bpróiseas measúnachta timpeallachta le haghaidh Thionscadal Fheirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh. Cuirfidh an t-aiseolas, an fhaisnéis agus an t-eolas áitiúil a chuirfidh tú ar fáil bonn eolais faoi fhorbairt agus dearadh an tionscadail.



Amlíne Thráscach an Tionscadail

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Suirbhéanna Comhshaoil agus Dearadh					Pleanáil	Ceant RESS agus Eangach	Tógáil			Feidhmiú
Idirchaidreamh Pobail agus Iascaigh										
		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 1		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 2		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 3				

energia
Renewables

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A.3 Fisheries Factsheet

North Celtic Sea is a proposed renewable energy project by Energia off the south east coast. It will supply clean electricity for Irish homes and businesses.

Energia

As a leading energy provider and infrastructure investor Energia Group currently supplies approximately 20% of the island of Ireland's total electricity requirements and is responsible for approximately 25% of wind power capacity installed on the island.

Climate Action

Energia is supporting Ireland's climate action target to reduce carbon emissions by half by 2030 and becoming a carbon-neutral country by 2050.

Offshore Wind

North Celtic Sea will make a positive contribution to decarbonising our energy supply and reducing emissions.

Clean Electricity

North Celtic Sea will supply clean electricity for over 500,000 homes.

Location

North Celtic Sea is a renewable energy project proposed to be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the Co. Waterford coast.

Size

A typical 600-800MW offshore wind farm will consist of approximately 40-60 turbines.

Benefits

Economic
- €2bn investment
- *c.* 800 jobs during construction
- 70-100 local operational and maintenance jobs
- Supply chain opportunities for local businesses

Social
Under the Renewable Electricity Support Fund (RESS), a typical 600-800MW wind farm will provide a multi million euro community benefit fund annually for local projects.

energia
Renewables

Fisheries Liaison Officer (021) 203 1005
Community Liaison Officer (087) 183 7452
info@northcelticseawind.ie
www.northcelticseawind.ie

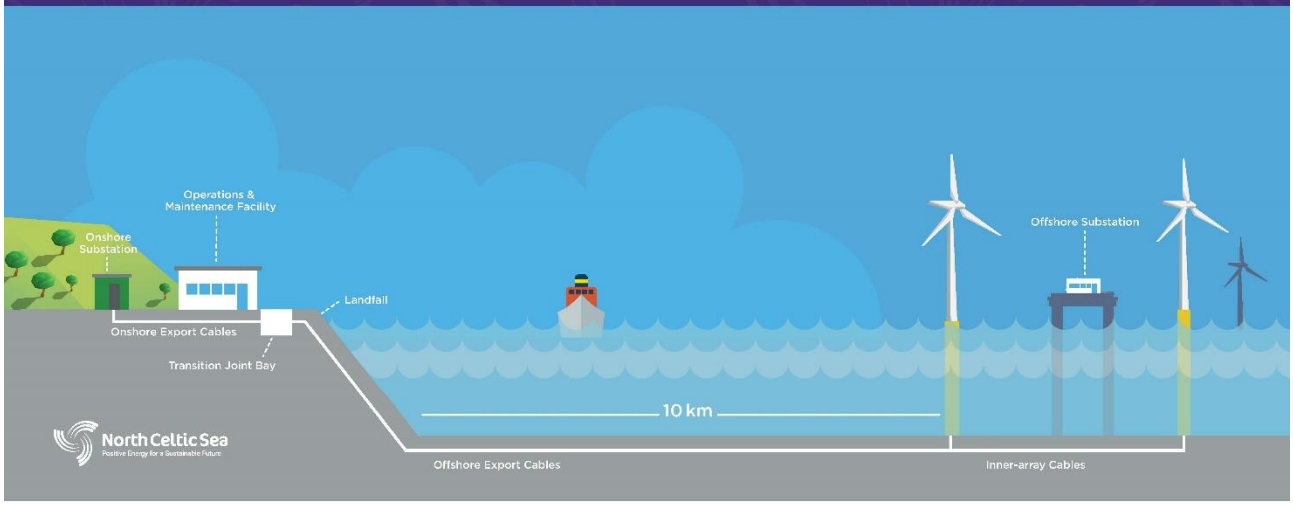
North Celtic Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

Current Stage

Energia has commenced the environmental assessment process for the North Celtic Sea project. Information on the proposed surveys and fisheries related Q&As are available on the project website. The information and local knowledge you can share on fishing activities can help to inform the development and design of the project.

Once operational, a multi-million annual community benefit fund will be put in place and could support initiatives like:

- Stock or hatchery enhancement programmes and research grants
- Port and pier infrastructure and equipment upgrades (e.g. cold stores, lighting, security, lifting equipment, pier ladders)
- Health and safety training and equipment
- Upskilling and diversification grants
- Grants for fisheries or seafood micro enterprises



Indicative Project Timeline

energia
Renewables

Fisheries Liaison Officer (021) 203 1005
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A.4 Fisheries Factsheet As Gaeilge

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Tá Energia ag tacú le sprioc gníomhaíochta aeráide na hÉireann le hastaíochtaí carbóin a laghdú faoina leath faoi 2030 agus le bheith ina tír atá neodrach ó thaobh carbóin de faoi 2050.

Fuinneamh Gaoithe Amach ón gCósta

Déanfaidh Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh a cion féin lenár soláthar fuinnimh a dhícharbónú agus astaíochtaí a laghdú.

Leictreachas Glan

Cuirfidh Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh leictreachas glan ar fáil do bhreis agus 500,000 teach.

Suíomh

Is tionscadal fuinnimh in-athnuaite í Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh atá beartaithe le bheith ar a laghad 10km, agus suas le 25km, amach ó chósta Phort Láirge.

Méid

Bheadh thart ar 40-60 tuirbín i gceist le gnáth-thionscadal gaoithe amach ón gcósta 600-800 MW.

Buntáistí

Geilleagrach

- Infheistíocht €2bn
- *c.* 800 post agus an obair thógála ar bun
- 70-100 post oibríochta agus cothabhála sa cheantar áitiúil
- Deiseanna slabhra soláthair do ghnólachtaí áitiúla

Sóisialta

Faoin gCiste Tacaíochta Leictreachais In-Athnuaite (RESS), cuirfear ciste sochair pobail is fiú na milliúin euro ar fáil do thionscadail áitiúla gach bliain mar gheall ar ghnáthfheirm ghaoithe 600-800MW.

energia Renewables

Oifigeach Idirchaidrimh Pobail (087) 183 7452
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info@northcelticseawind.ie
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North Celtic Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

energia
Renewables

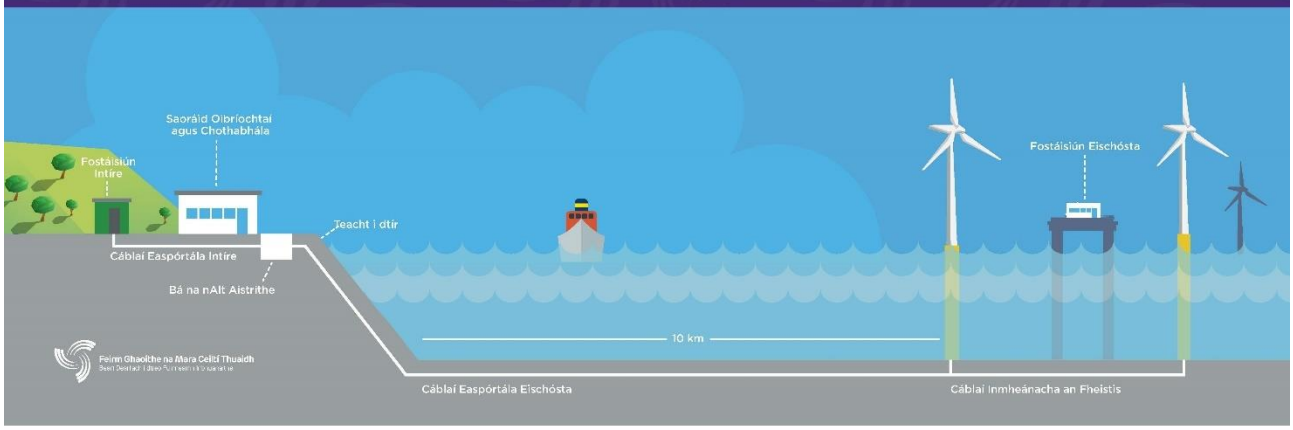
Feirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaithe

An Chéim Reatha

Tá tús curtha ag Energia leis an bpróiseas measúnachta timpeallachta le haghaidh Thionscadal Fheirm Ghaoithe na Mara Ceiltí Thuaidh. Tá eolas faoi na suirbhéanna beartaithe agus ceisteanna agus freagraí a bhaineann le hiascach le fáil ar shuíomh idirlín an tionscadail. Cuirfidh aon fhaisnéis a chuirfidh tú ar fáil ar ghníomhaíochtaí iascaireachta áitiúla bonn eolais faoin obair le suíomh oiriúnach don fheirm ghaoithe a aithint agus a bheachtú.

Nuair a bheidh sé ag feidhmiú, cuirfear ciste sochair pobail bliantúil ar fiú na milliúin é ar bun agus d'fhéadfadh sé tacú le tionscnaimh amhail:

- Cláir feabhsúcháin stoic nó gorlainne agus deontais taighde
- Uasghráduithe bonneagair agus trealaimh calafoirt agus cé (m.sh. athdhromchlú bóthair, fuarstórais, soilsiú, slándáil, trealamh ardaithe, dréimirí cé)
- Oiliúint agus trealamh sláinte agus sábháilteachta
- Deontais um uasoiliúint agus éagsúlú
- Deontais d'iascach nó do mhicrifhiontair bia mara



Amlíne Thráscach an Tionscadail

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Suirbhéanna Comhshaoil agus Dearadh					Pleanáil	Ceant RESS agus Eangach	Tógáil			Feidhmiú
Idirchaidreamh Pobail agus Iascaigh										
		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 1		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 2		Comhairliúcháin Poiblí 3				

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A.5 Site Investigations Briefing Document

View the full Site Investigation Briefing Document here

A.6 Fisheries Related Frequently Asked Questions

View the full Fisheries Related FAQ Document here

Appendix B - Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

Public consultation opens on North Celtic Sea offshore wind project

Energia is inviting members of the public to take part in a first phase of public consultation on a proposed renewable energy project in the North Celtic Sea with information available at www.northcelticseawind.ie

The project is proposed to be located at a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coast of Co. Waterford in the North Celtic Sea.

The North Celtic Sea project aims to decarbonise Ireland's energy supply, reduce emissions and help to achieve our 2030 climate action and offshore wind energy targets. The project will generate clean electricity for over 500,000 Irish homes and businesses.

As a leading Irish energy provider and long-term infrastructure investor Energia currently supplies approximately 20% of all electricity on the island of Ireland to over 823,000 homes and businesses. Energia is responsible for providing electricity from approximately 25% of all wind power on the island.

In the context of the ongoing climate emergency, Energia is committed to playing a leading role in addressing this challenge where offshore wind provides a significant opportunity for Ireland. Given that the development timeline for these projects is up to 10 years, it is necessary that the small number of early-stage projects, like North Celtic Sea, that have made significant progress to date, continue to achieve key development milestones enabling them to play a part in Ireland's 2030 energy system.

This early public consultation takes place from **22nd September – 29th October** and is the first in a series of opportunities for the public to meet the project team and learn about the North Celtic Sea project.

An online exhibition room is open at www.northcelticseawind.ie which includes survey area maps, indicative photo illustrations, a project timeline, and other information on the project and our engagement with local and fishing communities.

Energia's project team is holding a public webinar on **Wednesday 13th October from 7pm-8pm** and all are invited to attend to learn more about the project and ask questions. Registration is now open at www.northcelticseawind.ie. A recording of the webinar will also be made available online after the event.

Information clinics will be held from **18th – 22nd October** for anyone wishing to discuss specific aspects with the project team**.** Bookings can be made through the project website.

Launching the consultation, Eoin McPartland, Offshore Renewables Manager with Energia said, "*The North Celtic Sea project will generate 100% green electricity and will make a positive contribution to decarbonising Ireland's energy supply and reducing emissions - protecting the environment for current and future generations".*

"*We recognise that many Irish coastal communities around our shores are coming to terms with offshore windfarm developments for the first time. Coastal communities in other countries following progressive decarbonisation agendas are already experiencing some of the local benefits that can arise from this type of development in the green economy. As a leading Irish energy provider, we are committed to ensuring all areas of the local economy can thrive in parallel with this development."*

"*The North Celtic Sea project is at an early stage and this consultation is an opportunity to introduce the team and provide information. We're very much looking forward to discussing this important project with people over the coming weeks and we welcome feedback which can shape the development of the North Celtic Sea project*."

The project team is currently undertaking offshore and onshore studies to help determine site suitability and to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and design process. Further periods of consultation will take place over the coming 18 months to share progress on the project.

As one of Ireland's leading and most experienced renewable energy providers, Energia has also applied to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, for a foreshore licence to carry out surveys for this project. This application is at an advanced stage and a licence is expected soon. The licence will be a key milestone for the project and will enable it to progress alongside a small number of other projects that are capable of contributing to Ireland's 2030 target.

It is anticipated that a planning application for the North Celtic Sea project could be made in 2023 with a planning decision in 2024.

Community and fisheries liaison officers are available to discuss the project at:

Contact: Community Liaison Officer: Aiveen Finn Tel: 087 183 7452

Fisheries Liaison Officer: Trudy McIntyre Tel: 021 203 1105

Web: www.northcelticseawind.ie

Email: info@northcelticseawind.ie

ENDS.

Appendix C- Media Advertorial

Public Consultation
22 September - 29 October, 2021

Hello and I hope you are keeping well. My name is Eoin McPartland, Offshore Renewables Manager with Energia. I am delighted to announce the first phase of public consultation on a proposal by Energia for an offshore wind energy project in the North Celtic Sea.

The project is proposed to be located at a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the Co. Waterford coast in the North Celtic Sea. The North Celtic Sea project aims to decarbonise Ireland's energy supply, reduce emissions and help to achieve our 2030 climate action and offshore wind energy targets. The project will generate clean electricity for over 500,000 Irish homes and businesses.

We are committed to ensuring the project delivers significant economic and environmental benefits for coastal and fishing communities including high quality, long term employment and an annual community benefit fund in line with the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).

This first phase of consultation provides an opportunity to learn about the project, meet the team and provide feedback. There are a variety of ways to get information about the North Celtic Sea project:

- **Online Exhibition Room:** Visit the virtual room to view project information including survey area maps, indicative photo illustrations, a project timeline, and information on our engagement with local and fishing communities. A feedback form is also available. The room can be accessed via our website: www.northcelticseawind.ie.
- **Live Webinar:** The North Celtic Sea project team will present details on the project in a live webinar on **Wednesday 13 October from 7-8pm**. There will also be a questions and answers session. For more information and to register visit: www.northcelticseawind.ie.
- **Information Clinics:** you are welcome to book an appointment with the project team to discuss specific aspects of the project. The information clinics will be held from the **18- 22 October**. Booking requests can be made via our website www.northcelticseawind.ie.

The project team is currently undertaking offshore and onshore studies to help determine site suitability and to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and design process. Further periods of consultation will take place over the coming 18 months to share progress on the development. It is anticipated that a planning application would be made in 2023 with a planning decision in 2024.

I look forward to engaging with you during this consultation period and as the project progresses. Your feedback is important and can help to shape the development of the North Celtic Sea project. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me or our liaison officer using the details below.

Best regards,

Eoin

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Our Community Liaison Officer, Aiveen Finn, is available to discuss the North Celtic Sea project.

087 183 7452 | info@northcelticseawind.ie

Appendix D - Overview of Fisheries Engagement

D.1 Engagements

The project team visited the following piers a total of 18 times from February 2020 to December 2021:

- Helvick
- Boatstrand
- Dunmore East
- Kilmore Quay
- Duncannon
- Youghal
- Ballycotton

The project team engaged with 77 individuals over that time period (64 local fishermen and 13 members of industry organisations (e.g. fish producer organisations [POs], regional inshore fisheries forums [RIFFs], National Inshore Fisherman's Organisation [NIFO] /National Inshore Fisherman's Association [NIFA], Sea Fisheries Protection Authority [SFPA], Bord Iascaigh Mhara [BIM]).

Logged 102 phone calls with the fishing industry.

D.2 Engagement Material

The following information materials were produced and issued to the fishing community:

- A briefing document describing the proposed site investigation surveys (in March 2020 and updated in August 2021)
- A fisheries FAQ document addressing questions raised during industry level engagements between February and March 2020 in relation to the site investigation surveys (March 2020).
- An updated fisheries FAQ document was issued in August 2021 provided general project information and responses to the questions frequently asked of the project team during the engagements.