



South Irish Sea

Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future

Public Consultation Report No. 1

February 2022



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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 billion¹. 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-year².

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 South Irish Sea project as part of the solution to addressing climate change, to provide a secure supply of clean energy, 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. 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 are proud partners to Wexford Youths Women's Football Club since 2015. Energia is a long-standing partner of Grow it Yourself Ireland and has supported many local initiatives in Wexford including Tombrack Community Garden, Ferns, Granstown Priory Scheme, Wellingtonbridge, Scoil Muire, Barntown and Grow Together Rehab Care. We are also the national sponsor of Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia. Energia is the sustainable energy partner of the IRFU and sponsor of the Energia All Ireland Leagues.

1.2 South Irish Sea Project Overview

South Irish Sea is an offshore renewable energy project proposed to be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coasts of Wexford and south Wicklow. The project will supply clean electricity for Irish homes and businesses and make a major contribution to achieving Ireland's carbon-reduction targets. 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 location and proposed size of the wind farm, the number of turbines and the distance from shore. South Irish Sea will make a positive contribution to decarbonising our energy supply and

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

² <https://greennews.ie/climate-inaction-seven-bn-greens/>

reducing emissions – protecting the environment for current and future generations. The project will generate green electricity to power the equivalent of over 500,000 homes.



Figure 1 - South Irish Sea Survey Area Map

2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

Consultation with local communities including the fishing industry and all interested stakeholders forms a key part of the South Irish Sea project.

A first public consultation for the South Irish Sea project was held from 19th October – 26th November 2021. This was an early opportunity to learn about the South Irish 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 South Irish 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.



4,011 views of
the website



730 visits to the virtual
consultation room



14 adverts across 2 weeks
in 7 regional papers



2 weeks of local
radio adverts



53 people registered
for the project webinar



7 info clinics
booked



46 submissions
received

2.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to detail the public consultation process and to record the feedback received during the first non-statutory public consultation for the South Irish 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

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

A project website www.southirishseawind.ie was established in 2020 to facilitate the publishing of project information to all stakeholders.

The project website provides maps, photo illustrations, factsheets (in English and Irish), latest news, supply chain registration, a frequently asked questions section, online feedback and 'contact us' forms and contact information.

During the consultation, the website provided access to the virtual consultation room and enabled registration for the online public webinar and information clinics.

The documents published on the project website can be found in **Appendix A** of this document.

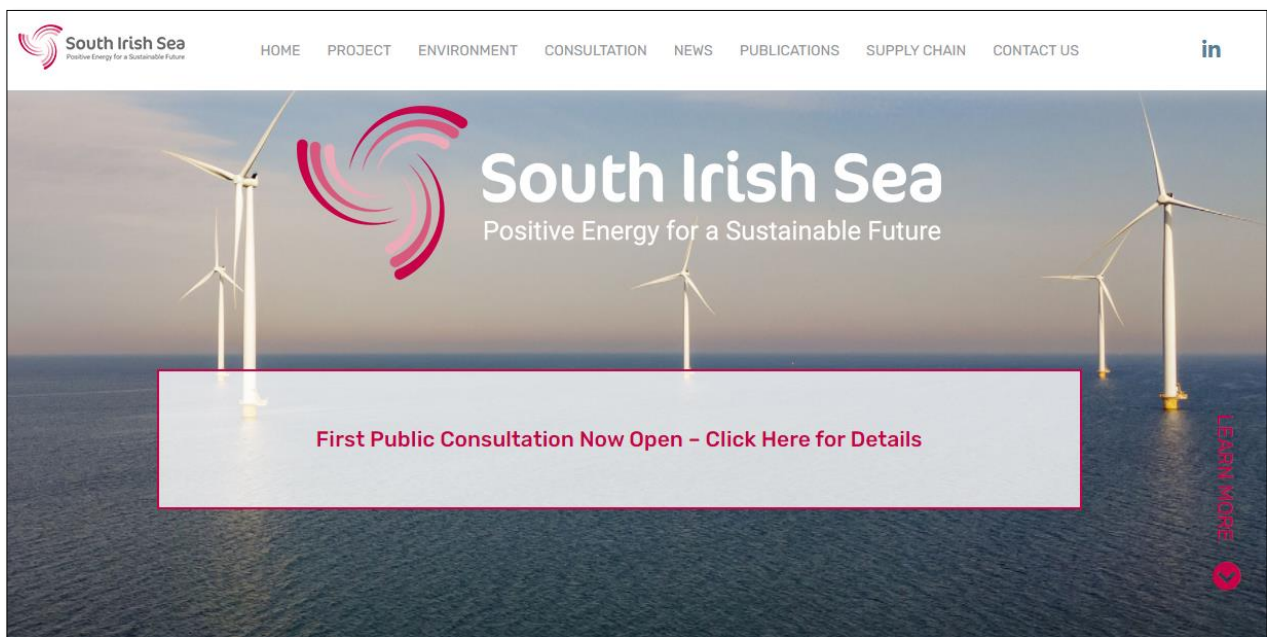


Figure 2 - Project Website Homepage

Over the course of the consultation period, the project website had 4,011 visitors. Visitors to the website viewed on average 3.79 pages per visit.

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 made on 24th October 2021, to make followers aware of the public consultation.

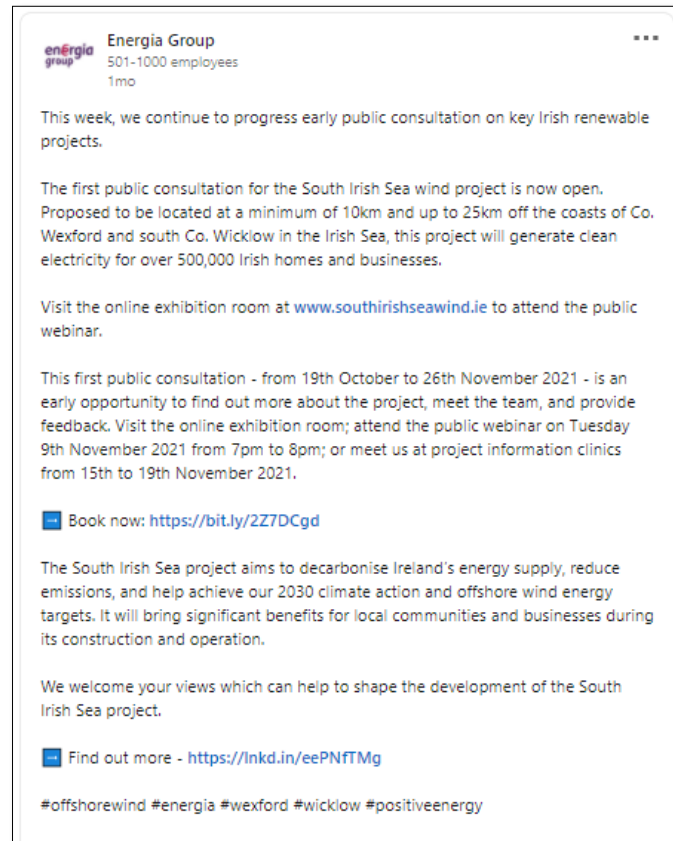


Figure 3 - Project LinkedIn Post

3.3 Virtual Consultation Room

A dedicated Virtual Consultation Room was opened to display project information in an interactive online setting. The consultation room contained relevant information displays, project maps, a feedback form and early indicative photo illustrations of the project. Over the course of the consultation the VCR received more than 730 visitors.

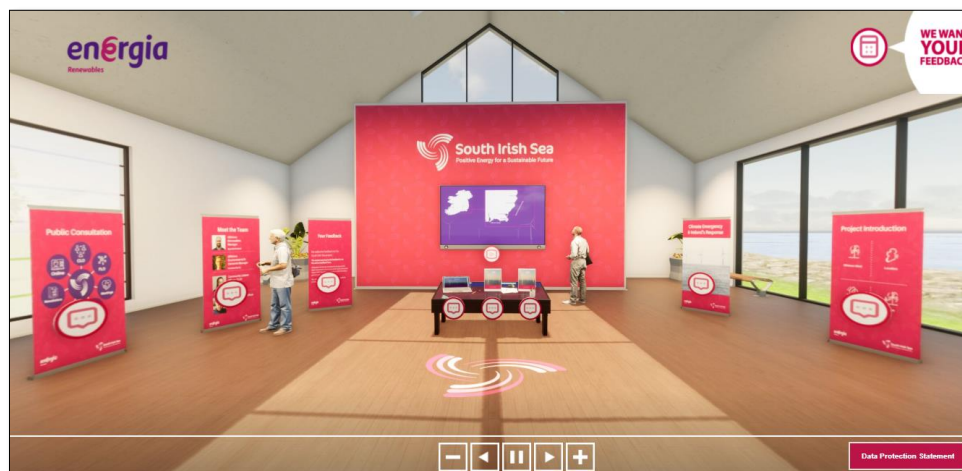


Figure 4 - Virtual Consultation Room

3.4 Press Release / Media Coverage

Press releases were issued to local and national news outlets to announce the launch of the public consultation. Following the release, online and local media outlets covered the launch of the public consultation including South East Radio, East Coast FM, the Wicklow People, the Gorey Guardian and others. Reminder press releases were also issued in advance of the public information webinar.

The press release can be found in **Appendix B** of this report.

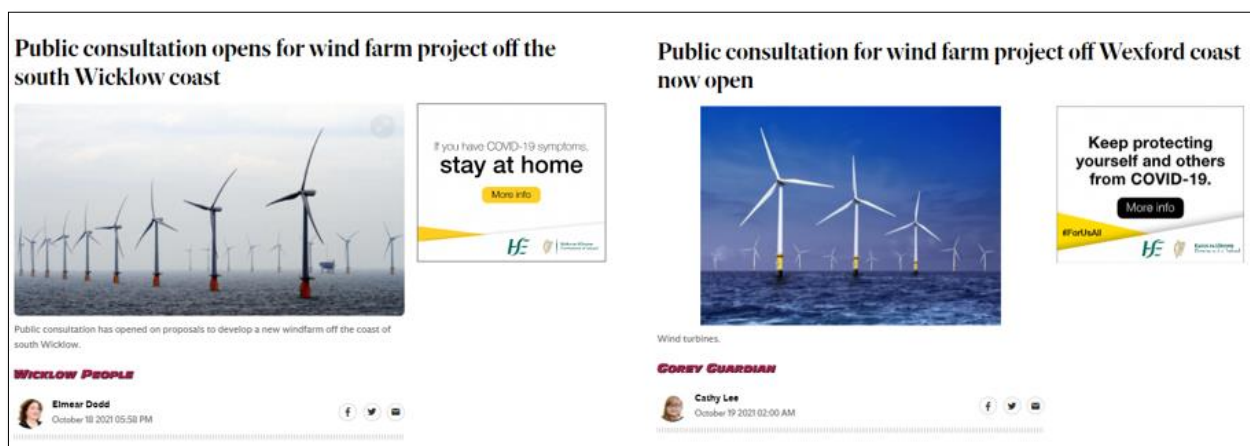


Figure 5 - Sample Media Coverage

3.4.1 Social Media Coverage

The project team sent information about the SIS project and the consultation to a wide range of stakeholders and organisations in Wexford and Wicklow. Public representatives informed constituents of the project through social media posts. The County Wicklow Public Participation Network posted the information on its Facebook page. Sample social media posts can be seen below.

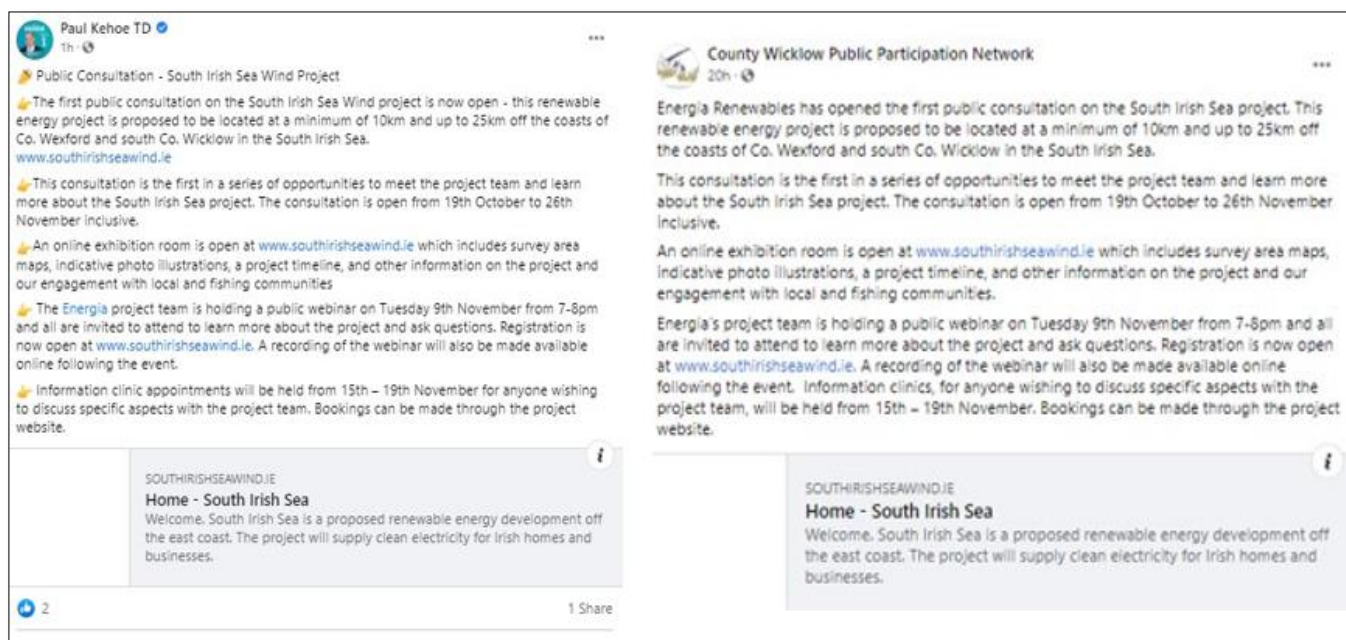


Figure 6 - Sample Social Media Coverage

3.5 Newspaper / Radio Adverts

A two-week local media advertising campaign was commissioned to promote the South Irish Sea project introductory public consultation. Full page adverts were published in the following publications week commencing 18th October and week commencing 25th October:

- Wexford People
- Enniscorthy Guardian
- Gorey Guardian
- New Ross Standard
- Arklow People
- Wicklow Times
- Wicklow Voice

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

A two-week prime-time radio advertising campaign was undertaken on South East Radio and East Coast FM week commencing 18th October and week commencing 25th October.

3.6 Public Information Webinar

As part of this consultation, Energia's project team held a public webinar on Tuesday 9th November 2021, from 7pm to 8pm. The webinar provided an overview of the South Irish Sea project and a Q&A session. In total, 53 stakeholders registered for the webinar. Written responses to the questions received are provided in Section 4. A recording of the public webinar is available to view at: <https://www.southirishseawind.ie/watch-the-project-webinar/>



Figure 7 - Project Webinar Image

3.7 Online Public Information Clinics

Cognisant of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, public health guidance and the need to conduct public consultations safely, the project team offered online one-to-one consultations with interested stakeholders wishing to discuss specific aspects of the project. Stakeholders could book these information clinics through the project website with the ability to choose a date and time that suited them between the 15th and the 19th of November 2021. In total seven one-to-one information clinics were booked. 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 was appointed in 2021.

An information phone and email service is operated Monday to Friday during normal business hours.

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 and throughout the first public consultation. This outreach will continue 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 on the project website and issued as part of press releases 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 any issues 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.

Meet our liaison officers...



Aiveen Finn

Community Liaison



Mark O'Reilly

Fisheries Liaison

Our liaison officers are available to provide information and assist with any queries in relation to the South Irish Sea project. We would love to hear from you.

Please contact our Community Liaison Officer (CLO):
Phone: 087 183 7452
Email: info@southirishseawind.ie

Please contact our Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO):
Phone: 021 2031005
Email: flo@southirishseawind.ie

Figure 8 - Liaison Officers Contact Details

4 FEEDBACK AND SUBMISSIONS

4.1 Overview

This section of the report outlines the submissions received during the first public consultation which ran from 19th October to 26th November 2021.

Feedback was received via the feedback form, email, telephone and provided to the project team during briefings.

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

Table 1 - Consultation Submissions Received

| Feedback Method | Submissions Received |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Email | 10 |
| Feedback form | 3 |
| Project phone line | 4 |
| Project webinar questions | 22 |
| Info clinics | 7 |
| Total | 46 |

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 South Irish Sea project and gave them an opportunity to give detailed feedback for the project team to consider. In total, three feedback forms were received. All the feedback captured in the forms is included in Section 4.3, below.

4.3 Consultation Feedback

This section acknowledges the submissions received during the consultation and provides responses from the South Irish 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 South Irish Sea project and for submitting questions and feedback.

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 Project Location

Stakeholders questioned how the proposed site location was chosen. Some respondents asked if the wind farm could be located further from shore. Respondents questioned the location of the wind farm and if it is to be situated on a sand bank similar to the Arklow Bank development. One respondent stated that the wind farm should be located closer to high energy users such as data centres. One respondent stated strong opposition to the project, as well as offshore and onshore wind in general.

4.3.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Project Location

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.

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

Fixed foundation offshore wind turbines can be installed in water depths of up to 65 metres (210ft) which is the approximate water depth at the eastern extent of the South Irish Sea survey area.

4.3.2 Grid Connection

Respondents queried how the project will connect to the national grid and whether grid routes or connection points have been considered.

4.3.2.1 Project Team Response to Grid Connection Feedback

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, via a submarine export cable(s). From the transition point, the electric power is transferred to an onshore electricity substation via underground cables and then into the national grid.

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.

4.3.3 Operation and Maintenance Facility

Some respondents asked about the identification of a suitable location for the Operations and Maintenance Facility. A local auctioneer made the project team aware of an available site for the OMF.

4.3.3.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on the Operations and Maintenance Facility

We thank respondents for their feedback and suggestions in relation to the local operations and maintenance facility. The operations phase will bring between 70-100 direct, high-quality, long-term, employment opportunities and these will be located at a local operations and maintenance facility. Part of the project development process is to identify and assess suitable locations for the operations and maintenance facility within the south east region. Further details on potential locations will be announced as the project progresses.

4.3.4 Cumulative Impact of Proposed Developments

Respondents cited a number of offshore renewable energy developments proposed for the Irish Sea and the combined potential impact these developments could have on the seascape. It was suggested that if all of the proposed projects are approved, there could be up to 160 turbines off the coast of Co. Wexford.

4.3.4.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Cumulative Impact of Proposed Developments

Approximately 5-7 projects will be needed to meet the 5GW target of electricity to be produced from offshore projects by 2030. The final number will depend on the permitted outputs of the projects. A wide range of factors, including the availability of grid connections, planning and supports will influence the locations of projects.

Energia recognises the importance of sensitive development and will undertake a thorough environmental assessment and engineering design process for the South Irish Sea project. A detailed Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) will be carried out as part of the environmental assessment.

4.3.5 Fishing

Respondents, including some elected representatives, asked what level of engagement has taken place with the fishing community in the south east region. Fishers in the area wish for the impacts on their livelihoods and the marine life to be fully assessed and reported on 'in the public domain'. Fishers also wished for the "minimisation of diversion from the safest, most efficient or traditional routes." It was queried whether there would be restrictions on fishing activity during construction or operation.

4.3.5.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Fishing

We thank respondents for their feedback in relation to fishing.

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. For safety reasons, an exclusion zone for vessels will apply around the wind farm site while the construction process is ongoing. The exclusion zone will be no larger than is necessary to ensure safety and will be guided by the Marine Survey Office. During the operational phase, smaller safety zones will be in place around individual wind farm structures, these will also be guided by the Marine Survey Office and will be no larger than necessary.

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.

4.3.6 Navigation, Shipping, and Communication

Submissions to the public consultation referenced possible impacts on navigation and communications equipment and stated that appropriate assessment should take place for any such development off the Irish coast.

A submission received from the Irish Marine Federation stated that the proposed wind farm “will be just over 5 nautical miles from the coastline” and this will narrow the “safe navigable waters for both leisure and commercial vessels.” The IMF noted that the “seas between the Arklow Bank and the Blackwater Bank are deep, safe and navigable waters” and wished to avoid the “squeeze” of fishing and leisure crafts towards dangerous waters or shipping lanes.

IMF further stated concerns over the safety zones around the bases of the individual turbines suggesting that these zones should be kept to an absolute minimum noting opposition to “safety zones that exclude all craft from entire wind farm arrays.”

The IMF believes that the collision risk posed by wind farms and associated infrastructure to recreational craft can be minimised by specifying a minimum rotor tip air draft of 22 metres above Highest Astronomical Tides.

4.3.6.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Navigation, Shipping and Communication

We thank respondents for their submissions on Navigation, Shipping, and Communication.

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 Safety Office and the Commissioners for Irish Lights.

For safety reasons, a temporary exclusion zone for vessels will apply around sections of the wind farm site while the construction process is ongoing. The exclusion zone will be no larger than is necessary to ensure safety and will be guided by the Marine Survey Office. During the operational phase, smaller safety zones will be in place around individual wind farm structures, these will also be guided by the Marine Survey Office and will be no larger than necessary.

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

4.3.7 Construction

It was queried whether the wind farm may impact tides and currents. Stakeholders questioned the impact that the proposed construction may have on the locality and specifically referenced potential flooding in Arklow. The Residents of Ferrybank and Seaview Avenue group submitted concerns relating to proposed renewable energy developments in the Arklow area. One respondent stated that “the removal of 6000m³ of gravel at the harbour entrance will lead to catastrophic flooding in the Ferrybank Seaview Avenue areas of the town.” Stakeholders submitted concerns about the project’s possible impact on coastal erosion. They cited local knowledge of “the disappearance of the North Beach in Arklow, sea encroachment is occurring at a rate of 1 to 2 metres yearly depending on location. Porters Rock Arklow is evidence of this erosion.”

4.3.7.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Construction

We thank respondents for highlighting of coastal erosion in the area. Given the considerable distance from shore (10-25kms), it is not anticipated that the South Irish Sea project will have any impact on coastal erosion. However, any potential impacts on coastal processes, including sediment transport, will be assessed within a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which will be prepared by environmental specialists as part of the planning application. This will include 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.

4.3.8 Consultation Process

The consultation process was an area of interest to stakeholders. Stakeholders that attended the project webinar on 9th November noted that it was informative. It was requested that a recording of the webinar be made available for those that could not attend.

It was noted by elected representatives that they wished to be kept informed of the project developments and wished to introduce the project team to Seal Rescue Ireland (SRI) and Native Oyster Reef Restoration Ireland (NORRI). It was noted that engagement with these organisations will help to inform the environmental assessment for the project.

4.3.8.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on the Consultation Process

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 South Irish Sea project team has been available to liaise with all interested stakeholders. In 2019, we published information on the SIS project on a dedicated webpage at <https://energiagroup.com/renewables/> and we appointed Fisheries Liaison Officers who began engagement with the fishing industry. The SIS project team also briefed public representatives in February 2020. Earlier this year we appointed a Community Liaison Officer for the SIS project. We also published a dedicated project website (www.southirishseawind.ie).

This first consultation, which has been advertised widely in local media and notified to stakeholders, for the South Irish Sea project is an early opportunity to share information about the project and to seek your views. 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 has been updated to include a recording of the public webinar and frequently asked questions.

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@southirishseawind.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.

4.3.9 Planning Process

Stakeholders queried the current stage of project development and the anticipated timeline to submission of a planning application. Submissions queried the opportunities for public consultation as part of the planning processes for offshore wind developments.

4.3.9.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on the Planning Process

The environmental studies, design, and aligned 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 for the South Irish Sea project could be made in 2023 under the new Maritime Area Planning legislation. The new legislation will provide a single planning process for the onshore and offshore infrastructure. 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. All planning reports will be published for public observations. Once the application is submitted, there will be an opportunity for the public to make observations on the proposed development directly to the planning authority during a statutory public consultation.

4.3.10 Project Benefits

A local elected representative submitted that economic and social benefits should be targeted to communities most impacted by the proposed development. A representative of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) connected with the project to discuss skills training for possible employment opportunities that may be available as the project develops. Stakeholders also asked about how the community benefit scheme will be quantified and how it will operate.

4.3.10.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on the Project Benefits

We thank respondents for their feedback and questions in relation 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 South Irish 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 South Irish 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.

We wish to thank WWETB for making contact in relation to training for employment opportunities. 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 committed to 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 multi-million Euro community benefit fund will be established for the benefit of the communities closest to the project. Guidance on how this will work will be set out in the Government's Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS).

4.3.11 Energy Supply and Use

Stakeholders queried how the power produced will be supplied to the national grid. It was queried as to which 500,000 homes will receive the energy produced by the project. Stakeholders questioned if the project was being developed to supply data centres and whether industrial or domestic consumers would receive preference in the event of power outages.

4.3.11.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on Energy Supply and Use

Ireland has set a target to produce 80% of all electricity from renewable sources in 2030.

The clean electricity that is generated by the South Irish Sea project will be supplied to the Irish electricity grid and will be used by residential and business customers in the south east region and throughout Ireland. A typical 600-800MW offshore renewable energy project would generate enough clean electricity to power the equivalent of over 500,000 homes.

In Ireland, all electricity that is generated is put into a “pool” and all suppliers are obliged to buy from this pool. It is not possible to supply a specific customer (data centre or otherwise) from a specific generation facility, be it offshore wind, onshore wind or gas.

The South Irish Sea project will assist homes and businesses to reduce carbon emissions. The proposed offshore windfarm will contribute to our 2030 climate target and is not being built to meet the demand of new or existing data centres.

It is the responsibility of EirGrid, as the Transmission System Operator (TSO), to ensure the supply and demand of electricity are in balance at all times. The Commission for the Regulation of Utilities and EirGrid published information recently on how the electricity network would be managed in the unlikely event of energy shortages. It is clear that domestic energy supplies will be prioritised.

4.3.12 Decommissioning

Stakeholders asked about decommissioning of the wind turbines at end of life and how provision for this decommissioning cost should be made in the event the company becomes insolvent or sells the business.

4.3.12.1.1 Project Team Response to Feedback on 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 of many instances where 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 STEPS IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Overview

Energia wishes to thank everyone that has provided feedback during this round of public consultation.

The publication of this report marks the conclusion of the introductory phase of public consultation for the South Irish Sea project. All feedback provided has been fully considered by the project team and will inform the project development process. This is the first of at least three non-statutory public consultations that will take place before a planning application is made.

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. There will be a further opportunity to submit views on the project at the statutory public consultation when a planning application is submitted.

In the interim, the Fisheries Liaison Officer and Community Liaison Officer continue to be available to discuss the project in the community. They can be contacted at any stage using the contact details which are available on the project website www.southirishseawind.ie.

5.2 Project Timeline

The graphic below outlines the indicative timeline for the South Irish Sea project. This timeline will be updated accordingly 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 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.

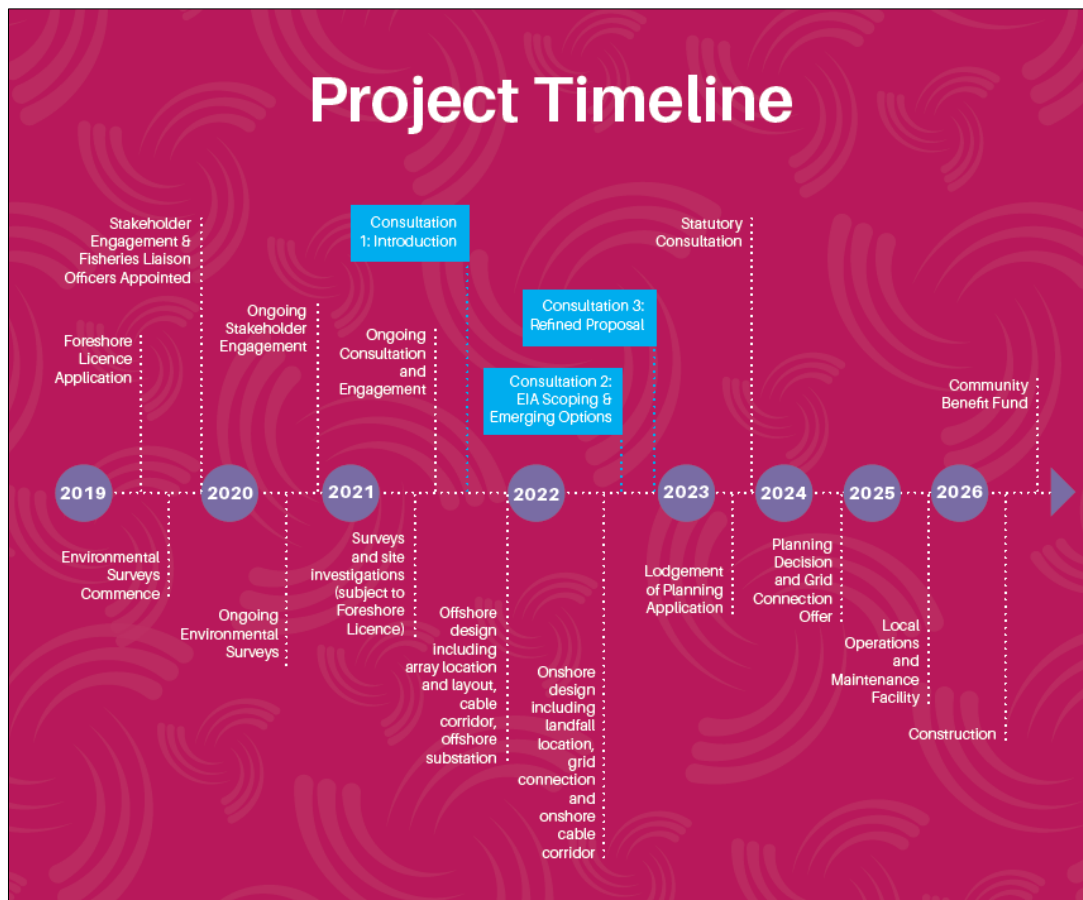



Figure 9 - Indicative Project Timeline

Appendices



Appendix A – Materials Published on Project Website


A.1 Project Factsheet



South Irish Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future


PROJECT FACTSHEET

South Irish 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

South Irish Sea will make a positive contribution to decarbonising our energy supply and reducing emissions.




Clean Electricity

South Irish Sea will supply clean electricity for over 500,000 homes.



Location


South Irish Sea is a renewable energy project proposed to be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coasts of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow.



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 per annum for local projects.



☎ Community Liaison Officer (087) 183 7452

☎ Fisheries Liaison Officer (021) 203 1005

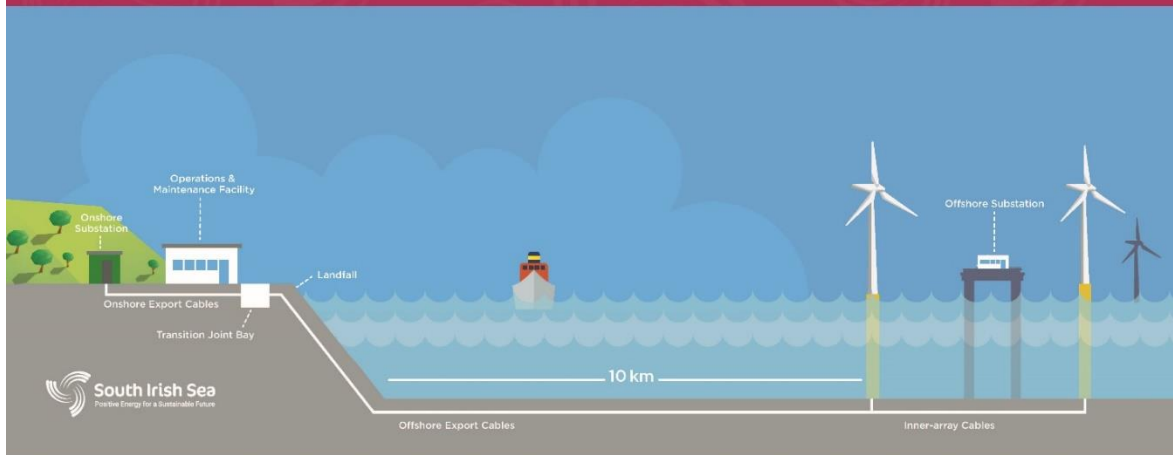
✉ info@southirishseawind.ie

🌐 www.southirishseawind.ie



Current Stage

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



Indicative Project Timeline



A.2 Project Factsheet As Gaeilge

BILEOG EOLAIS

Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaíthe

Tionscadal beartaithe fuinnimh in-athnuaite de chuid Energia i Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas, a bheidh suite amach ón gcósta thoir theas. Cuirfidh sé leictreachas glan ar fáil do thithe agus do ghnólachtaí in Éirinn.

Energia

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

Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide

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

Fuinneamh Gaoithe Amach ón gCósta

Deanfaidh Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas a cion féin lenár soláthar fuinnimh a dhícharbónú agus astaíochtaí a laghdú.

Leictreachas Glan

Cuirfidh Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas leictreachas glan ar fáil do bhreis agus 500,000 teach.

Suíomh

Is tionscadal fuinnimh in-athnuaite i Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas atá beartaithe le bheith ar a laghad 10km, agus suas le 25km, amach ó chósta Chontae Loch Garman agus Chontae Chill Mhantáin theas.

Méid

Bheadh thart ar 40-60 turbin i gceist le gnáthfheirm ghaoithe amach ón gcósta 600-800MW.

Buntáistí

Geilleagrách

- 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 Tacaiochta 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.

enèrgia
Renewables

Oifigeach Idirchaidrimh Pobail (087) 183 7452

Oifigeach Idirchaidrimh Iascaigh (021) 203 1005

info@southirishseawind.ie

www.southirishseawind.ie



Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaithe

An Chéim Reatha


Tá tús curtha ag Energia leis an bpróiseas measúnachta timpeallachta le haghaidh Thionscadal Fheirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas. 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 Tháscach an Tionscadail




A.3 Fisheries Factsheet



South Irish Sea
Positive Energy for a Sustainable Future


FISHERIES FACTSHEET

South Irish 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

Energia is one of Ireland's leading energy companies, supplying approximately 25% of Ireland's total energy.




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

South Irish Sea will make a positive contribution to decarbonising our energy supply and reducing emissions.




Clean Electricity

South Irish Sea will supply clean electricity for over 500,000 homes.




Location

South Irish Sea is a renewable energy project proposed to a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coast of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow.



Size


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



Benefits


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

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 per annum for local projects.



energia
Renewables

☎ Fisheries Liaison Officer (021) 203 1005

☎ Community Liaison Officer (087) 183 7452

✉ info@southirishseawind.ie

🌐 www.southirishseawind.ie

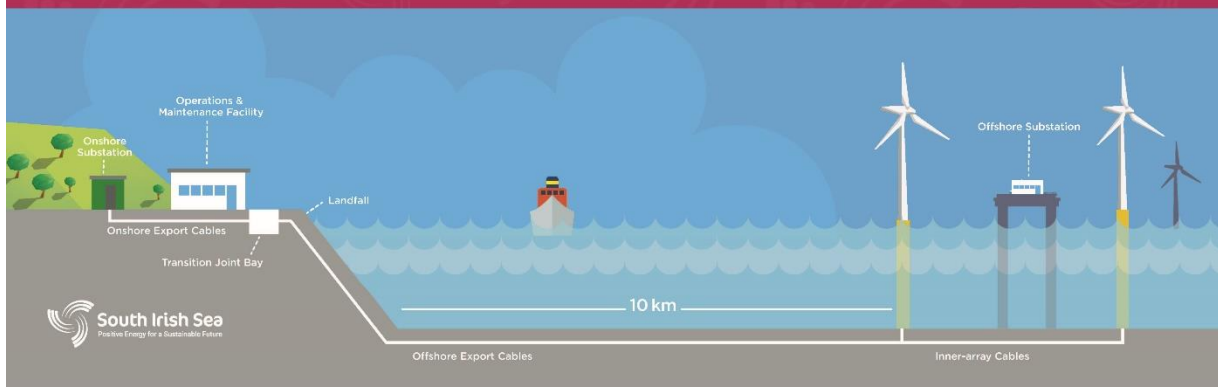


Current Stage

Enèrgia has commenced the environmental assessment process for the South Irish 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



A.4 Fisheries Factsheet As Gaeilge

BILEOG EOLAIS IASCAIREACHTA



Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaíthe

Tionscadal beartaithe fuinnimh in-athnuaite de chuid Energia í Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas, a bheidh suite amach ón gcósta thoir theas. Cuirfidh sé leictreachas glan ar fáil do thithe agus do ghnólaigh in Éirinn.



Energia

Tá Energia ar cheann de phríomhchomhlachtaí fuinnimh na hÉireann agus soláthraíonn sé thart ar 25% d'fhuinneamh iomlán na hÉireann.



Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide

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



Fuinneamh Gaoithe Amach ón gcósta

Déanfaidh Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas a cion féin lenár soláthar fuinnimh a dhícharbónú agus astaíochtaí a laghdú.



Leictreachas Glan

Cuirfidh Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas leictreachas glan ar fáil do bhreis agus 500,000 teach.



Suíomh

Is tionscadal fuinnimh in-athnuaite í Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas atá beartaithe le bheith ar a laghad 10km, agus suas le 25km, amach ó chósta Chontae Loch Garman agus Chontae Chill Mhantáin theas.



Méid

Bheadh thart ar 40-60 turbin i gceist le gnáthfheirm ghaoithe amach ón gcósta 600-800MW.



Buntáistí

Faoin gCiste Tacaiochta 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.



Geilleagrách

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



Sóisialta

Faoin gCiste Tacaiochta 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.

Buntáistí



Feirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas
Beart Dearfach i dtreo Fuinneamh Inbhuanaíthe

An Chéim Reatha

Tá tús curtha ag Energia leis an bpróiseas measúnachta timpeallachta le haghaidh Thionscadal Fheirm Ghaoithe Mhuir Éireann Theas. Tá eolas faoi na suirbhéanna beartaithe agus ceisteanna agus freagraí a bhaineann le cúrsaí iascaireachta le fáil ar shuíomh idirlín an tionscadail. Cuirfidh an fhaisnéis agus an t-eolas áitiúil a chuirfidh tú ar fáil maidir le gníomhaíochtaí iascaireachta bonn eolais faoi fhorbairt agus dearadh an tionscadail.

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:

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



Amlíne Tháscach an Tionscadail



A.5 Site Investigations Briefing Document

View the Site Investigation Briefing Document [here](#).

A.6 Fisheries Related Frequently Asked Questions

View the Fisheries Related FAQ Document [here](#).

Appendix B – Press Release



PRESS RELEASE

Public consultation opens on South Irish Sea offshore wind project

The first Public Consultation for Energia's proposed renewable energy project, off the coasts of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow, is now open – see www.southirishseawind.ie.

The South Irish Sea project is proposed to be located at a minimum of 10km and up to 25km out to sea off the coasts of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow.

This project aims to decarbonise Ireland's energy supply, reduce emissions, and help to achieve Ireland's 2030 climate action and offshore wind energy targets. The project will generate clean electricity for the equivalent of over 500,000 Irish homes.

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. As the development timeline for these projects is up to 10 years, it is necessary that the small number of early-stage projects, like South Irish 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 for the South Irish Sea project is underway from **19th October to 26th November 2021** and is the first in a series of opportunities for the public to meet the project team and learn about the project.

An online exhibition room is now open at www.southirishseawind.ie providing project information and materials such as survey area maps, indicative photo illustrations, a project timeline, and other information including engagement with local and fishing communities.

Energia's project team is holding an online public webinar on **Tuesday 9th November 2021 from 7pm to 8pm**. All are invited to join online to learn more about the project and ask questions. Registration for this webinar is now open at www.southirishseawind.ie. A recording of the webinar will also be made available online after the event.

South Irish Sea project information clinics will be held from **15th to 19th November 2021** for anyone who would like to discuss specific aspects with the project team. Bookings can also be made through the project website.

Launching the consultation, Eoin McPartland, Offshore Renewables Manager with Energia said, "Climate action is essential to protect our environment now and for the generations to come. Energia's South Irish Sea project will produce 100% green electricity that will contribute to decarbonising Ireland's energy supply, reducing emissions and powering homes and businesses into the future while meeting Ireland's 2030 renewable energy targets."

ENDS

Appendix C – Media Advertorial



Public Consultation

19th October to 26th November, 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 South Irish Sea.

This project is proposed to be located a minimum of 10km and up to 25km off the coasts of Co. Wexford and south Co. Wicklow in the South Irish Sea. The South Irish Sea project aims to decarbonise energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help to achieve Ireland's 2030 climate action and offshore wind energy targets. The project will generate clean electricity to power the equivalent of over 500,000 Irish homes.

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 early 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 South Irish 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.southirishseawind.ie.



- **Live Webinar:** The South Irish Sea project team will present details on the project in a live webinar on **Tuesday 9th November from 7-8pm**. This will include a question and answer session. For more information and to register visit: www.southirishseawind.ie



- **Information Clinics:** You are welcome to book an appointment with the project team to discuss specific aspects of the project. These information clinics will be held from **15th to 19th November**. Booking requests can be made via our website www.southirishseawind.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 South Irish Sea project. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me or the project liaison officer, using the details below.

Best regards,




Our Community Liaison Officer, Alveen Finn, is available to discuss the South Irish Sea project.

087 183 7452 | info@southirishseawind.ie

Appendix D - Overview of Fisheries Engagement

D.1 Engagements

The project team visited the following piers a total of 11 times from March 2020 to December 2021:

- Kilmore Quay
- Rosslare
- Arklow
- Wicklow
- Courtown

Engaged with 61 individuals over that time period (42 local fishermen and 19 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 82 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.