

POSITIVE ENERGY

€3 billion Positive Energy Ireland investment programme

Energia is one of Ireland’s leading energy companies, providing electricity and gas to homes and businesses nationwide with a major commitment to national energy sustainability through renewable resources.

We’re the power behind schools, hospitals, public lighting and every aspect of life and living that needs energy to make things happen.

Energia currently supplies approximately 25% of Ireland’s total energy and 21% of renewable electricity in Ireland – providing energy to over 750,000 homes and businesses. In order to further increase our contribution to Ireland’s positive energy future, we are currently developing wind energy, solar energy, hydrogen production, bioenergy plants and battery storage projects.

Over the past 20 years we have invested over €1bn in Ireland’s energy supply infrastructure. In 2019, we announced our intention to invest a further €3bn in our Positive Energy Programme for Ireland.

As one of the country’s top 50 businesses, we are committed to a positive energy future for Ireland and to continuing our investment in that future for the people and economy of Ireland. Among a number of other initiatives, Energia supports the promotion of the Irish language through our sponsorship of Seachtain na Gaeilge and we also support Grow It Yourself, which is headquartered in County Waterford.



Supplying over **1,200MW** of green power in Ireland

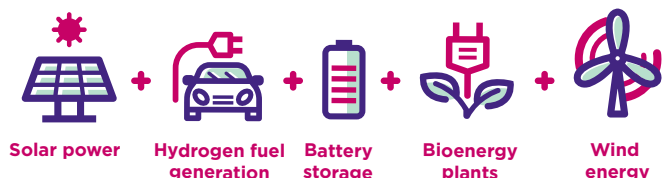


Supplying the energy needs of over **750,000** homes and businesses across the island



Invested over **€1 Billion** in Ireland’s energy supply infrastructure.

Energia is also currently developing:



Why Offshore Wind?

The Government has declared a climate emergency and has set ambitious targets for decarbonisation through increased levels of renewable energy generation by 2030 in Ireland's Climate Action Plan.

Offshore wind, with its ability to generate low cost renewable energy at scale, will play a considerable role in achieving these targets to 2030 and beyond. Ireland currently spends €6 billion per annum on imported fossil fuels for power generation. As we lessen our dependency on imported fuels and transition to an indigenous, renewable energy source, the value of this expenditure will be realised within the local and national economy.

Ireland is now placed to benefit from significant reductions in the cost of offshore wind seen in many of our neighbouring markets. With a minimum of 3.5GW of offshore wind to be delivered by 2030, the opportunity for Ireland, both nationally and regionally, is significant.

According to Wind Europe, every €1,000 invested in wind energy generates €250 in other economic sectors¹. For example, an investment in the order of €1bn in an offshore wind farm would bring major employment and would yield approximately €250m into the regional and national economy. In addition, a community benefit fund would bring direct benefits to local communities. Offshore wind farms will provide sustained substantial funding for local communities over a 25 year period, along with opportunities for local ports and infrastructure upgrades.

The Government has published its draft National Marine Planning Framework for consultation which sets out the framework for sustainable development of Ireland's marine area. The framework, which considers the multiple users of the seas around Ireland, includes considerable focus on offshore renewable energy and identifies areas for which foreshore licences have been awarded, or applied for. The framework aligns with the Climate Action Plan target of at least 3.5GW offshore by 2030 and recognises future targets are likely to increase this significantly.

National Climate Action Plan target of at least

3.5GW  **offshore by 2030**



According to Wind Europe, every **€1,000** invested in wind energy generates **€250** in other economic sectors



The amount Ireland spends on imported fossil fuels for power generation each year

¹ <https://windeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/files/about-wind/reports/WindEurope-Local-impact-global-leadership.pdf>

What is the process and the timescale?

The first step in assessing the potential to locate an offshore wind farm in an area is to apply to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for a Foreshore Licence, which will determine whether marine and seabed surveys can be carried out. Prior to submitting the application, Energia consulted with the following statutory consultees: Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, Waterford County Council, Port of Waterford, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Dunmore East Harbour), Commissioner of Irish Lights, Marine Survey Office, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Inland Fisheries Ireland. The Foreshore Licence application process includes a public and statutory consultation phase which is now complete. Through this consultation period we received a number of submissions from prescribed bodies and members of the public which we have responded to as part of the application process.

Environmental Assessment

If the Foreshore Licence is granted, Energia will commence the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") for the project which will take place over a period of two or more years. The purpose of the EIA is to provide information on the receiving environment and to assess the likely impact that a wind farm may have in a particular area. To obtain baseline data for the EIA, Energia will carry out marine and seabed surveys (permitted under the Foreshore Licence) within the identified study area. These are necessary to assess the suitability of an area for an offshore wind farm and would be one of many inputs into a future decision whether to proceed with a potential planning application.

Surveys

During the EIA process we will be undertaking surveys that will allow us to measure water depth, to identify seabed features, to determine seabed sediment type and distribution (sand, mud, gravel, rock) both on and below the seabed. We will also be carrying out surveys to determine the ecology on and in the seabed and in the water column (the area of water between the seabed and the sea surface). Data on wind speed, current speed and direction and wave height will also be recorded.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement will be a key component of the EIA process. This will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak to us about the project, provide their views and be kept up-to-date with progress. Community engagement will be a continuous process throughout the EIA phase and any subsequent planning application phase should a decision be taken to proceed. This would provide local communities with the opportunity to examine and comment on a wide variety of options for the project such as wind farm layout and location, cable route to shore, connection to the national grid. Engagement will take many forms and will include an initial project briefing document which will provide key project information and timelines and details of the EIA timeline, project milestones and upcoming community engagement events.

These community engagement events will include public information sessions, project awareness meetings, workshops and drop-in clinics. Information will also be provided on an ongoing basis through a dedicated project website and periodic newsletters.

Fisheries Liaison

As part of this stakeholder engagement and in advance of any seabed surveys, Energia, assisted by a Fisheries Liaison Officer ("FLO"), will consult with fisheries organisations and groups. The role of the FLO will be to provide project information and timelines to the fishing industry and address concerns / queries that the fishing industry may have with the ultimate goal of both activities being able to co-exist on a satisfactory basis. The FLO is a well-established role in marine projects and the selected FLO will have extensive knowledge of the fishing communities and fishing activities in the study area. All fishing interests will have an opportunity to discuss the survey plans and their fishing activity with us well in advance of the surveys being carried out.

Best Practice

Energia, as a long-term operator of renewable energy projects, understands the importance of 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.

FAQs

What is a Foreshore Licence?

The foreshore is the land and seabed between the high water mark and the 12 nautical mile limit. All foreshore is presumed to be owned by the State unless valid alternative title is provided.

A foreshore licence provides the holder with permission to carry out site investigation surveys over an area of foreshore (in this case the North Celtic Sea).

It is not planning permission and does not provide permission to build a wind farm. Other works that typically require a foreshore licence include repair work, some coastal protection work, undersea pipelines, cables, dredging works and harvesting of wild seaweed.

What are the next steps in the process?

If Energia is awarded a Foreshore Licence we will commence our Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") which will take place over a period of 2 or more years. The first step in the EIA will be undertaking the surveys outlined in the Foreshore Licence application. This will assess the suitability of the sea area for an offshore wind farm and following completion of the EIA, if the area is deemed to be suitable, a planning application will be further considered.

What is the purpose of the surveys?

There is a wide range of environmental, technical and commercial factors which determine site suitability for an offshore wind farm. The surveys set out in the Foreshore Licence application will provide information in relation to the environmental and technical aspects of the project, which then feed into a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("EIAR"), which is compiled over two or more years. The surveys will typically gather data on the ecology, geology and archaeology of the sea area, water depth, current speed and direction, wave heights and wind speed.

The proposed foreshore survey activity is similar to many other surveys currently being undertaken around the coast of Ireland to identify potentially suitable areas for offshore renewable energy generation. Other works that typically require a foreshore licence include repair work, some coastal protection work, undersea pipelines, cables, dredging works and harvesting of wild seaweed.

How do offshore wind farms benefit local communities?

According to Wind Europe, every €1,000 invested in wind energy generates €250 in other economic sectors². For example, an investment in the order of €1bn in an offshore wind farm would bring major employment and would yield approximately €250m into the regional and national economy. Further to this investment, the project will create a community benefit fund which provides sustained substantial funding for local communities over a 25 year period. The fund would be used to support communities, local initiatives and infrastructure upgrades in the neighbouring areas.

How much energy can be provided from an offshore wind farm?

A typical 600MW offshore wind farm could supply enough energy to power 450,000 homes every year – enough to power every household in the South East and South West of Ireland. This is equivalent to removing around 8 million tonnes of carbon emissions over its expected 25-year lifetime operation.

Where can I get more information about the surveys and this project?

Details of the surveys are available in Energia's application for a Foreshore Licence which is publicly available by searching for 'Energia' on the website of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government www.housing.gov.ie

If Energia are granted a Foreshore Licence, comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement will be carried out to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak to us about the project, provide their views and be kept up-to-date with progress. This will include regular public information events and a dedicated project website.

We can be contacted at any stage by email to:

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www.energia.ie