

# FISHERIES RELATED FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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The following are responses to a range of questions received during the following engagements with the fishing industry:

- South East Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum in New Ross on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- Industry level meeting in Dungarvan on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020
- Industry level meeting in Gorey on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- Industry level meeting in Dunmore East on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020
- Industry level meeting in Kilmore Quay (via video conferencing) on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and
- Industry level meeting in Wexford Harbour (via video conferencing) on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

## SITE INVESTIGATION (SI) SURVEY FAQs

### Why are SI works required?

*The SI works are required to determine ground conditions both on and beneath the seabed. This will help determine whether the site, at a high level, is suitable and if so, the most suitable turbine positions, potential foundation types, potential areas for cable routes to shore and installation methods.*

### Have these types of surveys already been carried out?

*Some basic information is available from surveys previously carried out for major state projects such as INFOMAR and others. Where this information is available for technical assessment and / or planning requirements, it may be possible to reuse the data. Where detail is lacking and for the detailed design phase, further surveys will be required.*

### When will these surveys take place?

*Precise timings are unknown at this stage as the project has not yet been granted a Foreshore Licence. Contractor availability will further affect this timing. Given the timelines involved in progressing through the Foreshore application process and that it is unlikely that a licence will be granted in advance of the next survey season, it is anticipated that the SI works would be carried out in 2021.*

### Size of survey vessel and equipment?

*Indicative examples are detailed in the SI Briefing Documents for the North Celtic Sea project ([Click here](#)<sup>1</sup>) and the South Irish Sea project ([Click here](#)<sup>2</sup>). When a contractor has been appointed and precise details are known they will be relayed to the fishing industry by the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO).*

### Will advance notice of the SI works be given?

*A Foreshore Licence is required in advance of any SI works taking place and notice of all SI works will be given to the fishing industry, through the project FLO, sufficiently in advance of any works commencing. Engagement with the relevant departments and issuance of marine notices will be undertaken following this engagement with the fishing industry and other stakeholders.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://energiagroup.com/globalassets/community/ncs-site-investigation-briefing-.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://energiagroup.com/globalassets/community/sis-site-investigation-briefing.pdf>

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

### **What effect will the geophysical survey equipment have on existing fisheries?**

*The Marine Institute through their INFOMAR programme have undertaken each of the proposed types of surveys set out in the Foreshore Licence around the Irish coast including in and around the proposed areas.*

*The high frequencies associated with multibeam echosounder and side scan sonar will not be heard by even the most sensitive fish species. The low frequency noise associated with sub-bottom profiling may be heard by some fish species. However, the employment of mitigation measures, the mobile nature of the survey vessel and the short-term temporary nature of the survey will ensure no significant impacts on fish populations. Sub bottom profiling surveys may also induce particle motion that may be detected by the bottom dwelling molluscs and shellfish species. However, the employment of mitigation measures, the mobile nature of the survey vessel and the short-term temporary nature of the survey will ensure no significant impacts on mollusc and shellfish populations. Energia have committed to providing further information in this regard and once it has been compiled it will be issued through the project FLO.*

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

### **How do noise levels compare with other noise sources in the ocean?**

*Different activities tend to produce noise of different pressures at different frequencies. For example: drilling noise tends to be up to 160 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa-m at frequencies below 300 Hz with a peak below 2 Hz; dredging tends to be up to 180 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa-m and below 1kHz; boats and small ships produce sound up to 170 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa-m with frequencies up to 10 kHz (outboards motors have peaks at frequencies above 1kHz and larger vessels peak below 1 kHz); the regular passing of a 30 metre trawler at 100 metres or a working cutter-suction transfer dredge at 100 metres approximates to 130 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa (for broad spectrum noise 45 – 7070 Hz); the regular passing of a Boeing 737 passenger jet 300 metres overhead approximates to 98 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa (for broad spectrum noise 45 – 7070 Hz) @ 300 metres below the source; sonar sound (multibeam echosounder, side scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler) can be up to 230 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa-m and range from 500 Hz to several hundred kHz.*

### **What effect will noise from the intrusive works have on existing fisheries?**

*The intrusive SI works will introduce noise into the marine environment throughout their limited duration. The drilling of boreholes is likely to introduce the highest sound energy level. Given that only one borehole will be drilled each day, the nature and duration of the overall campaign and timing of the proposed surveys, impacts are expected to be minimal. Energia have committed to providing further information in this regard and once it has been compiled it will be issued through the project FLO.*

### **What effect will SI works have on suspended sediments in the area?**

*The volume of sediment released into the water column while drilling/coring will be minimal and given that only 1 borehole will be drilled at a time, it will settle very close to the individual drilling/coring location. The volumes released will be localised and, in comparison to existing background levels, will be extremely minimal. Energia have committed to providing further information in this regard and once it has been compiled it will be issued through the project FLO.*

## What impact will the proposed surveys have on spawning and nursery grounds?

*Based on a review of research to date, impacts from geophysical surveys on the early life stages of commercial fish species are not considered to have any (significant) negative impact on recruitment to populations. Given the scale and duration of the proposed surveys, it is not believed that the proposed SI surveys would have a significant negative impact on spawning and nursery grounds in the area. Energia have committed to providing further information in this regard and once it has been compiled it will be issued through the project FLO.*

## What impact will the proposed surveys have on existing aquaculture operations?

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

*The intrusive SI works will introduce noise into the marine environment throughout their limited duration. The drilling of boreholes is likely to introduce the highest sound energy level. Given that only one borehole will be drilled each day, the nature and duration of the overall campaign and timing of the proposed surveys, impacts are expected to be minimal. The volume of sediment released into the water column while drilling/coring will be minimal and given that only 1 borehole will be drilled at a time, it will settle very close to the individual drilling/coring location. The volumes released will be localised and, in comparison to existing background levels, will be extremely minimal. Energia have committed to providing further information in this regard and once it has been compiled it will be issued through the project FLO.*

## How will the data buoys be marked?

*All buoys will be marked in accordance with Commissioner of Irish Lights (“CIL”) requirements.*

## Will there be displacement during the SI survey works?

*In the event that a Foreshore Licence is granted, Energia will continue to engage with the fishing industry on an ongoing basis and specifically in relation to SI works sufficiently in advance of commencement. This will ensure that intrusive works avoid rather than disrupt the current commercial fishing effort as much as possible.*

## GENERAL FAQs

### What size will the wind farm be?

*This information is unknown at this early stage and will be assessed if the project is granted a Foreshore Licence. A typical wind farm of 600MW capacity would contain 40 to 60 turbines however, detailed design will be required to assess the specifics of the North Celtic Sea site.*

### How far from shore will the wind farm be?

*It is not known yet where within the study area(s) the wind farm(s) will be as we have not performed the studies set out in the foreshore applications. The surveys which we are proposing under the Foreshore Licence application are to provide us with information to determine the feasible project size and location. Once this is known we will have a better indication of likely distance from shore.*

### **What fisheries surveys will be carried out?**

*Where data is required, dedicated fisheries surveys will be carried out. It is not known at this early stage what surveys will need to be conducted. Existing data and current / on-going Marine Institute surveys will be accessed where available.*

### **Where will the generated power generated go and where will it come ashore?**

*The power generated from the wind farm(s) would connect to the Irish National Grid. The connection points are unknown at this early stage and the corridors going ashore in the North Celtic Sea project are options that will be examined for potential use as cable corridors. Similarly for the South Irish Sea project, the potential cable route options will be selected from the single large cable corridor shown in the application. Consultation will be carried out with all stakeholders including the fishing and aquaculture industry during the cable corridor assessment phase.*

### **Will the cables coming ashore be buried?**

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

### **What is the expected timeframe for the project progressing?**

*If the Foreshore Licence is granted, the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") will be commenced which will include a comprehensive impact assessment of locating a wind farm at the proposed site. The SI works described within this document will be carried out as part of this process. The suitability of the site will continue to be studied throughout this period, a minimum of two years, and following completion of the EIA, should the site be deemed to be suitable for locating a wind farm, a planning application will be submitted.*

*Further to planning permission, the project would also require a grid connection agreement and would need to be successful in a Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) auction before being able to progress. Currently, we do not expect construction would commence before 2025.*

### **Who will be maintaining the wind farm(s) when completed?**

*The wind farm, if constructed, will be maintained by a team of service technicians and skilled mariners located at a local operations base. A suitable location for this operations base will be assessed during the EIA phase. The operations phase of an offshore wind farm would be for a minimum period of 20 years from the completion of construction.*

### **Will there be a community benefit fund?**

*Yes. Over the course of the planning process Energia will work with communities to research the needs and requirements of the local area. This will allow us to develop our approach to supporting the local area, in line with the requirements of the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). Details on the community benefit requirements for offshore projects have yet to be published.*

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

shipping and navigation as well as all onshore elements.

A comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement plan will be enacted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment ensuring that all stakeholders, including the community, have the opportunity to provide feedback, discuss any concerns and keep up to date with the project progress. In addition, project websites ([North Celtic Sea](https://www.energiagroup.com/community/renewables/north-celtic-sea-wind-project/)<sup>3</sup>; [South Irish Sea](https://www.energiagroup.com/community/renewables/south-irish-sea-wind-project/)<sup>4</sup>) are updated regularly and information on project development and key facts can be found there.

## FLO Contact Details

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.energiagroup.com/community/renewables/north-celtic-sea-wind-project/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.energiagroup.com/community/renewables/south-irish-sea-wind-project/>