



## Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta.

info@aranislandsenergycoop.ie

### **In response to the Consultation to inform a Grid Development Policy for offshore wind in Ireland.**

Date: 21/07/2020

In response to the *Consultation to inform a Grid Development Policy for offshore wind in Ireland*, we find that of the four primary options there is another option that has been overlooked, that is a significant part of the future development of sustainable energy on and offshore in Ireland.

In 2016, the Irish Government, through the White Paper on Energy, made a policy shift that put community involvement at the centre of all renewable energy related policies. In any plans going forward, local community involvement must be a factor.

Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann teoranta is an energy co-operative owned solely by the inhabitants of the three Aran Islands. Membership in the co-operative is open only to island residents and businesses. Founded in 2012, with a fixed set of aims and objectives, the co-operative set out a ten year plan to gradually reduce and eventually eliminate the islands' dependency on fossil fuels and install a source of renewable energy which the islanders would own. Since 2012, a huge amount of work has been done across all three islands in preparation for the transition to clean energy. This includes the retrofitting of older housing stock, electrifying the transport and heating systems on the islands and installing small scale electricity generation in the form of rooftop photovoltaic panels on homes and businesses on all three islands.



## Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta

To answer the Consultation questions, we deem it necessary to include a fifth option -

**'Community led with Developer and State'.**

Though small as individual community projects, it is a bigger body in its collective.

Option 1: Developer-led model

Option 2: Plan-defined, developer consent and build

Option 3: Plan-led, developer build

Option 4: Plan-led model

Option 5: Community-led with developer and state

Q1 - Cost levels. **Answer option 5 (or 4).**

More community led projects creates developer price competitiveness. These also create employment in the community and as shareholders, eventual profit goes straight back into the community making it more self-reliant than financially dependent on the State.

Q2 - Environmental impact. **Answer option 5 (or 4).**

Communities living in and understanding their environment, can make the choice of the least impact the installation of a wind turbine or turbines will make in situation and surrounds.

Q3 - Future proofing of policies and technologies, which model delivers the most satisfactory results? **Answer option 5 (or 4).**

Q4 - Required infrastructure. **Answer option 5 (or 4).**

The required infrastructure offers opportunities for offshore islands to become centres of excellence. Not only can offshore islands act as anchor points for offshore wind, they can be consciously developed as places where there is not only physical infrastructure to access and support offshore wind, but also human resources, capacity and expertise resident there. The islands of Ireland have the



## Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta

potential to become 'Lighthouse Islands' for the promotion of sustainability and a clean environment.

Q5 - Compatibility with Relevant Projects. **Answer Option 5 (or 4).**

Communities that have projects or are working on projects or looking towards the future in making the transition to self-sustainable clean energy are in communication. Meeting for consultations, sharing knowledge, sharing experience, and attending seminars about new developments in technologies such as hydrogen for fuel, geothermal and wave power.

Q6 - Social acceptance. **Answer Option 5 (or 4).**

Society is empowered to be engaged in producing self-sustaining energy in its communities, to be shareholders and benefactors. To be part of Ireland's transition in developing indigenous clean energy.

Q7 - Facilitating the timely development of offshore wind capacity to achieve the 2030 targets, which model delivers most satisfactory results.? **Answer Option 5 (or 4).**

Empowering communities to be involved in producing clean energy projects brings awareness, expands knowledge and creates a force towards the future transition of clean energy to reach the 2030 target with everyone.

Q8 - Rank the key drivers.

- 1 Environmental impact.
- 2 Social acceptance.
- 3 Required infrastructure.
- 4 Cost levels.
- 5 Facilitating the timely development of offshore wind capacity to achieve the 2030 targets.
- 6 Future proofing of policies and technologies.
- 7 Compatibility with Relevant Projects.



## Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teoranta

Q9 - Indigenous offshore wind energy industry, how important?

Extremely important. It is intelligent, we must harness the wind energy and other elements of clean energy that surrounds us to become as a nation self-sustaining and globally sustaining. Best development of industry is including community, developer and state led projects to meet our energy needs.

Q10 - How should onshore and offshore grid connections be optimized?

Q11 - Any further considerations to reduce cost to consumer?

Local community involvement, shared ownership, and the creation of employment would all reduce cost to local consumers and revive economies in remote regions of the country.

Q12 - Should developer compensation arrangements be provided?

This is considered in the options we are providing.

Q13 - Any further drivers to be considered?

Local community involvement, participation and ownership will enhance support and goodwill for the projects. This can only be of benefit to everyone.

Q14 - Overall which model is most appropriate as an enduring grid delivery model? **Answer option 5 (or 4).**

Q15 - What should the transition look like?

With respect for the environment and inhabitants, the infrastructures of models are situated with best practice in mind - It should not be wholly concentrated on mass in one place and to use a combination of our natural resources of wind, solar, geothermal and wave power. And to convert excess energy power into hydrogen for transportation fuel.