

**EirGrid response  
to the Maritime Area Consent  
Assessment for Relevant  
Projects**

**18<sup>th</sup> February 2022**



## 1 Overview

EirGrid plc (EirGrid) welcomes this consultation by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) entitled *Maritime Area Consent Assessment for Relevant Projects* (Consultation Paper). It represents the achievement of another key offshore policy milestone.

EirGrid supports the need for robust policies to develop the electricity grid in a safe and secure way. This is necessary to meet projected demand levels, to meet Government Policy, and to ensure a long-term, sustainable and competitive energy future for Ireland.

EirGrid is supportive of the proposals contained in the Consultation Paper as ultimate owner and operator of the offshore transmission assets.

## 2 Comments on Consultation Paper

EirGrid note that the provisions in the Consultation Paper align with the Grid Connection Assessment (GCA) process under development by the CRU.

Due to the complexity and scale of offshore wind farm projects, it is appropriate that all offshore developers demonstrate their financial and technical competence to ensure the quality and reliable delivery of these projects. EirGrid consider that the proposed criteria in the Consultation Paper are appropriate.

In relation to Section 3.1.2 – Geographic co-ordinates. As part of the GCA process, EirGrid may assign Phase 1 projects to connection nodes which differ from those preferred by the Phase 1 projects in their GCA and Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications, this is to ensure that the transmission system is planned in an optimal manner.

On that basis, the MAC process should allow for a modification of the proposed coordinates of the transmission cable route submitted by the Phase 1 projects. In the event of a modification being required, EirGrid will notify both the Phase 1 project and DECC at the earliest available opportunity in the GCA process.

In relation to Section 3.2.2. – Grid Connection, EirGrid propose an amendment of the statement included in Section 3.2.2 as follows “ *the Relevant Projects have been engaging in this grid connection process, it is proposed that these applicants for MAC under Phase One will be aligned to the development plans of the transmission system operator on completion of the Grid Connection Assessment (GCA) process and this criterion will not be evaluated on a pass/fail basis*”. EirGrid also confirm that evidence will be provided to all Phase 1 projects in respect of their completed GCA applications as required to support the MAC application process.

In relation to Section 3.3.1 – Levy Framework. The offshore transmission assets will be transferred by the Phase 1 projects to EirGrid after construction along with the associated component of the MAC. It is requested that the operation of these offshore transmission assets should not be subject to a levy.

In relation to Section 3.3.4 – Duration of a MAC. EirGrid note that these transmission assets may have a longer design life than 30 years. On that basis, it is requested that the component of the MAC associated with transmission assets could be granted a longer MAC duration and also be subject to an life extension approval process.

EirGrid is available to collaborate further with the Department and provide expert and focused input into the finalisation of the Assessment for Relevant Projects, particularly from a strategic transmission system perspective.