CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

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Offshore Wind Phase Two Consultation
International and Offshore Energy Division
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
29-31 Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
D02 X285

3rd March 2022

Re: Offshore Wind Phase Two Consultation Submission

Dear Sir,

The Construction Industry Federation would like to submit the following response with regards to the Offshore Wind Phase Two Consultation, and in particular to question 10 regarding the facilitation of hybrid grid connections.

1. **Hybrid grid connections will facilitate the rollout of offshore wind in Ireland in a timely, sustainable, and efficient manner and will in addition make an important contribution to Ireland's security of electricity supply. Key benefits of hybrid connections:**

- Sustainable and efficient use of the electricity network – reduced cost to the consumer and less physical disruption.
- Improved security of supply – combining two sources of generation at the same connection point increases the likelihood of available generation at any given time

2. **Floating offshore wind represents a tremendous economic opportunity for Ireland and should be embraced as soon as possible and not left to go beyond 2030. Key benefits of floating offshore wind:**

- Reduce and eventually eliminate Ireland's current dependence on foreign fossil fuels
- Delivery of an indigenous supply chain to create jobs and economic prosperity
- Decentralised distribution of economic opportunity to the Southern and Western seaboard – floating offshore wind has the potential to be the economic engine room of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The following are some of the advantages to Hybrid grid connections.

1. **Efficiency**. Two or more generators can use the same infrastructure, so it means more efficient use of the same infrastructure. Furthermore, given that the infrastructure is already there, it provides additional generation capacity in a faster timeframe, thereby allowing Ireland to meet its offshore renewable generation targets more quickly and with less disruption.
2. **Sustainability**. Using existing grid infrastructure avoids the need to build new infrastructure. Avoiding new infrastructure has environmental benefits and reduces the use of physical resources. In addition, the ability to avoid the development of new infrastructure should mean that the project has a greater degree of social acceptance.

3. **Security of supply**. The movement to more renewable generation means that it is more difficult to balance the electricity demands of the consumer with the generation profile from renewables. In general terms, and for the medium term, conventional power stations will be needed to balance the generation supply when there is reduced output from wind. A connection combining an offshore wind farm with a conventional power station means that, in practical terms, that the combined facility can provide baseload generation by combining renewable and thermal generation as necessary.

Currently, all renewable generation projects are supported via the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). It awards contracts to projects on the basis of the lowest cost. Experience to date demonstrates that the more projects that bid for support under RESS, the lower the contract prices and therefore the greater the benefits to the consumer. The use of hybrid connections means that more projects would be eligible to bid for support thereby reducing the support price.

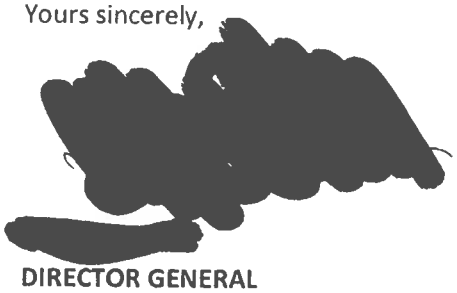
The development of floating offshore wind in Ireland provides many supply chain opportunities, much more so than the fixed bottom offshore wind sector. These benefits arise mainly because the floating offshore wind industry is in its infancy and there is not a mature supply chain for the sector, and also because it makes sense for logistical reasons to build many of the components as close to the point of deployment as possible.

In the medium to long term, the Irish floating offshore wind sector will supply much more than electricity and it is envisaged that these projects will generate alternative fuels such as hydrogen. In the short to medium term, it is important to kick start the sector to facilitate the ramping up of the supply chain. The location of conventional power stations such as Aghada in Cork and Moneypoint in West Clare means that they are ideally suited to provide hybrid grid connections to pioneering floating offshore wind projects.

There is a belief that floating offshore wind is not yet a mature technology and therefore it will not contribute to the Irish 2030 targets. This is a misconception. Scotland has recently awarded development rights for circa 13GW of floating offshore wind projects, a significant proportion of which is expected to be online by 2030. Ireland needs to commence the development of floating wind in this decade if it expects to capture the full potential of the Celtic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean beyond 2030.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.

Yours sincerely,



DIRECTOR GENERAL

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