



Submission to Offshore Wind Phase Two Consultation

March 2022

Dublin Chamber is the representative body for businesses in the Greater Dublin Area, with a diverse membership base spanning the spectrum from start-ups and SMEs to major multinational companies. Dublin Chamber has for more than a decade been a strong voice for sustainability and the importance of the business role in achieving national climate action goals. The Chamber is committed to upholding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, in particular, works in support of Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Goal 5 Gender Equality, and Goal 13 Climate Action. The Chamber is leading the way in preparing businesses for the transition to a green economy through its Sustainability Academy, which offers participating businesses a comprehensive range of supports including training in green public procurement. Ambitious measures are needed to accelerate Ireland's transition to a sustainable and innovative economic model that will form the basis for prosperity in a rapidly changing world. This submission outlines key points that should be taken into consideration in planning for Phase Two of offshore wind deployment.

For Ireland to meet its 51% emissions reduction target by 2030 all industries will have to make substantial changes. Energy industries account for 15% of Ireland's overall emissions.¹ In order to achieve Ireland's targets a switch to renewable electricity is essential, as recognised by the Climate Action Plan 2021 which proposes that 80% of electricity demand should be supplied through renewable generation by 2030. Government has further set a target of delivering 5 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. Given that we are now just 8 years away from 2030 it is essential that efforts are accelerated to ensure that the targets outlined by the Climate Action Plan 2021 are achievable.

One option that Dublin Chamber believes has been somewhat overlooked in this respect, is the potential of hybrid grid connections. A hybrid grid connection has two or more generation units under the same connection agreement, with a combined installed capacity greater than the connection agreement maximum export capacity, dynamically sharing the capacity at the point of connection to the grid. There are several benefits to hybrid grid connections, namely security of supply, efficiency, sustainability, and increased competition. In terms of security of supply, hybrid connectors have the combined benefits of two generation assets at the same location. This means that there is a "baseload" provision, so that if there is a lack of wind over a period of time there is a "back-up" source of energy for the grid. Important to note also is that wind is always the default source of energy into the hybrid connector, it is

¹ EPA, <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/ghg/latest-emissions-data/#:~:text=Agriculture%20is%20the%20single%20largest,%25%20and%2012.3%25%2C%20respectively.>

only when wind is not sufficient that the generator comes into play. The efficiency benefit of hybrid connectors is clear, in that the infrastructure already exists. Hybrid connectors are therefore readily available for a lower cost to consumers. A key pillar of the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) is to encourage competition between projects to achieve the lowest cost to the consumer. The increased grid capacity afforded by hybrid connections allows a greater number of projects to compete in the forthcoming RESS auctions which in turn makes those auctions more competitive. This ultimately results in reduced costs for the consumer. Dublin Chamber therefore proposes that moves should be made to deploy hybrid connectors in a timely manner. This is essential if Ireland is to achieve its 2030 targets.

Dublin Chamber welcomes the consultation's recognition of the need to consider "innovation technologies" as part of the Phase 2 process. The Chamber particularly advocates for the acceleration of planning in relation to Green Hydrogen. As several experts recently reported to the Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action, Green Hydrogen will play a key role in meeting Ireland's demand for clean energy. Green Hydrogen is particularly important for harder-to-decarbonise sectors, as it provides flexible, on-demand, power. Green Hydrogen notably enables Ireland to generate a greater share of its energy requirements with indigenous renewables; the benefits of this should not be underestimated, particularly given current global developments. A recent report from IRENA notes how Hydrogen could meet 12%² of World energy use by 2050, whilst others suggest figures of up to 24%.³ Wind Energy Ireland has stated that Green Hydrogen is vital to Ireland's transition to a net-zero society.⁴ Ireland urgently needs a Green Hydrogen strategy, to accelerate development in the area and to guide investment.

Another "innovation technology" that should take precedence is cyber security. Dublin Chamber proposes that cybersecurity be taken into consideration at all stages of development and operations. We need to ensure our energy supply is well insulated from potential cyber-attack. Protecting our offshore wind farms from online attacks must be at the forefront of planning to ensure we can deliver a reliable supply of electricity.

Dublin Chamber calls for Government to adopt a greater sense of urgency in relation to wind energy if its 2030 targets are to be met. Crucially, hybrid grid connectors can play a key role in helping to reach 5 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. The potential of Green Hydrogen is indisputable, and moves should now be made to ensure that it is a viable energy source in the near future. It will be essential to speed up the planning process so that no more time is wasted in achieving Ireland's emissions targets.

² IRENA, <https://www.irena.org/newsroom/pressreleases/2022/Jan/Hydrogen-Economy-Hints-at-New-Global-Power-Dynamics>

³ James Carton (DCU), Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action, https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_environment_and_climate_action/submissions/2022/2022-03-01_opening-statement-dr-james-carton-assistant-professor-energy-sustainability-and-hydrogen_en.pdf

⁴ Noel Cunniffe (Wind Energy Ireland), Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action, https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_environment_and_climate_action/submissions/2022/2022-03-01_opening-statement-noel-cunniffe-ceo-wind-energy-ireland_en.pdf