

Comhairle Contae Chorcaí Cork County Council

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Future Framework consultation
Offshore Environment and Future Development
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
29-21 Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
D02 X285

Via E-Mail: FutureFrameworkpublicconsultation@decc.gov.ie

13th February, 2024

RE: Submission to the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Framework Policy Statement

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Cork County Council welcomes the opportunity to make the following submission on the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Framework Policy Statement. The Council notes the contents of same and supports the need for the development of the offshore renewable energy sector to meet national climate action targets.

In particular, the Council notes the needs with respect to developing ORE technology, developing the electricity grid and energy storage mechanisms, interconnection of electricity markets, opportunities with regard to renewable hydrogen and the need for the development of port facilities to support the ORE sector.

The Council welcomes the clarifications provided in the statement with regard to all ORE development in Ireland being plan led and led by the State. The Council further welcomes the clear identification of the priorities considered central to the Future Framework – i.e., environmental concerns, public and stakeholder consultation, return to the State and local communities, cost competitiveness, delivery of targets, availability of relevant data (on our seas and maritime environment etc., technology and supply chain development and industrial alignment including infrastructure and port facilities. It is further noted that the Government is committed to scaling up the collection of data on the marine environment to support the ORE DMAP process and is taking action to address the skills and workforce requirements needed to develop ORE in Ireland.

cont'd./.

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 includes policies and objectives in support of the progression of renewable energy, including offshore, ocean and hydrogen energy and on the sustainable development of marine infrastructure including ports and harbours, and the Port of Cork etc.

Section 2.3 of the Statement notes that a minimum of four ports facilities are required to meet 2040 and 2050 targets, not including Belfast port and that the National Ports Policy 2013 is in the process of being updated by the Department of Transport.

As you will be aware the Port of Cork is the primary seaport in the south of the country. It is identified in National Ports Policy (NPP) as a Port of National Significance (Tier 1) and is a Core Port within the TEN-T (European Union's Trans European Network – Transport). It is one of two ports in Ireland that can facilitate all six shipping modes i.e. Lift-on, lift-off, roll-on, roll-off, liquid-bulk, Dry Bulk and Cruise, and could facilitate transport and deployment of offshore renewable energy devices through its deep-water berths.

Cork has other significant ports and harbours at Cobh, Bantry, Castletownbere, Kinsale, Baltimore, Ballycotton, Union Hall, Schull and Youghal. Cork harbour and Castletownbere/Bere Island port and dry dock facilities also have significant potential to service future on and offshore wind energy. There are also a wide range of experienced engineering service companies within the area and opportunities to expand and develop new skills to service the ORE sector.

In terms of technological developments, educational, training and research facilities, Cork supports significant research and expertise in the maritime sector in conjunction with the Irish Naval Service (INS), Munster Technological University (MTU), University College Cork (UCC) and the private sector. The universities provide various renewable energy and maritime courses which will provide a specialised skillset for graduates and create a strong workforce in the region to support Cork's Energy industry. MaREI, a Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine, coordinated by the ERI at UCC, is located in Ringaskiddy and is actively engaged in research, innovation and project delivery in the areas of energy transition, climate action and the blue economy.

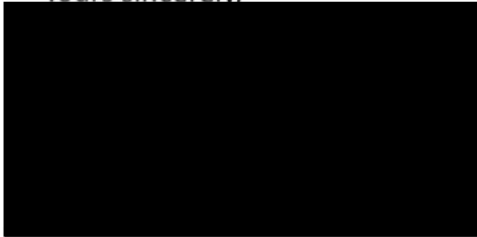
In terms of electricity infrastructure County Cork has significant infrastructure which is either in place or being developed which will support the development of ocean and offshore wind energy. The Celtic Interconnector project, currently under construction, will link Ireland to France via Youghal in Co. Cork, further strengthening the electricity infrastructure for the region.

Cork County Council is fully supportive of the delivery of off shore renewable energy projects, and the required land based supports that will be needed and would like to continue to contribute to the development of policy in this area.

Should you have any queries or areas that would benefit from further discussion, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and look forward to contributing further to future policy formulation in this area.

Yours sincerely,



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015