

**Minutes  
of the  
Offshore Renewable Energy Steering Group (ORES  
G)  
09:30am Monday 16 April 2018  
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment**

**Attendance:** DCCAE Eamonn Confrey (EC), Bernie Comey (BC), Philip Mac Fadden (PMF), SEAI Declan Meally (DM), Patricia Comiskey (PC), DHPLG Jeannine Dunne (JD)(Alternate for Roger Harrington), DTTAS Mary Lally (ML), GSI Sean Cullen (SC)

**Apologies:** Marine Institute Terry McMahon (TMM), Eirgrid Mark Norton, CRU Gosia Sadowska (GS), DBEI Maria Ginnity (MG), Joseph Cummins (JC), EPA Tadhg O'Mahony (TOM), DCHG Judith O'Connor (JOC), DHPLG Roger Harrington (RH)

**1. Adopt Agenda**

The agenda was adopted with agreement to move Item 4 – Interim Review of the OREDP Update, to the end.

**2. Agree minutes of ORESG meeting of 09 November 2017**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

**3. Update from each Working Group**

- **Environment**

PC updated the group on the work of the Environment Working Group (EWG)

- 2018 Work Plan has been agreed, subject to such additional work items as may arise from the recommendations of the OREDP Interim Review.
- Guidance Documents for developers on Marine Baseline Assessments and Monitoring have been approved by the group and are expected to be published shortly.
- An Opportunity and Constraints Mapping (OCM) tool has been developed by the group and a decision is needed on how to progress the tool. The EWG agreed that the tool had considerable potential and could possibly be developed in conjunction with the Marine Institute's work on MSP. Before it is progressed further a decision is required on the Government Department/ body to take ownership of the tool. EWG are to contact MI and the MSP division of DHPLG to progress the tool.
- The EWG is also developing a process map to set out the current system for ORE development and a one day workshop, overseen by an external consultant will be arranged to facilitate this.

**Action: PC to keep EC informed of progress on development of OCM tool**

- **Infrastructure**

BC Updated the group on the progress of the Infrastructure Working Group (IWG)

- 2018 IWG Work Plan has been agreed, subject to such additional work items as may arise from the recommendations of the OREDP Interim Review.
- The update to the 2012 IPORES report is nearing finalisation. Final comments have been requested from the members of the relevant steering group. The timetable for publication and distribution of the report will be agreed with the OREDP Steering Group.
- SEAI has undertaken a business needs review of the AMETS project and this review is almost complete.
- CRU has recently made a final decision regarding the Enduring Connection Policy – Phase 1. The decision is a first step in revising existing connection policy, allowing the first in a series of regular batches of connection offers. The decision is aimed to facilitate those projects with planning permission to get a connection offer, ahead of the less mature projects.
- Eirgrid has recently launched a Locations Consultation document following on from their 2017 tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES).

- **Job Creation**

EC gave an update on the Job Creation Working Group (JCWG)

- Declan Hughes has changed role with DBEI and Maria Ginnity will replace him on the ORESG and JCWG. It is hoped to hold a JCWG meeting in May and take forward actions.
- It is desirable to broaden membership of the group to include the SFI and MDT represented on the Group.
- The recent CRU decision on grid connections policy is positive.
- The Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) is under development. Community participation is a key element of the scheme. Subject to Government approval and State Aid clearance, it is expected that the first round of auctions under the scheme will open in 2019.
- DM highlighted the urgent need for the publication of the MAFA bill to give confidence to industry.
- A Communications Strategy for 2018 has been drafted by SEAI, will be circulated to the ORESG and JCWG for comment, prior to finalisation.

In response to points raised, OD advised that the Environmental Pillar with its experience in public participation and community engagement issues would be happy to work with DCCAE on progressing such matters. PT stressed the need for

coherency on ORE policy by decision makers across Government and the need to grasp the ORE development opportunity. DC noted, in regard to grid connections, the large variation in the scale of ORE projects from large ORE projects to small solar projects.

**Action: (1) EC to contact SFI and MDT to request a nominee from each organisation to the JCWG**

**(2) PMF to circulate draft communications strategy to ORESG and JCWG for comment**

#### **4. MAFA Bill Update**

JD advised that the provision of comments by a number of Departments on draft AGO advice on the MAFA bill will allow the AGO to provide final advice to DHPLG. It is hoped that this might be available over the coming weeks. DM stressed the urgency in progressing the new permitting regime if Ireland is to avoid missing development opportunities.

#### **5. Marine Spatial Planning**

JD advised that DHPLG have established two groups to work on MSP. The aim is to publish an issues paper in Q3 of 2018. A public meeting on MSP has been held in Wexford and public meetings are planned in every coastal county over the next number of months.

**Action: (1) JD to inform EC of upcoming community workshops as they are scheduled.**

**(2) DCCAE to circulate workshop dates to the ORESG**

#### **6. Industry Developments**

- EC updated group on the progress of the EU Clean Energy Package and the Renewable Energy Directive, in particular.
- Responses to a recent DCCAE public consultation on interconnection policy are now being reviewed by DCCAE. The interconnection policy statement is expected to be finalised in May 2018.
- DM spoke of progress as Irish developers move up the TRL's and highlighted the opportunities and potential community benefit on the west coast.
- PC spoke about the importance of enterprise development and support for technology developers who are increasingly falling outside of funding options and are struggling to continue to operate as a result.

**Action: PC to make suggestion to EC/JCWG on potential options and a pathway towards a "blended funding" project to aid developers at high trl levels.**

#### **7. 2017 Interim Review of OREDP Update**

EC thanked the Oversight Group for bringing this review to a conclusion. He gave a brief overview of the draft recommendations of the Interim Review. The document has been submitted to Minister Naughten. On publication of the review, it is anticipated that the ORESG will task the WGs with progressing relevant recommendations via their work programmes.

**Action: Interim Review Document to be circulated to ORESG and External Stakeholders Group once it has been published**

**8. Date for next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be organised in late September or early October 2018.

**Action: PMF to arrange date for next meeting. Working groups are to meet in advance of this meeting.**

**9. AOB**

**Electricity Policy Division**

**May 2018**