



environment & ENERGY MANAGEMENT

DRIVING ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES IN IRISH BUSINESS

**Deposit scheme
refunds €1.2m
to customers
returning cans
and plastic
bottles**

**Energy
companies
accused of
'short-changing'
consumers after
huge drop in
wholesale costs**



**Half of Irish
drivers willing
to make
the move to
electric or
hybrid car,
survey shows**

**Turbine
deliveries
underway
for Yellow
River Wind
Farm**





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SMART GRID IRELAND 2024 INNOVATION CONFERENCE

20th June 2024 – Croke Park Dublin

Powering the Energy Transition to Net Zero: Innovations & New Solutions that will help bridge the gap between policy, regulation, investment and delivery.

- The SMART GRID IRELAND networks and community in welcoming Energy/Utility/EHS/ Operations Managers/Leads from manufacturing in Ireland, academia, public sector and international organisations, who will attend Croke Park stadium on the 20th of June 2024,
- Smart Grid Ireland Annual - Innovation Conference 2024. On Thursday, 20th of June 2024, the Smart Grid Ireland Annual Innovation Conference 2024 – will be held at Croke Park stadium.
- Smart Grid Ireland looks forward to supporting the acceleration of technology adoption for the smart grids and local energy systems that are required to support Ireland's decarbonization of the energy sector.

www.smartgridireland.org

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Minister emphasises Ireland's progress towards becoming a renewable powerhouse in Europe. The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan, has today addressed leading business figures in the renewable wind energy sector at the WindEurope Annual Event 2024, Bilbao. The three-day conference is Europe's largest annual renewable wind energy event, with over 12,000 attendees.

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Minister Ryan addresses Europe's largest renewable wind energy gathering

- Minister emphasises Ireland's progress towards becoming a renewable powerhouse in Europe

The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan, has today addressed leading business figures in the renewable wind energy sector at the WindEurope Annual Event 2024, Bilbao. The three-day conference is Europe's largest annual renewable wind energy event, with over 12,000 attendees.

In a 'Ministerial Plenary Session on Offshore Wind', Minister Ryan outlined how Ireland is primed to become a key player in the future of renewable energy in Europe. The offshore wind ministerial session is the most anticipated event of the conference; it includes a selection of European ministers, officials from the European Commission, as well as senior figures from the world of business. The discussion offered insights into a range of areas within offshore wind, including: volumes and investments, grids, supply chains and floating wind.

Minister Ryan said:

"Ireland is already a wind energy success story. We get 35% of our electricity from onshore wind farms, which is more than anywhere else in Europe. We're world leaders in integrating renewables onto our electricity grid, which often sees 75% of total electricity demand come from wind farms. For over 20 years we have built a thriving national onshore wind industry, but now we are looking to our seas. Ireland has one of the best offshore wind resources in the world and we are moving towards the delivery of offshore wind energy at a rapid pace. More offshore wind capacity entered the planning system last year than ever before and we have a robust, and growing, pipeline of projects in place.

"We have already set out a clear pathway to achieving our 2030 offshore wind targets and our new Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy, set to be published next month, identifies the key actions Ireland will take to deliver 20 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2040 and at least 37 gigawatts by 2050. We have invested a lot of time and resources in building the necessary legislative and regulatory base to develop a sustainable industry that delivers for Ireland and Europe. We look forward to working alongside the leading industry figures here today at WindEurope conference as we move closer to Ireland's future as a global leader in renewable wind energy."

The ministerial panel discussion was just one of several high-profile Ireland-related events at WindEurope 2024. Other events included:

- a dedicated 'Ireland Markets Session' focusing on the latest developments in terms of regulation, auctions, policy developments and business opportunities for companies interested in Irish market. Matt Collins, Assistant Secretary for



Renewable Electricity, Hydrogen and Grid at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, was a guest speaker at this session

- a networking and information session hosted at the Ireland pavilion by members of the government of Ireland's cross-departmental Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce. At this event, the taskforce introduced the recently-published 'Powering Prosperity — Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy' and also outlined the principles of the upcoming Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy Policy Statement, to be published next month. Officials from the SEAI also gave an update on the Offshore Renewable Energy Technology Road Map
- a panel discussion on grid access for wind farms, which featured EirGrid's Chief Infrastructure Officer, Michael McMahon



Deposit scheme refunds €1.2m to customers returning cans and plastic bottles

Since programme put in place at start of February, almost seven million containers have been put into reverse-vending machines

About €1.2 million has been refunded to people who have returned cans and plastic bottles over the first six weeks of the new Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

Figures provided by the Department of the Environment show almost seven million containers have been returned by customers.

That breaks down as about 3.6 million cans and 3.4 million plastic bottles.

Data showing what percentage of containers, placed on the market or sold last month, were returned, will not be available until the end of March.

The scheme has been operating since February 1st. It is run by not-for-profit company Re-turn.

Consumers who buy a drink in a plastic bottle or aluminium can with the Re-turn logo now pay a deposit of between 15 and 25 cent, depending on container size, in addition to the price.

Undamaged, empty drinks containers can be returned to reverse-vending machines at participating shops. The deposit is refunded in the form of a voucher for that outlet.

In a written update to the Dáil, Minister for the Environment Eamon Ryan said feedback from consumers and businesses had been “largely positive” but “some issues are being reported”.

Examples include “confusion over barcodes and labels”, reverse-vending machine “downtime” and rejection of some containers. He said, “These issues are being addressed by Re-turn.”

There is a transition period for the scheme until June 1st to allow for the sale of old stock and the introduction of new stock with the Re-turn logo.

A department spokesman said: “As expected, returns and refunds in the first few weeks of the scheme were low, as new stock was being gradually introduced by retailers. However, there has been a steady increase in the last week.”

The collection target for the scheme as a percentage of containers placed on the market each year is 77 per cent by the end of 2025.

This rises to 90 per cent by the end of 2029 in line with the European Union’s single use plastics directive.

The spokesman said there were no shorter-term targets but the department was “monitoring the scheme closely and receives regular updates from Re-turn... on its performance”.



The money-back scheme encourages people to return used drinks containers to be recycled into new containers.



Ireland Chapter

Transforming the Irish Energy Sector Through Innovation, Creativity & Energy Efficiency

12th September 2024 | SETU Arena | Waterford

MANUFACTURING - Latest Energy Techniques & Processes

INFRASTRUCTURE - Energy Data Driven Results

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Enhancing Power System Resilience: Veolia passes the 2 GW of flexible power milestone in Europe

- 10 000 sites for an overall of up to 2 GW of flexible capacity already managed by Veolia in Europe.
- By 2030, the growing development and integration of intermittent wind and solar renewable energies into power grids will require a 10-fold increase in flexible power worldwide.
- To meet this challenge, Veolia announced the goal of achieving 3 GW of flexible electrical power by 2030 to balance the grid demand and intermittent production.

Veolia, European leader in electrical flexibility, has passed the milestone of 2 GW of flexible electrical power managed, equivalent to the output of two nuclear reactors or the consumption of 2 million people. This success builds on a portfolio of almost 10,000 sites managed across Europe and a variety of industrial customers (VPK, Thy Marcinelle, Beneo Orafiti, Aquiris, Veolia Eau, Orange, Inovyn Ineos etc.). To help meet the challenges of the energy crisis and the integration of intermittent power supply from renewable energies, Veolia's ambition is to accelerate the pace and reach 3GW of flexible power by 2030.

Electrical flexibility becomes increasingly important for ensuring a reliable and sustainable power supply in the context of the energy crisis in Europe and evolving electrical mix, with a growing share of renewable energies and the consequent need to manage variability and intermittency. It helps to modulate electricity production or consumption in real time to maintain the balance between supply and demand and can come from a variety of sources, such as energy storage devices, flexible power plants and demand-side management devices.

The electrical flexibility market is driven by very fast addition of intermittent solar and wind capacity to the grid, creating a large and long term need for grid balancing between



supply and demand. According to the IEA, by 2030, there will be a tenfold increase in the need for flexible assets worldwide, due to growth in Europe (over 500GW PV & wind). Under current market and policy conditions, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that the world's renewable electricity generation capacity will increase 2.5-fold by 2030.

In addition to its contribution to grid stability, it represents an economic opportunity for businesses, which are remunerated for adjusting their consumption during peak periods. This promotes a smart, mutually beneficial energy transition, offering stability to the grid and economic opportunities to businesses.

Veolia is positioned as a European technology leader in flexible process modeling

and IoT with a dedicated R&D team. It operates through intelligent algorithms, developed on a high-performance digital platform, to manage and optimize diffuse load shedding, i.e. the ability to coordinate several thousand sites that shed electricity over a given period, in response to alerts from the grid operator.

The Group's subsidiary, Flexcity integrates the operating constraints of industrial sites into its algorithms via a "Flexcity box" installed on site, which receives production or consumption data from flexible installations and transmits activation signals using industrial or IoT protocols. This information enables automatic activation with the least possible impact on its customers' operations.

Estelle Brachlianoff, Veolia's Chief Executive Officer said

"Intelligent energy management is an essential pillar in the ecological transformation of our energy systems. With electrical flexibility, the challenge of energy reduction transforms into both an ecological and economic opportunity. At Veolia, we consider electrical flexibility a resilient solution for a smart energy transition within territories. Sustainable energy management stands tall as a pivotal pillar in the ecological transformation of our energy systems. Leveraging Veolia's industrial expertise, we are empowered to deliver efficient solutions to strengthen the resilience of our customer's power systems."



Demand for gas decreased by 7% in 2023 as wind energy continues to rise: Gas Networks Ireland annual demand statement

- Gas generated 47% of total electricity last year
- Demand for compressed natural gas (CNG) in transport increased by 20%
- Work continues on repurposing gas network for renewable energy

The 2023 Gas Networks Ireland annual demand statement shows that overall demand for gas in Ireland decreased by 7% year-on-year when compared to 2022, due to an increase in energy powered by wind.

Gas generated 47% of total electricity in 2023 versus 48% in 2022. While wind's overall contribution to electricity generation increased from 34% in 2022 to 39% in 2023.

Electricity Generation

Gas was the largest energy source of electricity generation in Ireland for the first 10 months of 2023, and wind energy was the key source in December. Both wind and gas made an equal contribution of 41% in November.

Gas generated 47% of the total electricity used in Ireland in 2023, with wind energy contributing 39% and coal providing 4%.



June saw the highest reliance on gas during the year, as it provided 58% of electricity supplies during the month. Wind energy made its largest contribution in December, generating 53% of all electricity in the State. Gas peaked at 89% of electricity

generation during April, but never fell lower than December's 9.5%. Wind peaked at 80% in December, but at times fell to lower than 1% every month.

Commenting on the annual gas demand figures for 2023, Gas Networks Ireland's



Energy mix of gas and wind in Ireland's 2023 electricity generation



| | GAS | WIND | GAS AND WIND COMBINED |
|-----------|-----|------|-----------------------|
| January | 42% | 40% | 82% |
| February | 45% | 42% | 87% |
| March | 45% | 39% | 84% |
| April | 47% | 37% | 84% |
| May | 57% | 22% | 79% |
| June | 58% | 23% | 81% |
| July | 48% | 35% | 83% |
| August | 46% | 35% | 81% |
| September | 46% | 35% | 81% |
| October | 44% | 32% | 76% |
| November | 41% | 41% | 82% |
| December | 31% | 53% | 84% |

Acting Director of Strategy and Regulation, Brian Mullins, said:

“In 2023, Ireland’s national gas network continued to play a central role in meeting the country’s energy needs. During periods of low or absent wind, it ensured a continuous flow of electricity - essentially keeping Ireland’s lights on when the wind didn’t blow.

“Throughout January to December, there were days each month where wind energy - reliant on weather conditions - could only generate minimum electricity due to calm weather. On those days, gas provided the necessary backbone supplies and overall, in 2023 gas generated the majority (47%) of Ireland’s electricity. Overall, when combined, gas and wind energy generated 86% of Ireland’s electricity demand.”

Demand for gas in transport saw significant increases in 2023

In 2023, demand for compressed natural gas (CNG) in transport saw a significant year-on-year increase, up 20% compared to 2022. Fuelling with CNG can reduce a heavy good vehicle’s emissions by up to 22%, and with CNG suppliers now sourcing gas via renewable sources, BioCNG can provide the Irish haulage industry with a clean alternative fuel option.

In May, Gas Networks Ireland announced that carbon neutral BioCNG is available for heavy goods vehicles at Circle K’s forecourts in Limerick on the Ballysimon Road; in Tipperary, just off the M7 in Cashel, as well as the Dublin Port and Clonshaugh forecourts in Dublin.

In November, Gas Networks Ireland and Virginia International Logistics took another step forward in reducing emissions from Ireland’s transport industry with the opening of Ireland’s eighth CNG refuelling station.

Mr Mullins continued:

“The increasing demand for renewable gas from the transport sector is a positive trend.

Despite representing just 3% of vehicles on the road, Ireland’s commercial transport fleet contributes approximately a fifth of the sector’s carbon emissions, making it a challenging area to decarbonise.

While electricity is a proven alternate fuel for cars, electric solutions are not an option for use in Heavy Goods Vehicles, however CNG and its renewable equivalent, BioCNG, can substantially reduce emissions in the HGV sector.”

A look back at overall gas demand in 2023

A mild start to 2023 meant that gas demand fell month-on-month in both January (-8%) and February (-11%). However, in an unusually wet and dull March, gas demand increased 14% on February.

In April, demand for gas fell 14% month-on-month. May was a calm month with little wind, which meant that gas provided a much needed back up to compensate for the fall off in wind energy (-38% month-on-month), generating a total of 57% of Ireland’s electricity in May.

During the summer of 2023 when the country experienced very changeable weather, gas provided 87% of electricity generation at its peak during the month of June, while in one of Ireland’s wettest Julys on record, gas demand decreased by 18% year-on-year. In a mild and changeable August, gas demand fell by 21% year-on-year while wind energy’s contribution to electricity generation jumped from 19% in August 2022, to 35% in 2023.

September was a very mild, sunny, and wet month that brought everything from heatwaves to the first named storm of the season. With less wind available during the heatwave at the start of the month*, gas stepped up and generated two thirds of the electricity needed in the country. In contrast, during the stormy and windy end to September, wind energy generated 35% of the country’s electricity. However, at the same time, gas’s contribution peaked at 88%

and never fell below 11% at any point in September.

A mild yet very wet October saw Ireland’s gas demand increase by 13% on the previous month, with a 3.5% rise on the same month last year. While in November, the last three days of the month saw exceptional levels of gas demand, with the 30th and the 28th respectively being the highest two November gas demand days ever recorded, with gas playing a critical role in electricity supplies in Ireland.

2023 closed out with a mild but stormy month. Storms Elin, Fergus, Gerrit and Geraldine meant that there was plenty of wind, and thus plenty of wind energy available to generate 53% of the electricity needed in Ireland in December – an increase of twenty percentage points on December 2022. Gas’s contribution to electricity generation never dropped below 9% and reached up to 84% at times.

Working on the transition to renewable gases

Throughout 2023, Gas Networks Ireland continued working to increasingly replace natural gas with renewable gases; both the renewable gas of today - biomethane made from farm and food waste, which is already being produced and used in Ireland; and the renewable gas of the future - green hydrogen produced from offshore wind.

In July, the Government published the National Hydrogen Strategy which recognises the crucial role the gas network will play in specific areas of Ireland’s energy system – particularly the hard-to-abate sectors such as transport, industrial heating and power generation.

In September Gas Networks Ireland launched its Biomethane Energy Report at the Irish Renewable Gas Conference. The report identifies 176 projects throughout Ireland that have the overall potential to produce up to 14.8 terawatt-hours (TWh) of biomethane per annum, amounting to 26% of Ireland’s current gas demand, which could reduce carbon emissions by almost 4M tonnes a year.

Mr Mullins added:

“Ireland has a real opportunity to develop a biomethane industry at scale, and we are working closely with all stakeholders in that area – including the Government – to kickstart this. The imminent National Biomethane Strategy will complement the National Hydrogen Strategy, and Gas Networks Ireland will facilitate the transmission of these renewable gases through one of Europe’s most modern networks.

We are excited by the future and will continue to work hard to deliver for Ireland’s energy needs, along with continuing to decarbonise the gas network.”

Activ8 Powers Ahead: 2023 A Year of Sustainable Growth and Expansion

- Activ8 created fifteen new jobs with the opening of new depot in Naas, Co. Kildare
- Acquisition of Allbrite
- Expansion into Scotland
- Activ8 expects to create new jobs on the commercial side in 2024

Carrickmacross, Monaghan: Activ8 Solar Energies, Ireland's foremost domestic and commercial solar panel installation company, has concluded a groundbreaking year marked by a strategic acquisition, significant expansion, job creation, and an ambitious move into the Scottish market. These developments have positioned Activ8 as a leading force in renewable energy solutions in Ireland, combining solar expertise with heat pump knowledge and extending its footprint beyond the Irish borders.

New Depot and Job Creation in Naas, and Headquarters Expansion in Carrickmacross

Activ8 Solar Energies continued its growth trajectory in 2023 with the establishment of a new depot in Naas, Co. Kildare, creating fifteen immediate jobs, with more to come, and a substantial expansion of its Carrickmacross headquarters facility in Co. Monaghan. These moves underscore Activ8's commitment to providing high-quality solar solutions, job creation, and contributing to local communities.

Allbrite Acquisition

In a strategic move to broaden its renewables energy footprint, Activ8 announced its successful acquisition of Allbrite, a leading heat pump company in Ireland, in August 2023, consolidating its position as a comprehensive provider of sustainable energy solutions. The merger combines Activ8's renowned solar expertise with Allbrite's impressive heat pump knowledge, offering unmatched energy solutions to businesses and communities across Ireland.

Expansion into the Scottish Market

The company entered the Scottish market in 2023, marking a significant milestone in



Ciaran Marron, CEO and founder of Activ8 Solar Energies.

the company's mission to make sustainable energy accessible and affordable in multiple markets. The move demonstrates Activ8's commitment to fostering renewable energy in Scotland's commercial sector, reducing energy costs, and contributing to a more sustainable energy future. Fifteen commercial projects were completed by December 2023, with plans for thirty more in 2024 and a commitment to further growth in 2025/26.

Anticipated Growth in 2024

Looking ahead to 2024, Activ8 Solar Energies anticipates significant growth in the commercial sector, with a focus on servicing rapid growth in commercial, industrial, and utility-scale solar projects in Ireland and the UK. This expansion is expected to create numerous job opportunities. The company remains at the forefront of the solar industry, providing innovative solutions and driving positive change in the renewable energy sector.

Monaghan GAA Sponsorship

Activ8 partnered with Monaghan GAA in 2023 in a strategic three-year sponsorship agreement with the County Board, becoming

the first Monaghan-based business to sponsor the county's men's football and hurling teams in two decades.

Established Entrepreneur Of The Year

In November 2023, Ciaran Marron, CEO and founder of Activ8 Solar Energies, was named as the Established Entrepreneur Of The Year at the 26th annual EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. Winners of the established entrepreneur category are long-standing businesses which are "market leaders" in their sectors and have made a significant contribution to the Irish economy over time.

Ciaran Marron, CEO and Founder of Activ8 Solar Energies, said: "2023 has proved to be a pivotal year for Activ8 as we increased our renewable energy footprint. From strategic acquisitions and operational expansions to new international markets, we are poised to lead the industry forward. These milestones reflect our commitment to sustainability, growth, and progress. They are also a testament to the great team we have in the business."

Association of Energy Engineers Ireland Conference 2024 – The SETU Arena, Waterford on 12th September

Transforming Irish Industry & Business Through Innovation, Imagination and Energy Efficiency

The second annual Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) Ireland Conference & Exhibition will take place in the SETU Sports Arena Waterford, Ireland on the 14th September 2024. This unique event will bring together Energy Engineers and Facility Managers from across the country of Ireland who have the responsibility of energy efficiency within their facilities, plants and multi-site environments. Delegates will have the opportunity to listen to and engage with presentations from Global industry leaders and peers – discussing Policy, Trends, Innovation, ESG, Grid Development, Policy and Energy Efficiency in Irish Industry.

One of the largest energy efficiency events in Ireland, the event schedule includes 2-days of Training (CEM, ISO50001, CBCP, CMVP, etc), 1-days of conference, 1-days of advanced energy solution exhibition and networking/social events. This schedule of activities over the week will ensure a culture of sharing and learning, while offering AEE Ireland Chapter members (over 600) the opportunity to openly discuss the challenges, benefits and learnings of adopting the latest technologies and future energy solutions.

The exhibition offers energy efficiency solution suppliers to network with AEE



inception in 1981, AEE's Certified Energy Manager (CEM®) credential has become widely accepted, recognised, and used as a measure of professional accomplishment within energy management. It has gained industry-wide use as the standard for qualifying energy professionals both in the United States and throughout Europe.

Ireland members, but also the greater Irish energy market. Over 50 companies will exhibit and provide the delegate with an insight into structured energy solutions available today, but also understanding future trends and initiatives.

Since the Association of Energy Engineers

AEE Ireland 2024 Conference will take place in the SETU Sports Arena on 12th September.

To learn more about AEE Ireland 2023 please visit www.aeeconference.ie, or email shauna@boxmedia.ie ■

Mission
to shape the future of the energy industry through networking, energy awareness, education, training, professional certification and recognition

Vision
leading the global energy community to meet the challenges of a clean and sustainable future

ESB Group to collaborate with BladeBridge to repurpose wind turbine blades for new e-mobility Hub

- Cork-based start-up BladeBridge to repurpose decommissioned wind turbine blades into sustainable infrastructure
- BladeBridge will collaborate with ESB Group to construct a new e-mobility Hub using decommissioned blades
- ESB is today announcing a new collaboration with BladeBridge, a Cork-based start-up specialising in wind turbine blade repurposing.

The company had participated in the '2050 Accelerator' programme, a sustainability-focused start-up accelerator run by Dogpatch Labs, in partnership with ESB. Over the past few months, the ESB Innovation team working at the X_Site hub for sustainable innovation has collaborated with BladeBridge to identify new ways to repurpose wind turbine blades.

As part of the collaboration, a mutually beneficial pilot has been developed that will see the construction of a brand-new e-mobility Hub using repurposed, decommissioned wind turbine blades. The project will support the circular economy and align with ESB's goal of Net Zero by 2040 through three key objectives; decarbonising energy, building resilient infrastructure, and empowering customers to live more sustainably.

Donal Phelan, Head of Innovation at ESB Group, said: "We are delighted to be working with BladeBridge to repurpose wind

turbine blades through the development of an exciting e-mobility Hub that will showcase that this type of infrastructure can still serve a purpose after decommissioning while preventing further landfill waste. Our expertise in understanding the civic environment, safety and electrical standards, and engineering and design capabilities, together with BladeBridge's expertise in blade reverse engineering for repurposing, are what make this project possible."

Dr. Angie Nagle, CEO of BladeBridge, said: "Wind turbines have a 25-year lifespan, and the blade is the only part of the turbine that is not commercially recyclable – which poses a huge problem for wind farm owners. Once decommissioned, these blades still have a lot of life left in them, as they are crafted from composite materials that withstand massive forces and extreme weather conditions. Current methods of disposal include sending turbine blades to landfill, which will be banned in Europe

by 2025. In collaboration with ESB Group we will repurpose decommissioned wind turbine blades into sustainable infrastructure with the construction of a new e-mobility Hub."

About BladeBridge

BladeBridge repurposes decommissioned wind turbine blades into sustainable infrastructure such as pedestrian bridges and e-bike charging stations. Their mission is to prevent as much blade material from going to landfill as possible, while creating durable, aesthetically pleasing products for sustainable transport and living. Some of their creations can be seen on the Middleton to Youghal greenway in Cork, and the Achill greenway in Mayo.



SSE Renewables and Greencoat Renewables launch €300,000 Galway Wind Park Major Projects Fund

•Funding for 2024 and 2025 is being released to support transformational community projects around the wind park

SSE Renewables and Greencoat Renewables, co-owners of Galway Wind Park, have launched the latest application round of Galway Wind Park's €300,000 Major Projects Fund. The Fund supports community projects within 10km of Galway Wind Park and is part of the overall Community Fund programme, the largest of its kind in the country. The Fund will be open for applications from Tuesday, 6 February 2024, and will close on Friday, 12 April 2024.

The Major Projects Fund opens to applications every two years, and targets projects that will benefit the community and are deliverable within 20 months. The Major Projects Fund seeks to empower communities to create transformational projects and support the transition to a sustainable community. Not-for-profit community groups, charities, and sports clubs among others are eligible to apply and must demonstrate how their projects support specific UN Sustainable Development Goals that promote Affordable & Clean Energy (SDG 7), Sustainable Cities & Communities (SDG 11) and Climate Action (SDG 13).

Eligible projects must demonstrate how they can improve the local infrastructure, landscape, biodiversity, cultural and natural heritage, or support sports and recreation. Applicant projects are encouraged to consider transformational initiatives that can support energy efficiency, renewable generation, and environmental and economic benefits as part of the social economy.

Each project must make a lasting difference and positive impact on places where people live, work, and explore. Awards from the Major Project Fund will range from €20,000 to €150,000, and certain projects may qualify for multi-year funding.

The Major Projects Fund has been positively endorsed by the local community. There was a strong response to the 2022/23 Fund, which received funding requests of over €700,000 to deliver projects in excess of €1.5 million.

The Galway Wind Park Major Project Fund, in consultation with local stakeholders, is part of a commitment to deliver a genuine and lasting difference to



the local area. In August 2022, the second round of the Major Project Fund awarded €300,000 towards four large-scale projects bringing the total investment to €600,000.

One of the successful projects awarded was the development of the Doon Rosscahill Woods Forestry Trail.

Valerie Butler, on behalf of residents of Doon East and the Doon Rosscahill Woods Forestry Trail said:

“The trail in Rosscahill is a pivotal community asset, especially for residents of Doon East, Doon West, and Gorthacaurnan, offering safe, walkable access where it was previously lacking. It has become a community hub, evidenced by the successful Doon Woods Walking Group and well-attended events like Easter Egg hunts and Santa Claus visits, drawing over 100 local children and families per event. This trail provides a hazard-free route for residents, particularly in areas like Doon East, where pedestrian pathways to the main road are absent, while also encouraging a greener lifestyle by reducing reliance on cars. Overall, the trail symbolises a successful blend of safety, environmental stewardship, education, and social cohesion, significantly enhancing the quality of life in Rosscahill.”

John O’Sullivan, SSE Renewables, said: “SSE Renewables is very proud of the work that the Major Projects Fund has already achieved, and the quality of works completed from the 2022 funding. The successful groups have worked diligently to deliver large-scale transformational projects

that deliver lasting legacies to the local area. We look forward to working with the community again to help develop and deliver projects that can bring a transformational difference to the local area.”

Patrick Maguire, Greencoat Renewables, said: “We are delighted to support the third round of the Major Projects Fund for the community around Galway Wind Park alongside SSE Renewables. As long-term owners of wind farms in rural areas, we are keen to support and build strong relationships with the local community through projects like this. The Major Projects Fund offers communities the opportunity to deliver long-term sustainable projects that bring value and growth to rural areas representing true community development.”

All applications for the Galway Wind Park Major Projects Fund should contain a clear and concise business proposal with accurate costings, timelines, and targets, which demonstrate that the proposed development is shovel-ready.

Applications will be accepted from not-for-profit community groups within 10km of Galway Wind Park, with preference based on proximity.

Guidance documents with further information and the link to apply online can be found at SSERenewables.com/GalwayWindParkMajorProjects. For more information, please contact Jacqueline Durnin via email - GWP.communityfund@sse.com / ■

Turbine deliveries underway for Yellow River Wind Farm

- Delivery of turbine parts to continue until Spring 2024

T December 2023: SSE Renewables has today announced that the first deliveries of wind turbine components to its 100MW Yellow River Wind Farm project, currently under construction in Rhode, County Offaly, have commenced.

Wind turbine supplier Nordex Group has been commissioned by SSE Renewables to manufacture, deliver and install a total of 29 of its N117/3600 turbines at the Yellow River project site.

First convoys of the turbine components began last week and will continue until next April. The turbine parts, including towers, nacelles, hubs and blades, are being delivered under Garda escort from Galway Port to the Yellow River site via the M6 and R400. The delivery route and programme – agreed in advance by turbine provider Nordex with Offaly County Council and An Garda Síochána – sees deliveries taking place in the early hours of the morning to ensure minimum disruption to local residents.

The Nordex N117 turbine components being installed at Yellow River Wind Farm have been shipped to Galway Port from various global destinations. Turbine installations are due to begin on-site from later this month and continue through to the end of next May, ahead of the completion of the wind farm later in the year.

Paul Rodgers, SSE Renewables' Project Manager for Yellow River Wind Farm, said:

"This is a significant milestone for the project, and now means that we're one step



Turbine deliveries underway to the Yellow River site.

closer to delivering green electricity for the community in Offaly, the Midlands and beyond.

"Our Yellow River Wind Farm project is also contributing to SSE Renewables' own ambitious Net Zero Acceleration Programme which sees us spending around €4.5m a day on developing and building the clean power assets we need to deliver a greener, homegrown energy future.

"From the start of construction, we have been working closely with the local community in Offaly and, on behalf of myself and the rest of the Yellow River project team, I'd like to thank the community for their patience and support over the past several months.

"As a responsible developer and operator,

we are looking forward to continuing to work closely with the neighbouring community, especially as we progress towards completion next year."

James Lappin, Project Manager, Nordex said:

"We are pleased to be working with SSE Renewables on the Yellow River Wind Farm and to be providing our N117/3600 turbine from our award-winning and proven DELTA series for this important renewable energy project.

"With deliveries to site now underway, we are working closely with SSE Renewables, Offaly County Council, and An Garda Síochána to secure the safe and efficient delivery and installation of our turbines, whilst ensuring any disruption for local residents is kept to an absolute minimum.

"We appreciate the patience and support of the local community whilst we carry out our work and look forward to seeing the Yellow River Wind Farm project coming to fruition in the coming months."

SSE Renewables commenced construction on Yellow River Wind Farm in November 2022 and the project is expected to be completed in summer 2024. Once complete, the wind farm will generate enough low-carbon renewable energy to power 66,000 homes annually and offset 65,000 metric tonnes of carbon per annum, contributing significantly to Ireland's 2030 renewable energy targets.

Once operational, Yellow River will operate an annual Community Benefit Fund which will provide around €595,000 per annum for local initiatives, projects, clubs and amenities.



Turbine parts, including towers, nacelles, hubs and blades, are being delivered under Garda escort from Galway Port to the Yellow River site.

Sodexo UK & Ireland reports it is ahead of schedule on Net Zero 2040 roadmap

Sodexo UK & Ireland today announced that it has achieved a 37% reduction in absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across scopes 1, 2 and 3, compared to its baseline year of 2017. This reduction represents the removal of approximately 400,000 tonnes of carbon (tCO₂e) from its footprint at 31 May 2023.

Publishing its annual net zero progress report today, Sodexo UK & Ireland has announced it is now ahead of schedule on its journey to Net Zero 2040.

The facilities management and food services business – which was one of the first organisations to have a Science Based Targets initiative approved net zero target – had shown in its net zero transition plan that, to remain on track, it would have needed to achieve at least a 25.5% reduction in absolute GHG emissions by the end of FY23, arriving at 810,886 tCO₂e. Instead, the business achieved a 37% reduction and recorded a footprint of 689,172 tCO₂e.

The comprehensive report which covers the period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023, highlights key achievements including:

Scope 1 & 2 emissions: In the UK and

Ireland, Sodexo reduced emissions in its direct control by 50%, through initiatives such as membership in the Climate Group's RE100; commitment to 100% renewable energy purchases; and a progressive transition to hybrid and electric vehicles. In the last financial year, Sodexo purchased 96% renewable energy.

Scope 3 emissions: The business also achieved a 36% reduction in scope 3 GHG emissions – those outside its direct control. Initiatives such as Sodexo's net zero supply chain engagement strategy; a commitment to sustainable food options; and a robust food waste prevention programme have contributed significantly to this reduction.

Flag Targets: Sodexo has now set forest, land and agriculture (FLAG) science-based targets – 40% absolute GHG emissions reduction by 2030 and a 72% reduction by 2040.

Sean Haley, CEO of Sodexo UK & Ireland, says: "While there is still a long way to go, it is important to take a moment to reflect on quite how much has been achieved since 2010, when we first started working with WWF on our scope 1 and 2 calculations.

Today's announcement is encouraging and will, I am sure, build confidence in our ability to achieve our near and long-term targets to achieve net zero 2040."

Claire Atkins Morris, Sustainability Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland, says: "Working towards net zero is complex and can be an overwhelming challenge. With multiple data sets and action levers across business activities, it isn't easy. There are many opportunities for learning, refining and improving as we go. This, naturally, means that we need to be agile to the fast pace of change informed by external factors. This year, for example, we chose to move away from our 2025 carbon neutral target and reallocate funds to decarbonisation projects. We should all expect to see and be comfortable with changes in our journey, rebaselining and the influences of the external landscape."

For more information on Sodexo's net zero journey in the UK and Ireland, and to read the annual net zero progress report visit: <https://sodexouki.info/3RuiFDR> ■

Our Journey to Net Zero

Progress update, January 2024.



ESB Networks announces one Giga Watt of solar PV now energised on Ireland's electricity network

ESB Networks can confirm that it has 1,000 MW (one Giga Watt) of solar PV generation connected to Ireland's electricity network.

This figure includes 500 MW of utility-scale solar connections, 369 MW of which is from larger projects connected to the transmission system, managed by EirGrid. The figure also includes 300 MW of microgeneration (mainly domestic rooftop solar) and 200 MW of non-exporting solar generation.

One Giga Watt of solar power is enough to power the equivalent of approximately 400,000 homes when it is sunny. For context, peak demand on Ireland's electricity system is approximately 5.5 GW.

Minister for Climate Eamon Ryan TD says: "The 'rooftop revolution' has seen solar panels becoming an increasing feature across every town and suburb of the country, providing clean, indigenous electricity on over 82,000 homes. This rapid scale up

in micro- and small-scale generation has been mirrored in the rapid growth in the connection of utility-scale solar farms. Since I launched the first solar farm in Co Wicklow in May 2022, there has been a major acceleration in the deployment of solar farms, providing new income streams to farmers, supporting jobs and benefitting communities across the country. Today's announcement marks an important milestone in Ireland's journey to 8GW of solar connections by 2030 and shows that even in 'cloudy Ireland' we can harness our homegrown green resources to power homes and businesses."

Welcoming the reaching of the milestone, Nicholas Tarrant, Managing Director of ESB Networks says: "Enabling the connection of 1,000 MW of clean solar power onto Ireland's electricity network is a significant collective achievement for ESB Networks, our solar industry partners and indeed the 82,000-strong cohort of microgeneration

customers across Ireland. This scale of connections is underpinned by our sustained investment in a cleaner, more resilient, and more flexible electricity system. It is reducing our dependence on imported fossil fuels and ultimately delivering the electricity network for Ireland's clean, electric future."

Conall Bolger of the Irish Solar Energy Association says: "Reaching one Giga Watt of connected solar is a major milestone both for Ireland's fight against climate change and for our solar industry. Meeting our climate action targets requires a significant contribution from solar electricity, connecting 1 Giga Watt less than two years after Ireland's first solar farm was energised demonstrates the genuine potential of solar. There is a strong pipeline of new solar farms currently under development and we must continue to support this momentum to enable Ireland to achieve its goal of 8 GW of solar by 2030."



Pioneering ‘Shipfuel’ Initiative To Steer Irish Maritime Sector Towards Low-Carbon Future

As the world grapples with the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions, the maritime industry has been lagging in its efforts to transition the shipping sector from relying on traditional fossil fuels to low-carbon alternatives. In a landmark move for the Irish maritime sector, MaREI, the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine and leading renewable energy consultants Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions (GDG) have announced the inception of the ‘ShipFuel’ research project. This pioneering initiative is set to position Ireland at the helm of maritime sustainability by developing a clear path to support the transformation of the shipping sector’s reliance on traditional fuels to low-carbon alternatives.

The significance of this research, which the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland funds, cannot be overstated as maritime shipping, accountable for nearly 3% of global CO₂ emissions, plays a critical role in international trade, facilitating the transportation of 90% of the world’s goods. Despite its efficiency as a means of transport, the sector’s continued growth threatens to triple emissions by 2050, challenging the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement and climate goals worldwide. Recognising the urgency to make shipping part of the

global climate solution, the ‘ShipFuel’ research project will explore viable alternative fuels and the infrastructural adaptations required within Irish ports.

Professor Jerry D Murphy, Director of the MaREI centre, highlights the project’s critical importance: “Given that 90% of all Ireland’s traded goods are transported by sea, the implications for fuel consumption are immense. Our research aims to deliver a definitive roadmap, leading stakeholders toward a low-carbon, sustainable marine value chain, crucial for our economy and the planet.”

The ‘ShipFuel’ team will engage with stakeholders across the maritime sector to ensure the transition is collaborative, inclusive, and tailored to the unique requirements of the Irish shipping industry. The research will investigate potential fuel options such as hydrogen, compressed biomethane, methanol, and renewable diesel. The project will also look into vessel technologies, including retrofitting existing fleets, aligning with the recently revised ambitions set by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for net-zero emissions by ‘around’ 2050.

This initiative comes at a critical juncture as the lack of real action to date on emissions by the maritime sector poses a significant risk to

global climate targets. With the IMO’s most recent initiative, the Revised Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Strategy outlining a cautiously optimistic revision of its emissions goals, the ‘ShipFuel’ project’s outcomes are more pertinent than ever in setting a precedent for Irish and international maritime practices.

Commenting at the launch of the research, Jonathan Bull, GDG Managing Director, said, “The maritime sector has historically navigated through politically turbulent waters regarding CO₂ emissions reduction. The sector’s exclusion from the Paris Climate Agreement and its significant growth projections have made it a focal point of environmental and political debate. The launch of this research represents positive progress. It’s not just a response to a growing demand for cleaner shipping but may provide a proactive blueprint for the future. Sustainable maritime infrastructure that aligns with economic growth and environmental stewardship and paves the way for the industry’s evolution to meet global climate targets. GDG is delighted to collaborate on this vital research, utilising our global expertise in renewable energy and our leading marine engineering team to help develop tangible solutions for cleaner shipping.”



ESB launches major High-Power EV Charging Hub at prime Dublin location in Blanchardstown Centre

- Our new High-Powered charging hub at Blanchardstown Centre is capable of providing 100km of charge in as little as six minutes
- New Dublin hub is in addition to 19 new public charging hubs already installed by ESB in the last year.
- 2023 saw ESB reach a milestone of over 1,500 public charge points across Ireland.

Dublin, Ireland - ESB has opened its latest new High-Powered Charging Hub at the Blanchardstown Centre, Dublin which will benefit all electric vehicle (EV) drivers.

This is the biggest hub in Dublin accessible to all EV drivers, with four 200kW high-powered chargers which can charge eight EVs simultaneously and can provide 100km of charge in as little as six minutes. These new chargers are in addition to the existing high-power and fast chargers that were installed by ESB in Blanchardstown Centre in October 2021.

With 16 million visitors per year at one of Ireland's leading shopping destinations, this new charging hub marks a significant step towards a greener and more convenient future for all. Equipped with high power charging technology, drivers can quickly power up their electric vehicles, minimising wait times and maximising convenience.

Strategically placed in the retail park just off the M50 and N3, these chargers ensure effortless access for all visitors, eliminating

any concerns of searching for charging stations.

In total, ESB have delivered a record 19 new charging hubs over the past 12 months and upgraded charge points in several other locations, meaning there are now over 1,500 public charge points in place across the country.

A key milestone for ESB in 2023 was the doubling of the number of high-power chargers partially funded by the Government's Climate Action Fund. ESB has built 39 high power charging hubs nationwide over the past two years, replaced over 250 AC chargers with newer technology and upgraded a further 52 AC chargers to fast 50kW & 100kW chargers.

These innovative charging hubs will play a key role in supporting Ireland's EV transition, which is critical in terms of meeting Ireland's ambitious transport targets as laid out in the Climate Action Plan.

Welcoming this announcement, John Byrne, Head of eMobility at ESB, said: "We are delighted to have recently installed

another eight brand-new high-power chargers in Blanchardstown Centre. This hub installation marks a major milestone in extending the critical charging infrastructure available to the people of Dublin and beyond and will play a key role in helping Ireland reach its climate reduction targets.

"EVs are the fastest growing segment in the Irish car market so hubs like this are crucial for drivers and demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the public charging network can support this growth." John added.

Joe Gavin, General Manager of Blanchardstown Centre welcomed the new charging hub: "The Blanchardstown Centre plays a huge role in the fabric of Dublin life and we are delighted that we can partner with ESB to support members of our community and visitors to the area to access more sustainable choices. The chargers that ESB installed in 2021 have been hugely popular so it is great to add to these with our new high-power hub which will be a great benefit to our customers."



Pictured at the launch of ESB's new high power charging hub at Blanchardstown Centre are (l-r): George Rathborne, Infrastructure Delivery Manager, ESB ecars, Kim McNulty, Marketing and Communications Manager, Blanchardstown Centre and Joe Gavin, General Manager, Blanchardstown Centre.

The new charging hub includes four 200 kW high-power chargers with eight charging points for EV drivers. These chargers are capable of providing 100km of charge in as little as six minutes. This brings the total of new high power charging hubs delivered by ESB in Ireland to 39, with hundreds of existing hubs also upgraded across the country.

AIB halves carbon emissions from its own operations in under five years – AIB’s eighth annual Sustainability Report

- On course to meet net zero target in its own operations by 2030
- Provided €11.6 billion in new green lending to customers since 2019

AIB Group has reduced the carbon emissions from its own operations by 49 per cent since 2019 including a 17 per cent reduction in 2023, paving the way for the bank to meet its target of being net zero in its own operations by 2030.

The reduction, which is detailed in AIB’s 2023 Sustainability Report launched today, was achieved due to a strong focus on investing in energy management systems, LED lighting, metering and building upgrades, moving to new energy efficient office locations, working from home policies and occupying less overall office space.

AIB expects to make substantial further progress on reducing its own carbon emissions this year as it is now purchasing renewable energy from a purpose-built solar farm constructed in Gorey, Co. Wexford which became operational last month, with a second solar farm in Enniscorthy due to come on stream in the coming months. The annual energy generated from these two solar farms will create additional solar capacity for the national grid and ensure that up to 80 per cent of AIB’s estimated electricity needs will be certified to a fully traceable renewable solar energy source.

AIB seeks to lead by example when it comes to lowering carbon emissions, while also supporting its 3.3 million customers in the transition to a low carbon economy. The bank has provided a total of €11.6 billion in new green lending to customers since 2019 including €3.7 billion in 2023 with green lending amounting to 30 per cent of all of new lending in 2023.

The investment required to finance the global transition to a low-carbon economy is estimated to be in the trillions of dollars per year until 2050. Recognising the role of banks in empowering people to build a sustainable future, AIB last November tripled its Climate Action Fund to €30 billion as it seeks to deliver on its target that 70 per cent of new lending will be green or transition by 2030.

AIB Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer Mary Whitelaw said: “The threat of climate change has become a reality. In 2023, the planet experienced its hottest day on record, while heatwaves, flooding, wildfires and storms affected livelihoods and industries around the world. Ireland experienced its wettest July, its hottest June and its warmest year on record overall.



Pictured are AIB CEO Colin Hunt and Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer Mary Whitelaw at the Nature Trust native woodland site in Kilmahon, Co. Longford. AIB partnered with Coillte Nature and Nature Trust to plant 90,000 Irish native woodland trees.

Recognising that climate change and sustainability factors will impact global business models, there is opportunity for forward thinking businesses to create a new source of competitive advantage. At AIB, we are supporting our 3.3 million customers in the transition to a low carbon future not only through a range of green lending and investment products, but also with information, education and advice. We appreciate the scale of the challenge and recognise that collectively we all need to do more to protect our people, our planet and our prosperity from the threat of climate change.”

Lowering financed emissions

AIB is also seeking to play its part in fighting climate change by lowering its “financed emissions” - the emissions linked to its own lending decisions. The bank has set itself a target of becoming net zero on its financed emissions by 2040 (excluding agriculture) and by 2050 when agriculture is included. AIB has set financed emissions targets for key sectors covering 75% of its group lending portfolio including Residential, Commercial Real Estate, and Electricity Generation.

ESG bond issuance

Sustainability is not only about the Environment, but also about Social and Governance matters. During 2023, AIB issued its fifth green and second social bond,

each raising €750m, bringing the total AIB has raised from ESG bonds to €5.75bn since 2020. The report sets out AIB’s ambitions for further societal progress including by lending more than €6 billion to first time home buyers by 2026.

Supporting Customers with Information, Education and Advice

Given that the transition to sustainable business models will become a source of competitive advantage, the report details how AIB seeks to help businesses and farmers to crystallise that advantage by providing them with information, education and advice. These initiatives include AIB’s annual Sustainability Conference which was attended by c. 9,200 participants last year. AIB also has an in-house team dedicated to sustainability research and provides a range of advisory services, webinars, sector focused sustainability reports and customer roundtables.

Funding charities

The report also highlights that the bank continues to support communities through a range of charitable initiatives including for the GOAL Mile which raised €630k during 2023 and the AIB Community €1 Million Fund which provided direct support to 80 charities primarily around the Republic of Ireland but also in Britain and Northern Ireland.

IFAT Munich – More solutions, more exchange, more insights: The event program sets new standards in 2024

- Federal Minister Lemke visiting IFAT Munich
- How do municipalities achieve climate resilience? Action day seeks answers
- Star architect Daniel Libeskind on the future of construction

IFAT Munich, taking place in the Munich exhibition halls from May 13 to 17, 2024, will feature top-class speakers, more international exhibitors, and a varied and exciting event program. At the world's leading trade fair for water, sewage, waste and raw materials management, visitors can expect innovative environmental technologies, flanked by panel discussions, expert lectures, and live demonstrations.

Steffi Lemke visiting IFAT Munich: "More than ever, IFAT Munich is seen as the central solution platform and knowledge hub for all aspects of the circular economy," says Stefan Rummel, CEO of Messe München GmbH. "In addition to the many national and international experts, we also welcome many high-ranking politicians to IFAT Munich who are looking for an exchange with the industry."

The world-leading trade fair will be opened by Federal Environment Minister Steffi Lemke and the Bavarian State Minister for the Environment and Consumer Protection, Torsten Glauber. On the agenda right on day two of the trade fair, on May 14, will be the top-level talk on the circular economy. A panel discussion on the Green Deal with EU leaders is planned for Wednesday, May 15.

Day of resilient municipalities

Heavy rain and flooding, extreme heat and water shortage – the consequences of climate change cannot be ignored. That results in growing pressure on all social players, such as politicians, companies, and private individuals, to adapt to the changed conditions. Municipalities play a special role on the path to more climate resilience. IFAT Munich is devoting the "Day of Resilient Municipalities", taking place on Thursday, May 16, to this key role. In collaboration with the German Technical and Scientific Association for Gas and Water (DVGW), the German Association for Water Management (DWA), and the Association of Municipal Enterprises (VKU), lectures, expert panels, and guided tours providing valuable stimulus will be offered for all representatives of the municipal sector.

Star architect Daniel Libeskind on the future of construction

The last day of the trade fair, Friday, May 17, will focus on the key question of how

IFAT Munich 2024

May 13-17

World's Leading Trade Fair for Water, Sewage, Waste and Raw

Materials Management

and under what conditions we will live in the future. What role have cities played so far, and what role will they play in the future? What makes cities worth living in, and how should we plan them to ensure that they are prepared for the social and climate challenges? The panel discussion "Future of Living – Adapting to the results of climate change" will offer valuable suggestions for these considerations. IFAT Munich has been able to attract two internationally sought-after guests for the panel discussion: star architect Daniel Libeskind, whose narrative design language is particularly influential in cultural institutions worldwide, and Ian Goldin, Professor of Globalization and Development at Oxford University, and founding director of the world-leading Oxford Martin School research group.

More than 25 solution tours will offer valuable stimulus

In addition, IFAT Munich will offer visitors more than 25 guided solution tours, with visits to several stands that offer stimulus and concrete solutions for specific topics. Further information and an overview of all solution tours can now be found here.

Event program included in the ticket price In addition to the varied supporting program, IFAT Munich 2024 will once again offer exciting live demonstrations, practical days, and the Truck in Action Show. A detailed overview is now available on the IFAT website, and from mid-March in the IFAT app.

IFAT Munich

IFAT Munich is the world's largest and leading environmental technology trade fair. Every two years, the world-leading trade show presents solutions for water, sewage, waste and raw materials management as well as strategies to make maximum use of resources and to close raw material cycles.

The next IFAT Munich will be held at the exhibition center in Munich from May 13 to 17, 2024.

IFAT worldwide

In addition to the world's leading trade fair, IFAT, Messe München has wide-ranging expertise in organizing other international environmental technology trade fairs. These include IE expo China in Shanghai, IE expo Chengdu in Chengdu, IE expo Guangzhou in Guangzhou, IE expo Shenzhen in Shenzhen, IFAT Africa in Johannesburg, IFAT Eurasia in Istanbul, IFAT India in Mumbai, IFAT Delhi in New Delhi, Singapore International Water Week (in cooperation with IFAT) in Singapore as well as IFAT Brasil in São Paulo from 2024 onward. Together, the ten IFAT events constitute the world's largest network for environmental technologies.

Messe München

As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its more than 80 international trade fairs. These include eleven of the world's leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT, electronica, and ISPO. Its portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. Together with its subsidiaries, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the U.S. With a network of over 15 associated companies and almost 70 offices worldwide, Messe München is active in more than 130 countries. The more than 150 events held annually attract around 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors in Germany and abroad.

ESB and Bord na Móna officially launch Ireland's largest onshore Wind Farm at Oweninny as part of €320m investment

- Oweninny Wind Farm in North Mayo is a 50:50 joint venture between ESB and Bord na Móna, reflecting the commitment of both organisations to supporting the Government's target of achieving 80% renewable energy by 2030
- Built over two phases, the 192MW wind farm is Ireland's largest wind farm which can generate enough clean energy to meet the electricity demand of approximately 140,000 homes

Co Mayo, Ireland – Two of Ireland's leading energy providers, ESB and Bord na Móna are pleased to officially launch Oweninny Wind Farm in North Mayo. Combining both phases of the Oweninny Wind Farm project, the 50:50 joint venture between the organisations is now Ireland's largest onshore wind farm with an installed capacity of 192MW. This is enough clean energy to meet the electricity demand of approximately 140,000 homes.

The project, delivered in two phases, represents a total investment by ESB and Bord na Móna of €320m. In 2019, during phase one, 29 turbines were erected. While in late 2023, phase two, consisting of 31 turbines, entered commercial operation. The wind farm is financed by a consortium of banks including AIB, BNP Paribas and the EIB.

Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, said: "This really is a significant day for Ireland, and for Mayo, as we officially open the country's largest onshore wind farm. This flagship project by ESB and Bord na Móna at Oweninny showcases what we can achieve, and what must be done, to deliver the clean energy we need to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuel. The power of our own natural resources is incredible. This windfarm farm has the potential to power 140,000 homes, and it is just a taste of the green energy revolution to come. I am looking forward to what will come next for wind energy in Ireland, both onshore and offshore along our coasts, as we harness our renewable energy potential."

Paddy Hayes, ESB Chief Executive, outlined how the project will help to support ESB's Net Zero by 2040 targets: "Oweninny Wind Farm is another important step for ESB and for Ireland towards Net Zero. I would like to commend Bord na Móna for their partnership approach as we worked together to deliver what is now Ireland's largest wind farm. Oweninny builds on our

longstanding history of delivering projects of scale in North Mayo and the wider West of Ireland region. Renewable electricity reduces Ireland's dependence on gas markets and contributes to Ireland's ambitious climate action plan targets, supporting a Net Zero future for the customers and communities we serve."

Tom Donnellan, Chief Executive, Bord na Móna, commented: "We are delighted to launch our joint venture with ESB and officially conclude the second phase of Ireland's largest wind farm. This marks an important milestone for Bord na Móna as it underpins our dedication to operate as climate solutions and renewable energy leader in Ireland following the completion of our Brown to Green transition at the end of 2023. In Ireland, we are putting more renewables on the grid than ever before, which is essential if we are to meet our targets of achieving 80% renewable energy by 2030. Oweninny Wind Farm represents a significant step towards meeting those targets, and we look forward to continued expansion of our wider renewables output to bolster national progress further, including developments across wind, solar, hydrogen

and biomass."

Located between Crossmolina and Bangor Erris, the development adjoins Ireland's first commercial wind farm, Bord na Móna's Bellacorrick Wind Farm, which was built in 1992 and is still in operation.

During construction of phase two, the wind farm benefited the local economy in Connaught by around €50m as 100 people were employed each year over a six-year period. The wind farm has a Community Benefit Fund that will invest approximately €18m towards not-for-profit organisations such as community and voluntary groups, charities, social enterprises and clubs and societies whose work supports community-based initiatives and improvement projects.

The site also includes a purpose built €3m Visitor Interpretative Centre that focuses on the science, engineering and technology behind renewable energy while raising awareness of climate change and considering the landscape in which the wind farm is based. It provides insight to the history of power generation, peat production, wind energy development, the bog rehabilitation programme, ecological interests and the social history of the area.



Energia Group shares insights from women working in a variety of roles in the Energy sector this International Women's Day

- Rosy Billingham, Annabel FitzGerald, Sara Tinsley, Rachael O'Boyle and Susan Glascott speak about their roles in Energia Group and offer advice to young girls considering a career in Energy

Ahead of International Women's Day, and coinciding with STEP's Engineer's Week, Energia Group is profiling some of the women working in the Energy sector highlighting the variety of roles that support the Group as it continues to play a leading role in the decarbonization of the energy system across the island of Ireland.

Energia Group has a long-standing record of working in collaboration with community groups to enhance local areas and to benefit local people. Rosy Billingham works with Energia Group's Renewables team as their Community Engagement and Communications Manager. Rosy supports the Groups significant pipeline of renewable energy projects from the early stages of development through to the construction and operation of wind farms, solar farms, battery storage and green hydrogen

production facilities. Speaking about her role, and on women in the engineering sector, Rosy said, "My role is about keeping local communities and stakeholders informed about our portfolio of exciting renewable energy projects. The variety that comes with the role is what I enjoy most. I organize school visits to our wind farms which is really a brilliant way of highlighting the different roles involved in renewable energy. I also work with the wider engineering team to host public information events about our projects meeting local councilors, residents and business owners to update them on projects we might have in their area." She added, "There are so many different jobs in the Energy sector, engineering roles or indeed roles like mine that are important to the delivery of some of our most critical renewable energy infrastructure, the possibilities for all young people interested

in pursuing a career in engineering related sectors are limitless."

Annabel FitzGerald, the Group's ESG and Corporate Communications Manager holds a degree in Environmental Science and a Masters in Business Sustainability from the University of Limerick as well as a Masters with a focus on carbon footprinting from Queens University Belfast. She plays a leading role in the Group's sustainability journey. Speaking about her role she said, "From a young age I have been passionate about protecting our environment and in my role I strive to achieve this through ensuring sustainability accountability and ethical practices are embedded in our business. Our ESG efforts really are a vital component of who we are and how we do business. We have aligned our responsible business activities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals demonstrating our



Energia Group shares insights from women working in a variety of roles in the Energy sector this International Women's Day as part of STEP's Engineers Week. Pictured at the Group's Hydrogen Production facility at the Long Mountain Wind Farm, (L-R) Sara Tinsley, Planning and Environmental Consents Manager and Annabel FitzGerald, ESG & Corporate Communications Manager; Susan Glascott, Health, Safety & Environment Manager; Rosy Billingham, Community Engagement and Communications Manager; and Rachael O'Boyle, Operations Engineer in the Renewables Operations Department.



Energia Group shares insights from women working in a variety of roles in the Energy sector this International Women's Day as part of STEP's Engineers Week. Pictured at the Group's Long Mountain Wind Farm, (L-R) Rachael O'Boyle, Operations Engineer in the Renewables Operations Department; Susan Glascott, Health, Safety & Environment Manager; Rosy Billingham, Community Engagement and Communications Manager; Sara Tinsley, Planning and Environmental Consents Manager and Annnabel FitzGerald, ESG & Corporate Communications Manager with Energia Group.

commitment to the communities in which we operate and serve, our employees and to climate action." For girls considering a career in STEM she highlighted, "there are many STEM related roles in the energy sector and many exciting career pathways available. Pursuing a career in this sector is not just about diversity, it is an investment in creativity, innovation and building a more sustainable and inclusive future."

Sara Tinsley, Planning and Environmental Consents Manager with Energia Group, holds a Degree in Environmental Planning from Queen's University Belfast. Speaking about her role Sara said, "I work closely with our teams of engineering experts to co-ordinate project designs and ensure compliance with various planning procedures. The different projects that I am involved in are contributing to a cleaner, greener energy future for all helping the company to achieve our climate action goals. By the end of this decade, we plan to generate three times as much renewable energy from onshore wind and solar projects and reduce the carbon intensity of our electricity generation by 50% compared to 2019. I love that in my role I am helping to make a positive impact as we tackle climate change." Sara's advice to girls considering a career in engineering related sectors is, "Reach out to someone you know that works in the sector and also to STEM related organisations. Many organisations will have student membership opportunities. This is a great way to build a network, learn from experts and avail of work experience opportunities that can lead

you on an exciting and rewarding career path."

Rachael O'Boyle, Operations Engineer in the Renewables Operations Department, holds a Masters Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Queens University Belfast and participated in Energia group's Graduate programme. Speaking about what skills are important when considering Engineering as a career, Rachael said, "As an engineer in the renewable energy sector, I believe that dedication, innovation and a deep commitment to sustainability are paramount. I have experienced first-hand the importance of collaboration when working on infrastructural projects like wind farms, and so being able to work as part of a team is essential. Learning and growing as an engineer comes from the wealth of experienced professional you interact with every day. I am very passionate about encouraging women into STEM related roles. Promoting women in STEM is not just about diversity and inclusivity; it's about unlocking the full potential of a team. By fostering an environment where all voices are heard and valued, we can drive greater innovation and accelerate progress towards a more sustainable world."

Health and Safety remains a number one priority for Energia Group. Susan Glascott, a University College Cork graduate and Tipperary native, has worked in the company for seven years as the Renewables Operations Health, Safety and Environment Manager. In her role, Susan works closely with the engineering and operations teams

to ensure that work is completed to the highest health and safety standards in order to protect the people involved and to protect the environment that the work is being carried out in. Speaking on why Susan would recommend young women to pursue a career in the Energy sector, she explained that "the sector itself is so broad and there are many opportunities for career development and continued learning. Young women should not be intimidated by potentially ending up in a male dominated industry and instead embrace the opportunity to grow their careers in an exciting and innovative sector contributing to tackling challenges like climate change and energy security."

In recent year's Energia Group has introduced two women's health policies, Pregnancy Loss and Fertility Treatment and a Managers guidance document to support women through the Menopause forming part of the company's broader strategy of supporting all employees through every life stage. The company also provide free period care products to employees in all our offices through our partnership with Riley. Riley is a female-founded Irish business which supplies eco-friendly period-care products. These measures being implemented are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 8 Decent Work & Economic Growth.

If Energy moves you, then join us. Discover career opportunities at Energia Group www.energiagroup.com/careers ■

Griffin Hotel Group Action Next Phase of €1 Million Sustainability Programme

• Monart Destination Spa Joins the 100 Million Tree Initiative

During National Tree Week 2,500 native Irish trees will be planted at Monart Destination Spa.

Monart Destination Spa are delighted to announce that they have teamed up with the 100 million tree project in Ireland. This is phase one of the project that will see the Griffin Group drive better biodiversity by using the well-known Miyawaki method.

This method has proven that by planting excess trees together these grow 10 times faster, 30 times denser, create an area 100 times more biodiverse and most importantly create a very rapid carbon sink.

Monart will create a carbon sink of 34 tons per annum with this initiative, all the while creating a new space for their guests to enjoy while relaxing at the world-renowned destination spa.

The Griffin Group will add to this

initiative over the coming months and years increasing the variety of trees at Monart thereby improving local biodiversity. This plays a major role in the group's strategy of becoming carbon neutral and reducing biodiversity loss.

The Griffin Hotel Group have invested over 1 million euro in sustainability measures within the last 12 months.

Since 2014, the Griffin Hotel Group has been rolling out a long-term strategic sustainability plan. This planting and the following planting phases will result in a carbon sink of approximately 136 tonnes per annum which will help the company achieve carbon neutrality and increase biodiversity. The company is steadily rolling out its carbon reduction roadmap across the key energy, water, waste, and transport areas.

CEO of the Griffin Hotel Group Michael Griffin says, "It is wonderful to be here and

see the planting of these special Irish tree species and we are delighted to be part of such a great initiative. Monart has many species of trees which were brought in from all over the world during the 18th Century, so it is reassuring that we are bringing back the Irish woods which in a way gives us renewed woodlands as many of our magnificent older trees are struggling with age. We would like to thank the 100 Million Trees project team for all their assistance, it was a pleasure working with them. We look forward to seeing these magnificent trees develop and mature in the coming years giving our guests a new area in which to immerse themselves in nature."

For more information on the project and the Griffin Hotel Group's sustainability measures see <https://monart.ie/griffin-group-sustainability/> ■



During National Tree Week 2,500 native Irish trees have started to be planted at Monart Destination Spa resulting in the creation of a 'Noble Forest', the biodiversity action is the next step. In the Griffin Hotel Group's 1 million euro sustainability programme. Pictured at the planting is Richard Mulcahy (One Million Trees Founder) Mark Browne (General Manager Monart Destination Spa) Michael Griffin (CEO Griffin Hotel Group) Liam Anthony Griffin (Director Griffin Hotel Group) Igors Prokopenko (Head Grounds Keeper Monart Destination Spa).

Half of Irish drivers willing to make the move to electric or hybrid car, survey shows

- More than half of drivers intend to make the move to a hybrid or electric car when they next buy a new vehicle.

New research published by online sales website Carzone shows Ireland remains deeply car-dependent, despite the ongoing climate crisis, with 81% of people relying on their car as their primary form of transport ahead of public transport, walking, or cycling.

Despite this, there remains a broad willingness to adapt to alternative transport methods, with 72% of those who say they prefer to use their car also expressing an openness toward using more environmentally friendly commuting options should they be available.

Some 54% of respondents are planning to purchase an electric or hybrid model as their next car. A year ago, just 35% said the same.

Diesel cars remain the most popular in Ireland, with 47% of drivers opting for these. That is a reduction from the 54% reported in 2023, though.

A further 37% of those surveyed are driving petrol vehicles, with the remaining 16% now using a hybrid or electric vehicle, up from the 10% returned the previous year.

Half of those asked expressed ongoing reservations in terms of the inadequate standard of Ireland's e-vehicle charging infrastructure.

Concerns

Other significant concerns expressed include the expense and heightened depreciation seen in new electric cars, with people also stating the new range of vehicles are unreliable and have limited range.

Nevertheless, the report described the increase in the use of e-vehicles as reflecting a "palpable transition in the market".

Almost two-thirds of those asked said they



would buy or had bought an e-vehicle due to its pro-environment qualities.

The 2024 report notes the younger of its 1,000 respondents, aged between 17 and 24, as being the most likely to embrace change, with 76% of that cohort open to switching their mode of transport.

The opposite is noted for people older than 65, with only 53% of those surveyed in that age bracket open to the prospect of making a transition.

The report further underlines the regional variances often noted in terms of Ireland's adaptability to green alternatives, with people in Leinster the most likely to express willingness to change their habits, with 73% claiming to be willing to adapt to greener transport alternatives.

Munster and Connacht people were similarly of that mindset, with 72% and 71% of those surveyed responding in that manner. However, Ulster demonstrated a significantly lower proportion of respondents who said they would be willing to embrace change, with just 64% saying they were minded to do so.

"While our research underscores Ireland's heavy reliance on cars, it also reflects a growing openness to explore alternative transport options," a spokesperson for Carzone said.

"As evidenced by our motoring report, the trend of downsizing vehicles to reduce costs

hints at an ongoing evolution in people's transportation preferences," they added.

In terms of car-purchasing behaviour, the survey noted a majority, 37%, of buyers doing so because they wanted a newer vehicle, with 28% requiring a more reliable motor. Some 14% said they had changed because of their growing family and the consequent need for more space.

Used car market

Ireland's used car market has been buffeted in recent years by a combination of Brexit and a parts and vehicle supply shortage resulting from covid.

Those trends are reflected in current average purchasing levels, according to the survey, the results of which show on average Irish people change their car just under every five years, with the average spend on a new vehicle now €18,000, compared with the €16,370 seen 12 months previously.

Meanwhile, 95% of buyers are now more inclined to run a full history check — which may note previous write-offs together with the number of registered owners — on a vehicle before purchasing.

The amount spent on running a vehicle has increased for 29% of owners over the past years, the results said.



Gas Networks Ireland and AMBER partner on hydrogen compatibility research

Gas Networks Ireland and AMBER, the Science Foundation Ireland's centre for Advanced Materials and BioEngineering Research, have joined forces to undertake important research to determine how compatible the materials that make up Ireland's gas pipeline are with green hydrogen – an important first step for green hydrogen in the decarbonisation journey of Ireland's gas network.

The research project “Material Testing and Development under Variable Hydrogen Ratios” is being carried out by scientists from AMBER – SFI's multi-University Centre for world class Advanced Materials and BioEngineering Research, hosted at Trinity College Dublin – in conjunction with engineers from Gas Networks Ireland. With initial funding of €220,000 in the first year, the project has the potential to run for up to five years.

Speaking about the project, which aims to explore the impact of green hydrogen blended with natural gas and biomethane, as well as pure green hydrogen has on existing materials within Ireland's gas network, AMBER Principal Investigator, Associate Professor Rocco Lupoi said:

“Hydrogen is a much smaller and lighter molecule than those that make up natural gas and biomethane. This research will investigate the compatibility of transporting these smaller hydrogen molecules through the existing pipes and infrastructure - including materials such as polymers, rubbers and metals - that make up the gas network. Identifying any components within the

network that have a low compatibility with hydrogen - which may need to be replaced or adapted ensuring safety in transporting the green gas, is a key focus of the research.”

The EU is predicting that approximately 14% of energy consumption across Europe will be from hydrogen by 2050, and up to 20-35% of the total energy demand in the UK. Gas Networks Ireland is expecting that hydrogen will account for almost 3% of Ireland's gas demand by 2032.

“With over 80% of the State's natural gas requirements being met by gas imported from the UK, we are working to ensure that Ireland's gas network is ready to transport hydrogen,” Gas Networks Ireland's Head of Technical Development and Technical Training, Liam Nolan said.

“This research with AMBER is another step in our continued testing and research projects at our Network Innovation Centre, informing the continuous development of a detailed hydrogen technical and safety strategy - which is providing a road map for the transition to hydrogen, and the decarbonisation of Ireland's gas network. Hydrogen will form part of the energy renewables mix that includes wind, solar and tidal energy as well as biomethane.”

Research on use of hydrogen by domestic and industrial users

Gas Networks Ireland has also been collaborating on research with University College Dublin Energy Institute (UCDEI). Phase one of this research focused primarily



AMBER's Lead Researcher, Nisith Tewary.; Gas Networks Ireland's Materials Development Manager, Aidan Toher and AMBER's Principal Investigator, Dr. Rocco Lupoi discussing research project “Material Testing and Development under Variable Hydrogen Ratios” at Gas Networks Ireland's Network Innovation Centre in Brownsbarn.

on domestic appliances, which were tested with a variety of hydrogen blends. The research found that domestic appliances such as gas cookers could take up to 20% of hydrogen blended with natural gas without the need for retrofitting, modifications or additional costs.

Phase two of the research which concluded in late 2023, involved over 300 of the largest users of networked gas in the country and found that 90% of the end users' equipment is compatible with blends of 20% hydrogen, while the remaining 10% of Irish industry would need further assessment to determine the modifications required.

Phase three of this research, HyGreenNet will focus on the gas distribution network and investigate the operational, safety and material compatibility, and is underway with initial results expected before the end of 2024.

Gas Network Ireland is also working closely with the Hydrogen Safety Engineering and Research Centre (HySAFER) at Ulster University on a research project on the safety of hydrogen blends in the Gas Network, in collaboration with gas network operators in Northern Ireland. The project has received funding from CASE (Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy).

Additionally, Gas Networks Ireland is one of several industry stakeholders funding a €16 million strategic partnership with Irish third-level institutions that will examine how to holistically decarbonise the overall Irish energy sector. Hosted by UCDEI, NexSys (Next Generation Energy System) is also supported by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).



The research project “Material Testing and Development under Variable Hydrogen Ratios” is being carried out by scientists from AMBER and engineers from Gas Networks Ireland. Pictured is Gas Networks Ireland's Asset Engineering Manager, Emmet Cregan; AMBER's Principal Investigator, Dr. Rocco Lupoi; Gas Networks Ireland's Materials Development Manager, Aidan Toher and Senior Business Development Manager Daniel Knapper with AMBER's Lead Researcher, Nisith Tewary and Project Manager, Marie Tierney.

Bord Gáis Energy announces modest profit for 2023 while continuing to invest in energy security and renewable innovation

- Company investment of around €300M in peaking plants will support Ireland's energy security from 2025
- Strong support for Ireland's energy transition through green hydrogen and ammonia innovations
- €7M Energy Support Fund helps vulnerable customers

Bord Gáis Energy, part of Centrica PLC, today announced a profit of €2M for 2023 (a YOY reduction of €34M). A fully-integrated energy company, Bord Gáis Energy balanced pricing pressure in energy supply with a strong performance from its power generation and trading activities in 2023. The company continued to invest in: powering Ireland's economic growth; advancing Ireland's energy transition through industry innovations; and supporting customers through the worst of the energy crisis.

Powering Ireland's Economic Growth: With an expected total investment of around €300M, construction of Bord Gáis Energy's two, hydrogen-ready, 100MW flexible gas peaking plants in Athlone and Dublin continued. Both plants are due to join the grid in the first half of 2025, boosting Ireland's energy security.

Innovating to Lead the Energy Transition: Several strategic partnerships were announced as Bord Gáis Energy continued to explore pioneering solutions to facilitate the energy transition, including large-scale green hydrogen energy storage and Europe's first-ever ammonia-fired power generation facility.

Supporting customers: Bord Gáis Energy



Dave Kirwan, Bord Gáis Energy.

allocated €3M to its Energy Support Fund to help vulnerable customers, bringing to €7M the total invested in the fund since it was created in 2022. Commodity prices remain high but have continued to stabilise. The

company announced the first of two price reductions in a four-month period, resulting in reductions of almost €1,000 on the average dual fuel bill*. Continued investment in customer service resulted in a lower number of complaints per customer.

Speaking about the results today, Dave Kirwan, MD Bord Gáis Energy said:

“Throughout 2023, Bord Gáis Energy has continued to invest in powering Ireland's future economic success, progressing new and creative advances to deliver the energy transition, while supporting our customers through the worst of the energy crisis. Support from Centrica enables us deliver strategic investments and a customer-centric approach which will continue to yield positive results in the long term. We are very conscious of the challenge Ireland faces on energy security and are investing significantly in our hydrogen ready 100MW flexible gas peaking plants in Athlone and Dublin. We do all of this with an expanding team of valued, high-performing colleagues, to ensure that we are energising a greener, fairer future.”

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Hanley Energy announces further US expansion

Hanley Energy has announced plans to create 150 new jobs, split between the US and Ireland, as part of its global expansion.

It says 100 of the jobs will be created in the US this year, with the remainder in Ireland.

The Co Meath firm made the jobs announcement as it opened its \$12m US headquarters in Ashburn, Virginia.

Hanley Energy specialises in critical power and energy management solutions and has operations in 32 countries.

Its clients include major cloud and data centre companies, including Amazon Web Services, as well as Largo Foods and CIE.

“Opening our North American headquarters and expanding our global workforce... is a pivotal milestone in Hanley Energy’s global operations as we grow our global workforce to over 950 employees,” said Clive Gilmore, CEO of Hanley Energy. “It also lays the foundation for future expansion as we deliver energy and power management solutions to our partners Amazon Web

Services and other multinational technology providers in the U.S. and across the world.”

Hanley Energy is one of a number of Enterprise Ireland-backed firms to announce further investment in the US this week.

“Ireland plays a vital role in supporting the global construction industry, designing, and delivering advanced infrastructure across the data, pharma, and energy sectors and improving resource efficiencies across the lifecycle,” said Enterprise Ireland CEO Leo Clancy. “As a country, we have developed incredible capability in this area, and we are exporting this expertise across the world.

“Hanley Energy are at the heart of this, and their energy tracking software plays a vital role, helping industrial customers be more sustainable and efficient.”

Enterprise Ireland is holding a number of overseas events this week to highlight the work of its clients.

Today it is hosting a sustainability event in Washington DC, at which the US special presidential envoy for climate, John Kerry, is

a keynote speaker.

Speaking in Washington ahead of this year’s St Patrick’s Day celebrations, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said Hanley’s work “helping large industries to reduce emissions has never been more timely.

“Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today,” he said. “I believe Irish businesses, and enterprise in general have a pivotal role to play in turning the tide on climate change and biodiversity loss so we can leave the planet to the next generation in a better condition than we inherited.”

Neil Morris, Amazon Web Services (AWS) Country Lead, Ireland said; “Seeing Hanley’s rapid expansion over the last few years is another reminder of the hugely positive effects that international investment is having on Enterprise Ireland clients in Ireland. Launching a US Headquarters is a significant moment for Hanley and I wish them continued success.”



Hanley Energy has invested \$12m in its new facility in Virginia, USA.

Energy companies accused of ‘short-changing’ consumers after huge drop in wholesale costs

Energy suppliers have been accused of “short-changing” consumers after it emerged that wholesale costs have collapsed but they have only passed on a fraction of these cost reductions.

Calculations based on figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that wholesale electricity costs are down by 78pc since their peak in August 2022.

But prices for households have only come down by between 20pc and 25pc.

Most energy companies have announced two or more price cuts for consumers, with the larger players resisting calls for larger price reductions.

The CSO figures show that in February wholesale electricity prices fell by 15.3pc when compared with the previous month.

In the last year wholesale prices were down 46.8pc.

Calculations by this publication show that wholesale prices are now down 78pc since they peaked in August 2022.

Chairman of the Consumers Association of Ireland Michael Kilcoyne accused electricity suppliers and the Government of

“fleecing” households.

“We are being short-changed. The industry and the Government, with its Vat and other levies on electricity, are taking us for fools. Consumers are being fleeced,” Mr Kilcoyne said.

Daragh Cassidy of Bonkers.ie confirmed the Irish Independent calculations that wholesale electricity prices are down 78pc since August 2022.

At the same time consumer prices have only fallen by between 20pc and 25pc.

However, he pointed out that not all of the rise in wholesale costs was passed on to consumers.

He said: “Wholesale electricity prices continue to ease largely on the back of falling wholesale gas prices as well as strong wind output.

“However, they still remain high by historical standard.”

Mr Cassidy said wholesale prices are now at their lowest level since the start of 2021 before a host of events caused prices to skyrocket over the next two years.

This included a wind drought during the

summer of 2021, prolonged outages at two of the country’s biggest power stations for much of that same year, lingering Covid-related supply chain issues, and then the outbreak of war in Ukraine at the start of 2022.

Mr Cassidy said that due to hedging it takes time for price decreases on wholesale markets to feed through into lower bills for consumers.

He said wholesale prices only make up around half of the final cost of electricity for consumers. Government tax and levies, costs for the distribution of electricity into people’s homes, and supplier operating costs and profit margin also need to be factored in.

“However, if wholesale prices remain close to where they are, it’s highly likely we’ll see another round of price cuts in the second half of the year of between 10pc to 20pc,” Mr Cassidy said.

Mr Cassidy said this comes on the back of two rounds of price cuts over the past six months that have seen electricity bills fall by around 20pc to 25pc.



High electricity costs for consumers have been a feature of the market for two years now.

The PTSB Ideal Home Show is back at the RDS from April 26th – 28th!

- Take advantage of professional advice, attend informative live discussions and meet hundreds of leading suppliers as Ireland's largest home improvement show returns to the RDS.

The PTSB Ideal Home Show is set to return to the RDS Simmonscourt on Friday, April 26th – Sunday 28th of April, bringing the best of Ireland's home improvement professionals and suppliers under one roof to showcase the latest innovations in home renovations.

There are over 220 exhibitors ready to help up to 30,000 homeowners, movers and improvers across the weekend to implement their perfect home renovation, extension or new build, and discover a world of furnishings, appliances and lifestyle pieces.

Eddie Kearney, Head of Retail Distribution at PTSB, said: "PTSB is delighted to be back as title sponsor of the Ideal Home Show for the ninth year in a row. We know that many attendees will be at different stages of their home journey, and so whether they're interested in discussing applying for a loan, home improvement plans, retrofitting or building their own home, our dedicated team of mortgage experts will be available on stand N50 to guide them every step of the way."

Special guests and celebs will be in attendance throughout the weekend at the three Home Advice Theatres, including PTSB Ideal Home Show ambassadors: sustainable journalist and host of the DFS Interiors Theatre, Jo Linehan; Celebrity Chef Neven Maguire; garden designer Diarmuid Gavin, architect Hugh Wallace; and well known British interior stylist and



designer Sophie Robinson.

Caitriona O'Connor, PTSB Ideal Home Show Director, said: "The show has evolved and grown over time to suit the visitors' needs, offering expert advice, inspiration, suppliers and products for their home journey. No matter what your home needs, you're sure to find it all under one roof at the PTSB Ideal Home Show."

Exciting features for this spring show include the ever-popular PTSB Centre, PhoneWatch Ask An Expert Hub, Dunnes Stores Chefs Live Theatre with Chefs Neven Maguire and Donal Skehan, Fleetwood Interior Design Hub, DFS Interiors Theatre, Home Interiors Fair, Mitsubishi Electric Ecodan Home Advice Theatre, Electric Ireland Superhomes Home Energy Upgrade Pavilion and much more!

The signature zones return to deliver answers for all your home improvement needs! Zones include Home Interiors Fair, Home Energy Upgrade, Build and Extend Zone, Kitchens and Bathrooms, Working from Home and Garden, Lifestyle & Outdoor Living and Drive Electric. Drive Electric will feature a wide range of EV's and will include presentations by Bob Flavin in discussion with electric vehicle specialists throughout the weekend.

A visit to Ireland's best loved home improvement show at the RDS will help homeowners find the best available options from hundreds of leading suppliers and experts – all under one roof.

To keep up to date with exhibitor announcements, competitions and show-related blogs, visit PTSB Ideal Home Show at www.idealhome.ie ■

Department seeks legal advice over missed first carbon budget timeframe

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) says that it is considering legal advice after the passing of the statutory deadline for publishing Northern Ireland's first carbon budget.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 established the "end of 2023" as a deadline for the Department to publish carbon budgets for the first three budgetary periods of (2023-2027, 2028-2032, and 2033-2037).

Despite the launch of a 16-week consultation in June 2023 on Northern Ireland's 2030 and 2040 emissions reduction targets, as well as the first three carbon budgets, the Department has not clarified its current or next steps for establishing a carbon budget.

Instead, in response to a query on why the deadline had been missed, and whether a new timeframe had been established, a spokesperson for DAERA said that the Department is currently considering legal advice and as such, "is unable to comment further at this time".

Carbon budgets set a maximum total amount for the net Northern Ireland emissions as a whole for five-year periods and are seen as a key component to the overarching ambition of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. While the emission targets set are a net figure for Northern Ireland, each department will have to ensure

that the net Northern Ireland emissions account for each budgetary period does not exceed the carbon budget for that period.

The Climate Change Act mandated the Department to carry out a public consultation lasting at least 16 weeks on proposed carbon budgets; commission a financial, social, economic, and rural impact assessment on the effects of the carbon budget for that period; and consult the Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner, the other Northern Ireland departments and the Just Transition Commission and lay proposals before the Assembly.

It is around this last point on which the Department is potentially seeking advice, given the prolonged absence of a Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly and subsequent failure to appoint a Northern Ireland Climate Commission Commissioner and establish a Just Transition Commission.

While the Climate Change Act allowed for the Department to publish regulations that would amend carbon budgets for any budgetary period before the start of that period and change the date by which a carbon budget must be set, the Department has missed the timeframe set for the first carbon budget for 2023-2027.

Earlier in 2023, the Department had already set out that plans to also consult on Northern Ireland's first draft Climate Action Plan (2023-2027) had been delayed, pointing to the requirement for detailed

modelling, analysis, and policy development across government departments, "coupled with an extremely difficult budgetary position and the challenges associated with developing, in the absence of ministers, the new policies and programmes required to meet the carbon reduction targets".

Prior to the establishment of a net zero greenhouse gas emission target in the Northern Ireland Climate Change Act, the Climate Change Commission, an independent, statutory body set up to advise the UK and devolved governments on emission targets, had previously advised on an 83 per cent emission reduction target for Northern Ireland, highlighting that even this aspiration would be "extremely challenging".

The Climate Change Commission has recommended that the first carbon budget should be set at a 33 per cent average annual reduction, the second carbon budget at a 48 per cent average annual reduction, and the third carbon budget at a 62 per cent average annual reduction.

The Climate Change Act requires the setting of targets for the years 2030 and 2040, that are in line with the 2050 target, to be completed by June 2024. The CCC's advice is a 48 per cent emissions reduction, against the baseline figure, by 2030, a target already outlined in the Act. It further recommends a 77 per cent reduction by 2040 as the target.



Dublin Airport generates the same carbon emissions as 1.4 million cars every year

- Twenty airports generate the same amount of carbon emissions as 58 coal plants based on latest findings

Dublin Airport generates 2.8 million tonnes of CO₂, equivalent to the yearly carbon emissions of 1.4 million cars, according to the latest findings of Airport Tracker which monitors pollutants emitted at the world's main airports.

This year's tracker, issued on Thursday, shows Dublin Airport generates significant volumes of the worst air pollutants associated with vehicular traffic – nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and PM_{2.5} (particulate matter) – equivalent to the yearly emissions of 520,000 cars.

Just 20 airports, headed by Dubai airport, generated 231 million tonnes of CO₂ – the same amount as 58 coal plants in 2019 – the year for which latest data is available. It “shows the disproportionate climate and health impact of just a small number of airports”, it says.

Dublin Airport operator DAA declined to comment on the findings.

The tracker is compiled by global affairs think tank ODI, in partnership with the NGO Transport & Environment. Data was provided by the International Council on Clean Transportation.

Dublin Airport generated 2.8 million tonnes (mt) of CO₂ in 2019, 2.59mt of which arose from passenger traffic – but was not in top 20 worst airports. Shannon Airport generated 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent to the yearly emissions of 100,000 cars and NO_x and PM_{2.5} volumes equivalent to those of 30,000 cars yearly.

Combining impacts of passenger and freight transport, Dubai International

Airport produced the equivalent CO₂ emissions of 5.03 coal plants, while Heathrow produced the equivalent of 4.77 coal plants. London's six airports together produced 27 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2019 and 8,900 tonnes of NO_x and 83 tonnes of PM_{2.5}.

ODI's report is supported by research from Stay Grounded, a network aimed at reducing air traffic and building a climate-just transport system, and UECNA, an umbrella for airport community groups.

Globally, air pollution is the fourth largest risk factor for human health, killing 6.7 million people in 2019, while in 2018, air pollution had associated economic costs of €193 billion to the European economy, it says.

On airports backing expensive so-called sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), which are central to their decarbonisation strategies, it finds “currently, SAFs account for only 0.1 per cent of jet fuel consumption and effective decarbonisation would require production increasing from a few hundred million litres today to over 400 billion litres by 2050.

Expected efficiency gains from technological advancements are likely to be offset by increased demand as the industry bounces back, it warns.

“If current growth trajectories continue and the uptake of clean technologies does not accelerate, emissions generated by airports will boom, putting millions of people at risk.”

In response, Magdalena Heuwieser of Stay Grounded said: “Aircraft noise levels are

continuously exceeded, and we completely lack EU standards on ultrafine particles, which are a major health hazard.

“Key measures must be taken immediately to protect the health of workers and communities surrounding airports – like night flight bans, or simple jet fuel improvements to have at least the same standards as car fuel. But technology won't solve the whole problem, a reduction of the number of flights is most effective and needed,” she added.

The research shows gaps in decarbonising aviation, said Shandelle Steadman of ODI. “Airports aren't reporting these emissions and often slip under the radar, but without tackling localised emissions at the airport level, the sector's climate and health impact will only worsen; damaging our health, livelihoods and climate.”

Jo Dardenne, aviation director at Transport & Environment said: “Pollution around airports is growing year on year. It affects millions of people, who breathe in toxic emissions and develop health conditions as a result, yet policymakers are brushing the problem under the carpet.”

Exponential growth of the sector and of airports is incompatible with their climate goals, especially considering the slow uptake of clean technologies, she added.

“The sector led us to believe that they would bounce back better after the pandemic; they've certainly bounced back, but without action, the sector's climate and health impact isn't going to get any better.”



Dublin Airport generated 2.8 million tonnes (mt) of CO₂ in 2019, 2.59mt of which arose from passenger traffic – but was not in top 20 worst airports.

Ireland's offshore wind industrial strategy highlights its sector-leading potential

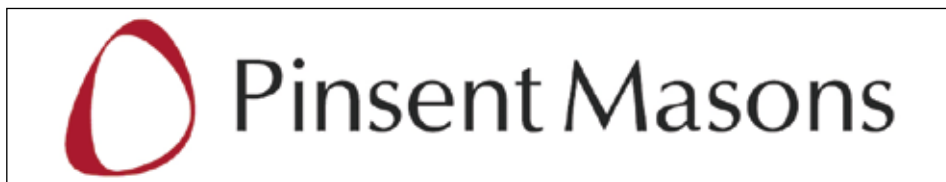
The Irish government's new industrial strategy document for the offshore wind sector recognises Ireland's significant potential to be a leading European producer of offshore wind energy, while increasing Ireland's energy security, a renewable energy expert has said.

Released by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 'Powering Prosperity – Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy' (102-page / 3713KB PDF) seeks to make the most of the 420,000 square kilometre exclusive economic zone extending 320 kilometres off the Irish coast.

Focusing on actions to be taken in 2024 and 2025, the strategy covers 40 actions across four core areas which aim to maximise the economic benefit of Ireland achieving its offshore renewable targets. In particular, it recognises that development of an offshore wind energy industry and supply chain as a necessity for Ireland to become a destination for further foreign direct investment (FDI) to complement its domestic capabilities, creating opportunities both at home and overseas.

The four core areas set out in the strategy are offshore wind supply chains, research, development and innovation, future demand and end uses for renewable energy, and balanced regional economic development opportunities.

Notable actions include entry into a memorandum of understanding between transmission system operator EirGrid,



Garrett Monaghan.

government business development agency Enterprise Ireland and FDI agency IDA Ireland, to provide a framework for strategic cooperation between these entities on the development of offshore wind energy.

Also included as an action is the establishment of the Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence (OWCE) which would enable

key offshore wind energy stakeholders such as government agencies, education institutions and offshore wind energy supply chain businesses to access new technologies and further collaborate to improve the offshore wind sector's competitiveness. The strategy identifies floating offshore wind and digital issues as areas the OWCE is likely to focus on.

Additional actions are the study of green energy industrial parks and their potential for co-locating large scale renewable energy generation infrastructure technology, the provision of one-to-one assistance supporting change in offshore wind supply chain companies, and the creation of strategic partnerships with other countries enabling cooperation and knowledge transfer in supply chain development.

The strategy also aims to possibly extend the €500 million Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme and explore other possible alternative funding schemes or initiatives that might support the growth of the offshore wind supply chain.

Alongside these actions, the strategy will look to agree actions to deliver on skills priorities for achieving offshore wind energy targets, and assess the potential for accelerating the development of a West Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP). It will also examine the cost and viability of initiating floating offshore wind projects in the anticipated DMAP, as part of the government's aim to support the development of the sector.

Garrett Monaghan, a renewable energy expert at Pinsent Masons, said: "Delivery of the Irish offshore sector requires committed and sustained co-operation across government and state bodies, and needs to be insulated from political and economic cycles."

"Ireland does not have a history of issuing industrialisation strategies. The publishing of a dedicated offshore wind strategy is significant and deliberately and properly intended to coincide with related core Irish and EU policies, including the Future Framework, hydrogen and the energy security needs identified in REPowerEU," he said.



Kelly applauds Green Hydrogen agreement between Shannon Foynes and Rotterdam Ports

Ireland's largest bulk port, Shannon Foynes, and Europe's largest port, the Port of Rotterdam, have inked a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at developing a supply-chain corridor for exporting green hydrogen fuel from the west of Ireland's abundant wind resource, Seán Kelly MEP has said. The agreement signifies a significant leap towards achieving Europe's ambitious green hydrogen strategy for 2030.

With wind resources off the west coast of Ireland exceeding 80GW of green electricity, MEP Kelly expressed his support for the collaboration: "The south-west of Ireland, with its almost limitless wind resource, will be pivotal in Ireland's National Hydrogen Strategy. This collaboration between Rotterdam and Shannon Foynes is a very important initiative that aligns with our commitment to a low-carbon and competitive economy."

"Developing a green hydrogen supply chain could be a crucial turning point in Ireland's journey towards a sustainable and competitive economy. Combining wind energy with green hydrogen production has the potential to transform our nation,

and this agreement underscores the role the south-west region can play."

"This is recognition of the South West's enormous potential for green hydrogen production we have, when can then be exported into Europe", Kelly added.

The Ireland South MEP concluded by expressing satisfaction with the progress: "Having championed the need for an Irish Hydrogen Strategy for many years, I am pleased to see a significant step forward. Shannon Foynes Port company deserve credit for their forward thinking business model, proving that they should be the first name on the team sheet when the National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind is published later this year."

This collaboration not only aligns with Ireland's national objectives but also contributes to Europe's broader vision for a sustainable future. As the ports work jointly towards a greener tomorrow, the partnership signals hope for a transformative shift in energy production and consumption.



Nephin Energy fuels Green Gas Revolution from Co. Tipperary

Ephin Energy announces the creation of its new business Nephin Renewable Gas (NRG). NRG is a newly established renewable energy company and has set up its operational headquarters in Tipperary Town. NRG's ambition is to become the leading producer and supplier of biomethane in Ireland.

The new office facility was officially opened today by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D.

Biomethane can play a major role in helping Ireland meet its climate ambitions by reducing emissions and supporting the decarbonization of otherwise hard to abate sectors such as manufacturing, transport and agriculture.

In addition to producing biomethane, hundreds of direct and indirect jobs will be created all around rural Ireland from the operation and maintenance of the AD plants. In addition to jobs, the AD sector can provide new reliable, long-term sources of income for farmers and associated agri industries.

Furthermore, NRG's plants will enable farmers to reduce their own carbon footprint by allowing them to redirect their slurries and manures away from the land towards NRG's biomethane plants. In turn this will help reduce the level of pollution entering Ireland's streams and rivers.

As well as biomethane, NRG's plants will generate clean indigenous biogenic carbon dioxide that can directly replace imported fossil derived CO₂ in a variety of industrial applications. The plants will also produce low carbon biofertiliser which can be used as a direct replacement for imported fossil fuel derived fertiliser.

Tom O'Brien, Managing Director, Nephin Energy, said: "Today is

a huge day for us as we announce the creation of our new business, Nephin Renewable Gas. We are delighted to be setting up our headquarters in Tipperary Town, in the heart of the Golden Vale. Our ambition is to become Ireland's leading biomethane production company.

Nephin can realise this ambition by relying on its unique competitive advantages, such as building on our existing position as Ireland's largest natural gas company, our access to the strong, long-term, patient capital of our owners CPP Investments, and utilising the 100+ years of combined RNG and agri experience of our first-class management team in NRG.

In building this business, we look forward to making a meaningful investment in Ireland's rural economies and partnering with farmers to give them a real opportunity to benefit from the green energy transition."

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Simon Coveney TD, said: "Companies like Nephin Renewable Gas, will play a pivotal role in helping Ireland achieve its Climate Action target of delivering 5.7 TWh of indigenously produced biomethane by 2030. Producing biomethane at scale in Ireland will make a significant contribution towards our ability to reduce climate emissions across hard to abate energy demand sectors, such as manufacturing and transport. Not only is it a positive development in terms of climate change and energy transition, Nephin Renewable Gas' biomethane production will benefit rural communities across Ireland by generating jobs and creating new revenue streams for farmers."



Pictured at the official opening of the new Nephin Renewable Gas headquarters in Tipperary Town are (L-R) Tom O'Brien, Managing Director, Nephin Energy; Minister Simon Coveney TD; and Dr Tony Yates, Managing Director of Nephin Renewable Gas.

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