Request for Expressions of Interest for Industrial Sites from companies involved in the sustainable generation, storage and distribution of renewable energy.

Request for Expressions of Interest

North Offaly Development Fund CLG is looking for Expressions of Interest for Industrial Sites from suitable companies, investors or businesses involved in the sustainable generation, storage and/or distribution of renewable energy, who are interested in locating and developing their business at **Rhode Green Energy Park**.

Successful applicants would have to demonstrate their willingness and potential to be suitable for collaboration and participation with the Rhode Green Energy Park concept. The evaluation of submissions will be informed by the Eco-Industrial Framework, developed by RPS in conjunction with North Offaly Development Fund CLG. The Framework can be reviewed here:

IE000820_RGEP-Implementation-Report-_F02_02042024_Report.pdf (offaly.ie)

Completed Expressions of Interest submissions should be forwarded to

info@leo.offalycoco.ie , no later than close of business on **Friday, 11th October 2024. Please include Expression of Interest Rhode in the subject line of your email.**

It is envisaged that the evaluation process will be completed by end of November 2024 and the results will be made available thereafter. Please note that this timeframe may be amended to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement and the best possible outcome.

Format of Submission

Applicants are required to structure their submission under the 6 headings below. The weighting applied to each heading is outlined.

- Integrated Sustainability Approach (Energy Systems Integration and Materials Exchange) – weighting 2.5 out of 10
- Employment Creation & Opportunities – weighting 1.5 out of 10
- Clean Industry & Decarbonisation – weighting 2 out of 10
- Innovation, Research and Development – weighting 0.5 out of 10
- Community Gain – weighting 1.5 out of 10
- Spatial/Resource Efficiency & Risk – weighting 2 out of 10

The following information may assist you in the formulation of your submission.

Overview

North Offaly Development Fund CLG (NODF) is a community-based organisation that was established in the wake of the closure of the peat-fired power plant at Rhode, Co Offaly, which was operated by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB). NODF received its initial funding from the ESB and its mission is to assist enterprise creation and development in the area and fill the void left from the closure of peat burning electricity generation in the area.

Rhode Green Energy Park (RGEP) is owned and operated by NODF. NODF have been working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Offaly County Council to progress the park as a green energy hub which would facilitate a cluster of sustainable energy generation, storage and distribution projects. It is envisaged that these projects would work in collaboration with each other in an industrial symbiosis business model, enabling decarbonisation while facilitating each other to utilise waste heat and energy for a range of users including industry, horticulture and community benefit.

RGEP will also aim to demonstrate the benefit of a planned approach to sustainable energy generation and high energy intensive industry co-location, such as data centres, agri-food, horticulture, bio-economy etc.

Guidance on Potential RGEP Tenants

The following list of potential tenants (including but not limited to) could prove to be suitable candidates for an industrially symbiotic relationship:

- Energy Storage Facilities (BESS, Flywheel, Heat storage)
- Green Energy Enterprise
- Data Centre
- Green Hydrogen Production, Storage & Distribution
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Sustainable Manufacturing
- Research and Development Facilities
- Horticulture (requiring heat input)
- Chemical/Pharmaceutical/Biotech Manufacturing
- Other Large Energy Users (LEU)

Given the concentration of renewable energy projects, Rhode GEP is highly suitable for a range of development, including Large Energy Users (LEUs), such as a data centre. The Siemens report of March 2023 illustrates that the siting of a data centre in Offaly is favourable, and there is potential for (green) hydrogen to play a role in supporting such a centre.

Principles of Rhode Green Energy Park

The Environment, Biodiversity & Sustainability

- Ensuring that all activities within the park include measures to promote long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability while protecting and enhancing local biodiversity.

Employment & Economic Opportunities

- Ensuring that tenants make the best use of the resources and opportunities within the park, while supporting local employment, providing high-quality, well-paying job opportunities.

Innovation, Creativity & Continuous Improvement

- Encouraging continuous innovation, research and development in green technology, renewable energy, and sustainable industrial processes.
- Facilitating data collection and monitoring of key metrics, to work toward making efficiency gains, while allowing for more to be learned about the eco-industrial park concept.

Industrial Cooperation, Resource Sharing & The Circular Economy

- Fostering a culture of collaboration among stakeholders, industries, and the community to achieve shared sustainability goals, through utilisation of by-products and waste.
- Promoting the circular economy, including waste minimisation and recycling to minimise the consumption of resources and reduce waste generation.

Community Gain & The Just Transition

- Ensuring that local communities are included and see benefits from increased investment in the area, encouraging indirect investment and community support, including measures such as maintaining open access to the area for recreational amenity.

Decarbonisation & Clean Energy

- Emphasising the seamless integration of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, alongside energy conversion, and energy storage such as BESS and green hydrogen, into the operations of the park and its tenants.

Ethical Business Practices

- Encouraging businesses to adopt ethical practices that prioritise social responsibility, transparency, and fair treatment of employees and communities.

Criteria Evaluation

Based on the principles identified, and the RGEP Charter, the following criteria have been established on which to evaluate potential tenants:

1. **Integrated Sustainability Approach (Energy Systems Integration and Materials Exchange) – weighting 2.5 out of 10.**

Integrated Sustainability Approach (ISA) encompasses two key components: Energy Systems Integration (ESI) and Materials Exchange. ESI involves the coordination and optimisation of diverse energy systems within the green energy industrial park, focusing on renewable sources, energy storage, and demand management. This ensures the creation of a resilient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly energy infrastructure. Applicants are encouraged to propose comprehensive integration plans with existing on-site energy infrastructure, with the potential to participate in a private electricity network, subject to relevant legislation. This pursues the aim of maximising renewable energy utilisation and minimisation of energy waste.

Simultaneously, Materials Exchange under ISA emphasises the strategic sharing and reuse of resources, by-products, and waste materials among industrial entities in the Park. This practice minimises resource consumption, reduces waste generation, and fosters a circular economy approach, where one company's waste becomes another's resource, promoting sustainability within the industrial park. Applicants are expected to demonstrate potential for a high level of material exchange with existing or permitted developments within RGEP, actively participating in industrial symbiosis, where possible. Given that there may be limited or no existing tenants, potential for materials exchange should instead be demonstrated clearly.

The ISA criterion evaluates applicants on their commitment to a holistic sustainability approach that combines efficient energy systems, collaborative materials exchange, and circular economy practices. This integrated strategy aims to create a synergistic and environmentally responsible industrial ecosystem within RGEP.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Exemplary ISA	+2: Highly Sustainable ISA	+1: Advancing Sustainable ISA	0: Moderately Sustainable ISA	-1: Developing Sustainable ISA	-2: Less Sustainable ISA	-3: Not Very Sustainable ISA

2. Employment Creation & Opportunities – weighting 1.5 out of 10.

Employment creation in the context of RGEP, refers to the generation of job opportunities and the development of a skilled workforce within the Park, specifically catering to roles related to the implementation, management, and maintenance of sustainable practices, renewable energy technologies, and collaborative industrial processes. This focus on employment creation aims to foster local economic growth, support the just transition to a green economy, and enhance community well-being by providing stable and meaningful employment opportunities that align with the principles of environmental sustainability and industrial symbiosis. Employment opportunities should pay regard to the history of the region, which is undergoing significant economic transformation away from peat harvesting and processing, toward industries such as renewable energies.

Applications are preferred where there are more meaningful and secure positions created, with suitable income to ensure the vitality of local communities and a high quality of living for employees. It is expected that the number of positions will vary across different industrial sectors. Applicants are encouraged to identify and maximise the number of positions that would be suitable for local residents in a sustainable manner (long-term positions).

In alignment with RGEP's commitment to employment creation, there is a recognition of the evolving economic landscape and the need also to support displaced workers, particularly those transitioning from industries such as peat harvesting. To facilitate this, applicants are encouraged to contribute to educational programmes and opportunities aimed at retraining interested local residents. These programmes should focus on developing skills relevant to sustainable practices, renewable energy technologies, and collaborative industrial processes. This investment in education not only supports a just transition but also ensures the local workforce is equipped for the emerging opportunities within the green energy industrial park. While efforts to prioritise local talent are encouraged, the initiative acknowledges the potential need for specialised skills from broader regions, promoting a diverse and skilled workforce essential for the Park's success.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Exceptional	+2: Strong	+1: Good	0: Moderate	-1: Basic	-2: Limited	-3: Negligible

3. Clean Industry & Decarbonisation – weighting 2 out of 10.

The term "clean industry" typically refers to industrial sectors or activities that prioritise environmentally friendly practices and sustainability. Clean industries are characterised by their efforts to minimise negative impacts on the environment, reduce pollution (air, water, ground, noise, light, etc), conserve natural resources, and promote sustainable development. These industries often strive to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental responsibility. Decarbonisation plays a very important role in the attainment of cleaner industrial operations. This involves the adoption of renewable energy sources, the implementation of energy-efficient technologies, and the promotion of sustainable production processes that aim to minimise the release of carbon emissions, thereby mitigating the adverse effects of industrial operations on the environment. Decarbonisation strategies in this context contribute to the transition towards a low-carbon and sustainable industrial ecosystem, fostering a cleaner and more environmentally friendly industrial landscape.

With respect to RGEP, it is expected that tenants will make every effort to reduce the environmental impact of the industrial activities they undertake. More points are awarded for industries that are cleaner and produce less carbon emissions and pollution, including air, water, ground, noise and light pollution.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Exceptionally Clean Industry	+2: Very Clean Industry	+1: Above-Average Clean Industry	0: Clean Industry	-1: Moderately Polluting	-2: Polluting	-3: Very Polluting

4. Innovation, Research and Development – weighting 0.5 out of 10.

In the RGEP, innovation is pivotal, driving the continual development of novel technologies, processes, and collaborative strategies. This approach enhances resource efficiency, promotes sustainability, and integrates renewable energy seamlessly. The aim is to cultivate synergies among diverse industrial entities, fostering the exchange of resources, waste materials, and expertise to maximise energy efficiency and minimise environmental impact, advancing a circular economy model.

Applicants are expected to incorporate innovative processes, particularly in materials sharing and renewable energy integration, aligning with the Park's sustainability and efficiency goals. Concurrently, research and development (R&D) plays a crucial role, systematically investigating and advancing technologies and processes to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and environmental performance. This includes collaborative solutions within industrial operations, exploring new methodologies, renewable energy technologies, and resource-efficient practices for a circular economy, waste minimisation, and optimised resource utilisation.

Notably, the criterion emphasises on-site development of new technologies, highlighting the crucial role of R&D in driving continuous improvement, innovation, and the adoption of cutting-edge solutions. This commitment is vital for promoting a sustainable and environmentally friendly industrial ecosystem within the RGEP.

Furthermore, applicants are strongly encouraged to engage and form partnerships, where appropriate, with universities and third-level educational institutions, with the view of fostering RGEP as a centre of learning focused on renewable energy technology, green industry, and eco-industrial symbiotic processes and relationships. Partnerships between institutions and tenants will provide mutual benefits and further aid research and development efforts by tenants, while also offering valuable opportunities for research by educational institutes.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Outstanding	+2: Very Good	+1: Good	0: Average	-1: Below Average	-2: Poor	-3: Very Poor

5. Community Gain – weighting 1.5 out of 10.

In the context of RGEP, the term 'community gain' refers to the comprehensive benefits experienced by the local community as a result of the Park's activities and initiatives. These benefits encompass both tangible and intangible aspects, including improvement of local infrastructure, maintenance of existing open access to the site, enhancement of community well-being, provision of a high-quality environment/public realm, and the promotion of sustainable development practices.

Community benefit is contingent upon tenants actively contributing to the physical integration and permeability of the Park. Presently, local people enjoy using the space as part of a walking trail. Applicants are encouraged to design and implement infrastructural elements that ensure open access to the Park, inviting collaboration and fostering a sense of community. Consideration should be given to the creation of recreational walking routes, enhancing the Park's accessibility and promoting a recreational enjoyment of the area.

Fostering a sense of community ownership and identity is pivotal, and tenants are encouraged to contribute to the establishment of a high-quality environment. This involves designing spaces that not only prioritise ecological sustainability but also embody aesthetically pleasing and well-maintained surroundings, thereby cultivating a strong communal identity and instilling a sense of pride among the Park's stakeholders.

Emphasising the positive social, economic, and environmental impacts of the GEP, community gain fosters a sense of shared prosperity, sustainability, and community engagement in the surrounding area. The integration of educational opportunities enhances this positive impact, reinforcing the commitment to creating a holistic and sustainable community within the RGEP. Likewise, investment in local infrastructure and other aspects of community wellbeing is favourable.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Outstanding	+2: Very Good	+1: Good	0: Average	-1: Below Average	-2: Poor	-3: Very Poor

6. Spatial/Resource Efficiency & Risk – weighting 2 out of 10.

In the context of the Rhode Green Energy Park (RGEP), the 'Spatial/Resource Efficiency and Risk' criterion is integral to evaluating an applicant's proficiency in optimising space and resource utilisation while addressing associated risks. Risk can take many forms regarding potential tenants. For example, proposals that are significant in scale are riskier than smaller proposals, as they take up more space in the Park, reducing the ability for diversification. Risk also considers deliverability – that being the ability for a company to realise their proposal fully, as described.

Spatial Efficiency:

Applicants will be assessed based on their ability to maximise spatial utilisation effectively, while providing good interconnection potential. This involves proposing developments that make efficient use of available space without unnecessary sprawl, allowing development to fit together tightly. Considerations will be given to innovative design strategies that promote compact, sustainable, and multifunctional land use, fostering a harmonious integration with the surrounding environment. Applicants should avoid potential barriers/conflicts for both access and utilities. Applicants should also keep potential Park expansion in mind, avoiding barriers, and considering potential interconnections.

Resource Efficiency:

Efficiency in resource utilisation, including water and electricity, is a key aspect of this criterion. Applicants are expected to present comprehensive plans that minimise resource consumption, integrate renewable energy sources, and prioritise energy-efficient technologies. The emphasis is on sustainable practices that align with the overarching goals of the RGEP, contributing to a resilient and environmentally conscious industrial park. Applicants should consider the physical connection for resources such as water and electricity, minimising consumption where possible, including through resource sharing (or potential to do so).

Risk Assessment:

Spatial and resource efficiency are inherently linked to risk, and applicants are encouraged to provide a detailed risk assessment associated with their proposed developments, insofar as possible. The risks of most concern within RGEP relate to large developments, which consume significant land and resources (water and electricity) that may preclude other development (spatial risk), and developments that may fail to be delivered (delivery risk). Assessment involves addressing potential challenges such as the overuse of space and resources and the implications of underutilisation or project abandonment. Clear mitigation strategies and contingency plans will be favourably considered, demonstrating a proactive approach to risk management.

The grading guidance for this criterion will range from +3 to -3 as follows:

+3: Outstanding	+2: Very Good	+1: Good	0: Average	-1: Below Average	-2: Poor	-3: Very Poor

Sample Evaluation Matrix

Illustrated below is a Pugh Matrix that contains the identified criteria-demonstrating how an applicant is evaluated against the minimum acceptable solution (standard application), accompanied by the grading guidance for each criterion.

	Applicant A		Applicant B		Applicant C		Applicant D		Weighting Assigned
	Score	Aggregated Score	Score	Aggregated Score	Score	Aggregated Score	Score	Aggregated Score	
Integrated Sustainability Approach (Energy and Materials)	3	7.5	0	0	2	5	1	2.5	**2.5**
Employment Creation & Opportunities	1	1.5	-2	-3	0	0	2	3	**1.5**
Clean Industry and Decarbonisation	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	**2**
Innovation Research and Development	1	.5	0	0	-1	-0.5	0	0	**0.5**
Community Gain	2	3	1	1.5	-1	-1.5	1	1.5	**1.5**
Spatial/Resource Efficiency & Risk	1	2	-3	-6	-2	-4	2	4	**2**
Aggregated Score (Sum of Criterion Score x Weighting)	**18.5**	**18.5**	**-4**	**-7.5**	**1**	**2**	**13**	**13**	**10**
Ranked Options	**1st**		**Failed (Substandard)**		**3rd**		**2nd**		

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NORTH OFFALY DEVELOPMENT FUND

RHODE GREEN ENERGY PARK