



**OFFSHORE CAN GENERATE 40% OF IRELAND'S POWER  
€4 BILLION INVESTMENT IN PROJECTS UNDERWAY  
SUPPORTIVE FRAMEWORK NEEDED TO SECURE INVESTMENT**

Offshore wind energy developers today confirmed that they have projects at an advanced stage of preparation for the development of over 2,000mw of renewable energy in Irish waters at a capital cost of over €4 billion. The announcement was made by the five largest offshore wind companies in Ireland at the launch of NOW Ireland, a new organisation to promote the development of the offshore wind industry in Ireland. "Offshore wind has the capability to generate large volumes of electrical power from green, renewable and indigenous resources. Offshore wind is unique in offering the capacity to deliver substantial volumes of power on a scale that no other renewable can match and to do so in a short time scale," Brian Britton, Secretary of NOW Ireland stated at the launch in Dublin today.

Offshore wind farms are considerably larger in size than onshore wind farms. If the offshore projects currently under way were fully developed each would rank in the top twelve power stations in Ireland. The funding required is also substantial as they are far bigger than onshore farms and require a higher level of investment. However these power stations are also more efficient and operate with significantly higher load factors than onshore. Their scale and efficiency justifies the investment of the large amounts of capital required to develop them.

NOW Ireland is the acronym for the National Offshore Wind Association of Ireland which has as its slogan "Making renewables Ireland's primary power source". The founding members of NOW Ireland are Airtricity, Oriel Windfarm Limited, Eco Wind Power Limited, Fuinneamh Sceirde Teo and Saorgas Energy Limited. Each of these companies has developed plans for offshore fields in Irish waters and made substantial investment in bringing those plans forward.

Brian Britton, whose Oriel Windfarm recently unveiled plans for a 330mw offshore windfarm in the North Irish Sea, described the potential of offshore wind energy. "Offshore has the capacity to deliver levels of renewable energy which cannot be matched. Technological development in offshore turbines means that efficiency levels are rising, production capacity is rising and costs are rapidly diminishing. This means substantial developments ranging from 100mw to 1000mw in size. Companies such as those represented by NOW Ireland see the financial benefit of a substantial capital investment totalling over €4bn to harness this new technology".

However investment is currently being hampered due to the lack of a clear and coherent Government policy on offshore wind. This stands in marked contrast to other countries throughout the EU, that have actively promoted offshore wind as a key component of their energy strategy. NOW Ireland will work with the statutory agencies to raise awareness of what offshore energy can achieve and to remove the barriers that are preventing the widespread deployment of offshore energy."

Speaking at the launch Torben Andersen of Airtricity highlighted the importance of offshore wind in terms of addressing Ireland's long term security of energy supply. Reliance on depleting fossil fuels sourced from areas that are unstable is not the most attractive option for Ireland. The alternative to this dependence is the development of real alternatives. "Instead of being at the end of the gas pipeline we can be in the forefront of offshore wind deployment in Ireland".

On the issue of meeting our climate change targets Mr. Andersen indicated that offshore wind would be the only generating source that would be capable of delivering the Governments target of generating 33% of our electricity through renewable sources by 2020. "Offshore wind is a key generating source that can deliver sufficient load factors, while still meeting the objective of coming from a clean renewable source."

NOW Ireland Chairman, Michael McBennett, addressing the members at the inaugural meeting in the Burlington Hotel, indicated that the immediate priority for the association was to work with Government to develop a policy on offshore. "Investment will not occur in a vacuum and it is critical for all of the operators represented here that some clarity is arrived at in terms of how this sector is to be developed. Irish companies have been extensively involved in developing offshore projects around the world. The fact that there has been little development to date in Ireland is an indication of the lack of interest to date by government in promoting offshore. NOW Ireland is being formed to change this situation and to promote the development of what should be a major industry for Ireland".

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## **Profiles of founder members**

**Airtricity** is a world leading renewable energy company, developing and operating wind farms across Europe, North America and Asia. The company was founded in 1999 and now employs over 400 people across its offices in Ireland, Scotland, England and the United States. Through partnerships with leading international companies such as GE and Fluor, Airtricity is taking a leading role in the development of offshore wind farms including the Arklow bank wind farm off the coast of Wicklow.

**Oriel Windfarm Ltd** is an Irish owned and operated renewable energy company established to develop offshore wind farms in Ireland. The company's first project is the development of a wind farm in the North Irish Sea. Oriel Windfarm Ltd. applied to DCMNR in February 2007 for a foreshore lease to construct a wind farm, comprising 55 turbines capable of producing 330MW of electricity. This application is currently in the final stages of assessment by the Department.

**Saorgus Energy Ltd** is an Irish owned company that was formed in 1993. Its directors are Michael Barry, Aidan Forde and John Bourke. The company specialises in the development of large wind energy sites in Ireland. In 2006 two companies owned by the directors of Saorgus Energy applied for two foreshore leases to construct an offshore windfarm on the Kish and Bray Banks off the coast of Dublin and Wicklow. This application is currently being assessed by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

**Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta** is a Galway Gaeltacht based company, involved since 2001 in developing an offshore windfarm at the Skerd Rocks, some 6km to 10km off the coast of Carna in County Galway. FST is completing its Environmental Impact Assessment and plans to apply for a Foreshore Lease for a 100MW project shortly. FST previously applied for a connection to the 110 kilovolt electricity distribution station that is proposed for the Camus/Screeb area of Connemara. The Skerd Rocks project is the only proposed offshore windfarm on the West Coast.

**Codling Wind Park** is a joint venture project between Fred Olsen Renewables, a division of Ganger Rolf and Bonheur ASA, both listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange, and Eco Wind Power Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Treasury Holdings Ltd. The planned wind park would comprise of 220 turbines, the nearest to shore being 12km and the furthest being 20km out to sea, situated off the east coast of Ireland in the area of the Codling Bank. Codling Wind Park received a foreshore lease in December 2005 to carry out the full construction of the site in 3 separate phases comprising of 200MW in each stage.