

## The Crown Estate and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland

### Statement of Intent

January 2023

#### Introduction

The Department for the Economy Northern Ireland (DfE) and The Crown Estate (TCE) have developed this Statement of Intent to confirm their joint aspirations in the field of offshore renewable energy development. The purpose of this Statement of Intent is to outline the ways in which the two organisations will work together to enable leasing for offshore wind in the Northern Ireland (NI) marine area, in parallel with work to address relevant regulatory and planning challenges in conjunction with other Government Departments.

#### Common Priorities

- **Climate change and decarbonisation targets:** Helping to enable the NI Executive's aim of achieving net zero carbon and affordable energy under the Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland (Energy Strategy)<sup>1</sup> and Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022 (Action Plan)<sup>2</sup>, in particular the aim for 1GW of offshore wind in NI waters from 2030.
- **Sustainable development in the marine environment:** The Marine Plan for Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup> and the Energy Strategy support growth of the low carbon economy in NI, whilst ensuring this occurs in the most appropriate locations, with co-existence of compatible uses where achievable, and balancing all competing factors in a sustainable, environmentally positive way.
- **Robust decision-making:** Taking a scientifically sound and evidence-based approach to advice, planning and decision-making.
- **Ecosystem resilience:** Enabling consideration of key environmental issues and opportunities at an early stage in the development of policies, plans and projects. Bringing nature recovery and biodiversity enhancement into strategic thinking around future development.
- **Data and evidence:** Seeking opportunities to improve the evidence base through our work and in collaboration with others. Making the best use of available data and evidence, identifying gaps and where relevant, commissioning studies to add value and support informed decision making. Sharing data, wherever possible, for the benefit of all.
- **Community value:** Helping to unlock economic benefits to communities of NI through offshore activities.
- **Onshore planning:** Links with electricity network connections, onshore infrastructure and interactions with planning regimes to realise offshore potential.
- **Co-location and co-existence:** Challenge ourselves to proactively seek innovative opportunities in the marine environment to allow for future development within the framework of the Marine Plan for Northern Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Energy-Strategy-for-Northern-Ireland-path-to-net-zero.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/energy-strategy-path-to-net-zero-action-plan.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-plan-northern-ireland>

## Common Challenges

- The need to increase offshore renewable energy deployment to help meet Energy Strategy and Net Zero targets whilst ensuring a balance with other sea users and the environment.
- The need for regulatory and planning mechanisms, particularly but not exclusively in the marine environment, to support sustainable development and ecosystem resilience (including consenting, electricity network, revenue support and decommissioning) to deploy offshore wind in NI.
- Addressing evidence gaps and ensuring that lessons learnt feed into future work on plans and projects.
- Different approaches between UK and devolved Governments on policies, terminology, and priorities.
- Realising the economic gain, community, and supply chain benefits through expansion of offshore renewables.

## Shared Values

- Working collaboratively and proactively on strategic solutions to common challenges by looking for opportunities for partnership working, and through sharing of ideas and evidence.
- Work on a “no surprises” approach between our organisations on messaging and commitment towards sharing communications.
- Explore ways for both organisations to be most effective in assisting renewable energy development from policy through to decommissioning within the existing and required development of the marine governance framework in a collaborative manner.

## Collaboration Potential

- Developing a joint vision on future marine opportunity, working together on key initiatives both through forums such as the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan (OREAP) Steering Group, Working Groups, and bilateral engagement.
- Work together using lessons learnt from previous leasing rounds and involvement in programmes (such as the GB Offshore Transmission Network Review) to identify challenges and contribute to solutions to progress future leasing in NI.
- Identify opportunities through the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change (OWEC) programme, alongside other Government Departments and relevant bodies, on priority projects to address evidence gaps in NI associated with the development of further offshore wind.
- Provide a united approach, where respective remits allow, to messaging and communications around future offshore wind leasing opportunities within NI.
- Sharing data and evidence, whenever appropriate, about the effects of offshore renewable energy development to improve the evidence base and streamline infrastructure planning and assessment.