



Fisheries

Update Newsletter

March 2022

Generating a greener Ireland





Welcome to our Fisheries Update Newsletter, which we will use in the months and years ahead to provide up-to-date information on our planned activities on the Codling Wind Park project. We will also use it to respond to questions and concerns you raise with us during face-to-face meetings, ensuring you all get the same information from us at the same time.

In this first edition of the newsletter, the focus is on two main items: (1) our proposed Operations and Maintenance Base (OMB) at Wicklow Harbour and (2) responding to the questions you asked during the information evening meetings we had with you last November.

Codling Wind Park is a renewable energy project of strategic national importance and it is our intention to develop it in a way that local communities can feel part of, including the fishing community. Throughout last year, our Fisheries Liaison Officer, Mark O'Reilly, met with most of you many times on the quaysides in Wicklow, Arklow, Greystones and Dún Laoghaire. In November, along with other colleagues from the Codling team, I met with many of you for the first time in Arklow, Wicklow and Dún Laoghaire, which we appreciated.

A few weeks ago, Mark and I, along with our Operations and Maintenance Manager, Andy Kay, held further quayside meetings, this time to get your feedback on our early thinking around the OMB facilities at Wicklow Harbour. Again, these meetings were very helpful, and we were grateful for your time. In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to engage and consult, doing our best to keep everyone involved and updated on the progress being made at the OMB and on the project overall. We will be seeking your input and feedback and listening to your views, as we try to progress our plans in a collaborative way.

The offshore wind industry might be new to Ireland, but it is well-established in other countries, such as the United Kingdom. Our team has extensive experience of working in these markets, and of developing, designing and delivering offshore wind farms in partnership with local communities, including marine users and existing industries, such as fishing.

We know there is a long and proud tradition of fishing off the coast of County Wicklow. We respect this tradition and want to work with you and others to ensure it continues to thrive alongside the emerging offshore wind industry here.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and helpful. In addition to this and future engagement and consultation, you can also get in touch with us at any time. Full contact details are provided at the end.

Is mise, le meas,

Denise

Denise Horan
Stakeholder Engagement Manager

Note:
Throughout this newsletter, we use the collective term 'fishers' rather than the traditional term 'fishermen' when referring to all those involved in the fishing industry. This recognises that both men and women are actively involved in fishing.

Operations & Maintenance Base

In November, we announced that Wicklow Port has been confirmed as the preferred home for Codling Wind Park's Operations and Maintenance Base (OMB), the long-term facility from which the offshore wind farm will be operated and serviced.

This will bring a major economic boost to the area, with significant investment to be made in the development of the port facilities, the creation of 75 new, long-term, local jobs, retraining and apprenticeship opportunities, together with opportunities for local businesses to support the planning, design, construction, and ongoing operation of the new base.

What is the Operations & Maintenance Base?

The OMB will provide offices, warehousing and vessel berthing facilities to permit the safe operation and maintenance of Codling Wind Park over its expected operational lifetime of 30 years. The OMB will be constructed and commissioned during the wind park construction phase and will be ready in advance of operations starting.

While we do not yet know the location or design of these facilities within Wicklow Harbour, we are likely to require the following:

1. O&M building (offices, meeting rooms and welfare facilities for operational personnel as well as a remote surveillance, operation, and marine control room for the wind park)
2. Warehousing
3. Car parking area
4. Berthing space for 2-3 crew transfer vessels (CTVs), each approximately 27m long
5. Pontoon(s) to allow CTVs to berth and mobilise easily
6. Quayside davit crane
7. Fuel storage and water discharge tanks
8. Potentially, a communications mast

Current activities

As discussed with those we met on the quayside in January, we have been looking at various options in the harbour in recent months, in conjunction with Wicklow County Council. We recognise that it is already a busy harbour, and our objective is to identify potential areas in which our facilities can be accommodated with minimum disruption to existing harbour users.

Vessel berthing areas on both the North and South Quays have been identified as early possibilities, with the South Quay quickly emerging as having greater potential. However, following the very constructive feedback we received from you on the quayside in January, we are now considering a wider range of options.

Next steps

Throughout 2022, further work will take place to assess each of the options identified. Then conceptual and detailed designs will be prepared, setting out what a shortlist of these options might look like. These proposals will be shared publicly through a public consultation process and your specific feedback will also be invited.

As per the Irish Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2020, the OMB will require an approved planning application prior to commencement of construction works. The planning application will be prepared in accordance with the regulations and submitted to Wicklow County Council for approval. An Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development will also be completed and submitted in support of the planning application.

Timeline

As with all major development and construction projects, timelines can change. However, currently, it is our intention to submit a planning application for the OMB in 2023 or 2024, following completion of consultation on the various design concepts and selection of the most appropriate one.

Subject to planning permission, it is hoped to commence construction in 2025, with the construction phase expected to last for approximately one year.

Nearshore Survey Work in 2022

In the coming months, we expect to undertake a relatively small geotechnical survey within our designated Foreshore Licence area. This will be a nearshore survey and will not extend to, or include, the Codling Bank.

Further information will be shared and discussed with you in advance of any work commencing. In addition, an appropriate Marine Notice will be issued.

75

Number of long-term, local jobs associated with the Operations and Maintenance Base.



Answering Your Questions

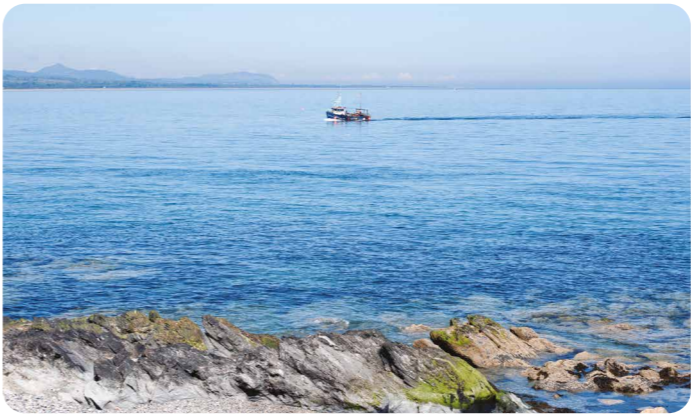
When we held our information evenings last November, you raised many questions, which we committed to responding to in due course. Below is a list of all the questions which were for us to answer, plus our responses. Some additional questions raised were for Wicklow County Council and we have passed these onto the local authority.

	Question	Answer
1	Is it correct that only three berthing spaces will be required as part of the OMB facilities? (It has been suggested that up to seven might be needed, due to the size of the wind farm).	Yes, this is correct. During the operational phase of the wind farm, no more than three vessels will be required to transport maintenance teams offshore.
2	Wicklow Port is already full and there is no room for any more boats or berthing spaces. Boats are already tied up three abreast in some places, which is breaking the harbour bylaws. Will the additional spaces required by the OMB further impact fishers?	Codling Wind Park is seeking to develop an area of the port that is not currently used for berthing, thereby increasing the overall capacity of the port, without increasing congestion or displacing any existing vessels from their current berthing spaces.
3	Will the new infrastructure and changes required within one part of the harbour negatively impact on conditions in other parts?	Codling Wind Park’s objective is to increase the capacity of the port to accommodate our vessels without negatively impacting the conditions within the harbour.
4	Fishers are concerned that they will be displaced if Codling Wind Park builds its OMB in Wicklow. Will there be any displacement?	Codling Wind Park is seeking to develop an area of the port that is not currently used for berthing, thereby increasing the overall capacity of the port without displacing any existing vessels from their berthing spaces.



We are determined to ensure that there is regular, ongoing, and transparent engagement between ourselves, Wicklow County Council and fishers.

	Question	Answer
5	If fishing boats have to move because of the OMB, will fishers be compensated?	One of the key criteria for the Codling Wind Park team in selecting the most suitable location for the OMB facilities at Wicklow Harbour is minimising disturbance to existing harbour users. It is our intention to work with Wicklow County Council and all other relevant stakeholders, including fishers, to find a location that best meets this requirement and allows our activities to take place alongside those of existing users.
6	Will Codling Wind Park buy fishers’ boats?	It is not the intention of Codling Wind Park to buy any fishers’ boats. Our desire is to work side by side with fishers and all other harbour users, ensuring all activities can take place simultaneously, safely, and efficiently.
7	Will the creation of a new pontoon at the South Quay weaken the ability of the South Quay to act as a breaker during bad weather, leading to waves washing up onto the road?	We do not yet know in which area of the harbour we will seek to locate our facilities. However, any pontoons or other structures that might be required will be fully assessed for suitability to local conditions during the design stage of the work.
8	Will there be any vibration from the turbines and the cables under the sea, which could impact fish and whelk stocks in the area?	No vibration is expected from installed turbines or cables, and cables will also be protected from movement by a cable protection system (typically achieved by cable burial). All project components will be assessed as part of the project design process to ensure that when constructed they remain within prescribed and consented limits. Some temporary noise and vibration may be expected during installation of the wind turbines and subsea cables for Codling Wind Park. This will be assessed as part of our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA), which will be undertaken by independent technical specialists and will be informed by detailed underwater noise and vibration assessments.
9	What impact will the cable lines around the base of the turbines have on whelk and local species?	During the cable installation process, some temporary disturbance to benthic species (such as shelled animals and crustaceans) is anticipated, associated with the laying of cables or cable protection materials for the project. This will be assessed as part of the project’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA), which will be undertaken by independent technical specialists. Cable installation studies will be conducted by our project engineers, and subsea cables that connect the turbines will be buried to sufficient depth to minimise any long-term effects on local species, wherever possible. Any cables that cannot be buried to sufficient depth will be protected using appropriate cable protection materials. We are also looking to incorporate appropriate features into cable protection materials to encourage habitat development, including for whelk and other benthic species.



Fishers will be consulted and kept informed of any proposed activities which may have an impact on their activities.

Answering Your Questions

	Question	Answer
10	Will noise from the turbines be audible on shore?	It is not expected that noise from operational turbines of the Codling Wind Park project will be audible on shore. This is due to the distance of the offshore wind farm from the shore, combined with the levels of ambient (existing) noise at the coast. However, the potential for turbines to generate noise will be assessed as part of the project's EIA and a detailed noise study will be undertaken by independent technical specialists to inform noise assessments.
11	What kind of sediments etc. are expected to be found when dredging begins, and how will this be dealt with?	Codling Wind Park will not be undertaking any dredging in Wicklow Harbour. All such work will be undertaken by Wicklow County Council, as will any necessary sediment and seabed assessments, which will be completed in advance.
12	What engagement and consultation will take place with fishers, and when, in terms of the options being considered for the OMB, forthcoming surveys and construction?	In response to the many questions raised during our information evenings in November 2021, we undertook further engagements in January to outline the early-stage options we are considering for our OMB facilities at Wicklow Harbour. We will also share details of our planned offshore survey activities for 2022 once sufficient information is available. In relation to the construction of Codling Wind Park, it is our intention to engage with you on an ongoing basis in advance of this, to share plans and options and to gather valuable feedback.
13	Will Codling Wind Park provide advance notice to fishers of all proposed activities which may impact their livelihoods, e.g., offshore surveys, construction, and operations?	Fishers will be consulted and kept informed of any proposed activities which may have an impact on their activities. Information will be made available directly to you, on our website and via the project's Stakeholder Engagement Manager and Fisheries Liaison Officer.
14	Will Codling Wind Park provide details of any exclusion zones required, at the various stages of the project, and clearly communicate these in writing to fishers?	Generally, there is no reason why fishing (including mussel activities) and offshore wind farms cannot co-exist, and fishing continues today in and around many offshore wind farms in many parts of the world. Following construction of the wind farm, no exclusion zones are proposed to be implemented above cables or within the development area. During site investigations and construction activities, temporary exclusion or safe passage zones surrounding vessels and infrastructure under construction are likely, which will be clearly communicated to fishers well in advance.



1-1.5km

Turbines will have significant separation distances between them, in the region of 1-1.5km.

	Question	Answer
15	What is the risk to fishing boats of a potential collision with the turbines, when Codling Wind Park is in operation?	We anticipate the risk of a collision with the turbines to be very low. Codling Wind Park are using the services of an independent marine traffic consultant who will prepare a detailed Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA), which will inform the risk to fishing and shipping. All turbines will be visible, lit appropriately in line with Commissioner of Irish Lights (CIL) requirements, charted, and mapped on navigation plotters etc. The turbines will also have significant separation distances between them, in the region of 1-1.5km.
16	If there were a collision between a fishing boat and a turbine, would fishers be pursued for damages, and would an exclusion zone be introduced around the turbines?	As mentioned in response to question 15, we anticipate the risk of a collision with the turbines to be very low. Codling Wind Park are using the services of an independent marine traffic consultant who will prepare a detailed Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA), which will inform the risk to fishing and shipping. All turbines will be visible, lit appropriately in line with Commissioner of Irish Lights (CIL) requirements, charted, and mapped on navigation plotters etc. The turbines will also have significant separation distances between them, in the region of 1-1.5km. What might happen in the very unlikely event of a collision is not something we can speculate on at this stage, as the process for addressing such incidents would be led by the appropriate statutory authority, not by any individual project.
17	Will Codling Wind Park provide clarity around the Health and Safety protocols required when the wind farm is operational? (For example, in relation to collision risks)	For all maritime activities, both leisure and professional (private and commercial) there is existing legislation in place governing how to operate when offshore. Seafarers must adhere to marine legislation already in place, which includes a responsibility placed upon vessel owners/users to ensure that they do not pose a risk or cause a collision. In addition to existing legislation, Codling Wind Park will have the following measures and mitigations in place for the duration of the operations and maintenance phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Response Plan• Navigation lights at strategic locations• Notice to mariners and area/turbine/offshore sub-station locations clearly defined on marine charts• Defined shipping lanes (if applicable)
18	Can Codling Wind Park provide more detail on the new jobs which will be created and give re-assurance of the number of jobs being predicted?	Construction of the new base, which is currently expected to get underway in early 2025, will see the creation of around 40 temporary jobs. During the operations phase, we expect to create a further 75 new, long-term, local jobs at the Operations & Maintenance base. The breakdown of these jobs will be as follows: Operating and maintaining the wind turbine generators (WTG) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 47 jobs in total• Includes 40 WTG Service Technicians• A range of managerial and supervisory jobs Asset Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28 jobs in total• Includes 20 managerial and engineering roles• 8 back-office support roles

Answering Your Questions

	Question	Answer
19	Will Codling Wind Park receive preferential treatment from Wicklow County Council to the detriment of fishers?	Codling Wind Park will be subject to the same regulations, by-laws and engagement protocols when dealing with Wicklow County Council as all other harbour users.
20	Is there a disconnect between Codling Wind Park, Wicklow County Council and the fishers?	We are determined to ensure that there is regular, ongoing, and transparent engagement between ourselves, Wicklow County Council and fishers. If three-way engagements between Codling Wind Park, Wicklow County Council and local fishers are required we will be more than happy to facilitate and participate. We will also continue to engage separately with Wicklow County Council in their capacity as both the local authority and custodians of Wicklow Harbour. Likewise, we will engage separately with fishers as important users of the harbour.
21	Why are representatives from Wicklow County Council not present at all meetings between Codling Wind Park and fishers?	While we invited Wicklow County Council to the information evenings we hosted in November, it is a matter for them to choose how and when they engage with their stakeholders. If three-way engagements between Codling Wind Park, Wicklow County Council and yourselves are required in the future, we will be more than happy to facilitate and participate.
22	Some fishers believe that this is a 'done deal' between the Government and Codling Wind Park, and that the project will get the go-ahead, with no regard for fishers. Is this true?	There is no 'done deal' between the Government and Codling Wind Park. For Codling Wind Park to proceed, it will require planning consent from An Bord Pleanála, and to be successful in the competitive offshore wind RESS auction, expected to open towards the end of 2022. We will continue to communicate, engage, and consult with you and other marine users as the project develops and progresses, sharing information and encouraging feedback and input.

Getting in touch

As we continue to shape and design the project, your feedback is very important to us. In addition to planned public consultation later this year, you can contact us in the following ways, at any time:



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