



## [NexSys \(Next Generation Energy Systems\)](#)

Submission to Consultation on the Marine Planning Policy Statement

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### **Introduction**

[NexSys \(Next Generation Energy Systems\)](#) is an all-island, multidisciplinary energy research programme. Through this programme of research, 50 leading academics across 9 institutions are working in partnership with industry to tackle the challenges of energy system decarbonisation, developing evidence-based pathways for a net zero energy system.

NexSys is committed to engaging with national policy processes in order to provide evidence based research and policy insights in support of our net zero ambitions. The draft MPPS will be an important enabling document for the development of key offshore renewable energy (ORE) infrastructure. In this submission NexSys members have sought to provide insights, drawing from their research, as to how the final MPPS can fully support the development of this infrastructure, in line with the Climate Action Plan and Ireland's national climate objective.

## Offshore Transmission Infrastructure and Interconnection

Sustained investment in offshore grids will be necessary to harness Ireland's offshore wind potential<sup>1</sup>. The finalised MPPS recognises this<sup>2</sup>, and this planning prioritisation is welcome. It will be important that this commitment to support necessary transmission infrastructure through planning is matched in the years ahead by strategic capital investment, as outlined in the revised National Development Plan.

## Port Capacity & Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)

Ireland has a major deficit in critical port infrastructure which will be required to support the planned rollout of fixed bottom offshore wind farms. In particular, there are at present no marshalling ports available in Ireland to conduct ORE deployment activities. Forthcoming NexSys research, conducted in Dublin City University [1], indicates that 4 ORE marshalling ports will be needed in order for Ireland to meet its stated ORE targets (5 GW by 2030, though this timeline is likely unachievable at this point).

This under-delivery will result in an under-delivery on planned volumes of installed capacity of offshore renewable wind energy (ORE). This under-delivery will result in the loss of economic benefits from offshore wind identified in the *Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy Policy statement*<sup>3</sup>, *Powering Prosperity – Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy*<sup>4</sup> and the *SEAI Offshore Renewable Energy Technology Roadmap*<sup>5</sup>.

The National Ports Policy 2013, currently under review, identifies 5 key ports across 2 tiers: (Tier 1: Dublin, Cork and Shannon/Foynes, Tier 2: Rosslare and Waterford). Of these ports, Dublin has opted out of offshore renewable energy delivery, and Waterford is not suitable (due to water depth), while Shannon/Foynes will likely specialise in floating wind rather than fixed bottom offshore wind. There are therefore only 2 ports identified which can support fixed offshore wind delivery, though 4 ports (have been identified by NexSys analysis), will be needed if the proposed volume of offshore wind capacity is to be delivered.

Future planning policy should therefore align with National Policy Objective 55 of the National Planning Framework:

*"To support, the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, the sustainable development of enabling onshore and off-shore infrastructure including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements, non-grid transmission infrastructure, as well as port infrastructure for the marshalling and assembly of wind turbine components and for the operation and maintenance of offshore renewable energy projects."*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [EirGrid announces €1 billion procurement programme for offshore electricity grid](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Marine Planning Policy Statement \(MPPS\) - Consultation Draft](#), p.10

<sup>3</sup> [Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Powering Prosperity – Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy - DETE](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Offshore Renewable Energy | Technology Roadmap| SEAI](#)

<sup>6</sup> [National Planning Framework First Revision](#), p.105

In relation to ORE ports, the draft MPPS states that:

*"It is important to note that as an Island nation, Ireland's commercial ports will play a key role in the deployment of ORE infrastructure and in securing the energy supply for the state into the future. In this regard it is crucial that the strategic development of commercial ports to provide the capacity to facilitate the delivery of the Governments ORE targets is prioritised."*<sup>7</sup>

This language is welcome, given the current level of infrastructure deficit all efforts should be made to ensure that there is no planning impediment to the necessary port development. In order to realise this outlined ambition for ports in facilitating ORE infrastructure, it will be necessary to align future iterations of the National Ports Policy with the language used in the draft MPPS.

The draft MPPS identifies Ports of National Significance as being *"supported as a key objective in both National Ports Policy and the Government's National Development Plan"*<sup>8</sup>. However, ORE ports are not mentioned in either the revised 2025 NDP or in the existing National Ports Policy. There is a risk that the necessary strategic port development identified in the MPPS will not be actioned effectively. It may be necessary for the language in the draft policy statement to be strengthened to specifically reference the needed capital investment and policy support that ORE ports will require if they are to facilitate Ireland's ORE ambitions.

## References

Carton, J.G., Duggan, B. Analysis of & Methodology to Assess Port Requirements for Fixed Bottom Offshore Wind Development in Ireland, Journal Article, 2025 - In Press.

## Contributors

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NexSys welcomes further engagement with the Department on this submission and related matters. Any information requests can be sent to [john.doody@ucd.ie](mailto:john.doody@ucd.ie).

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<sup>7</sup> [Marine Planning Policy Statement \(MPPS\) - Consultation Draft](#), p.10

<sup>8</sup> Idem, p.13