

Below are extracts from 2 news articles and an Irish Government strategy paper, published by, RTE.ie (8th & 11th March 2024) and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (gov.ie) (8th March 2024) as referenced below. (a link to the full government paper is provided in the references below)

Ireland's growth in transition to green energy is well underway.



Dairygold to power processing plants with renewable solar electricity from Co-Op member's farm.

In this recent article, RTE (2024) reveals how the Dairygold Co-op has reached a purchase agreement with one of its farmer members to generate renewable electricity to power its processing operations in Cork:

Dairygold to power its processing plants with renewable solar electricity from a co-op member's farm. Mitchelstown-based dairy co-operative Dairygold has become the first dairy processor in Ireland to sign a corporate Power Purchase Agreement (CPPA) with one of its own farmer members. The agreement between Dairygold and local grain supplier Michael Quirk will see the co-op purchase 5,000 MWh per year of renewable solar energy from Lurrig Solar Farm, located on Michael's farm in Aghada, Co Cork.

The solar farm, which was developed in 2022, will provide electricity for Dairygold's processing operations. Among the products Dairygold produces for the home and export markets are milk and protein powders, cheese and butter.

"We're delighted to enter this agreement with Lurrig Solar Farm. It is the first of its kind in the industry and brings together a leading dairy co-operative with a farmer supplier to source locally produced renewable electricity. Pioneering developments like this represent important progress on the implementation of our sustainability strategy," Dairygold's interim chief executive Michael Harte said.

RTE (2024)

According to RTE (2024), farmer Michael Quirke is delighted to be involved in such an initiative and hopes it will encourage other farmers to do likewise. For Dairygold's part, this agreement for solar energy purchase forms part of its wider programme of decarbonisation :

"As a family farmer and member of Dairygold Co-Operative for more than four decades, both Rose and I are delighted to be involved in this groundbreaking agreement with our Co-Op," Lurrig farm owner Michael Quirk said. "When we began farming here at Lurrig, the renewable energy industry did not exist, but today it is a central facet in all of our lives. We hope today's announcement will serve as encouragement for farmers to embrace opportunities in this area," he added.

Today's agreement is just one of a number of initiatives undertaken by Dairygold as part of its decarbonisation programme for its processing and transport operations, which include the development of the decarbonisation roadmap for processing, a programme to assist farmers to install Solar PV generation on their holdings and the installation of solar PV at Dairygold's Lombardstown Mill in Mallow, Co Cork.

RTE (2024)



New wind farm a 'significant step' in meeting renewable energy targets.

Meanwhile in other related news this week, RTE (2024) explains how the joint development by the ESB and Bord na Mona, of Ireland's largest onshore wind farm in Oweninny, Co. Mayo, is a significant step for Ireland in meeting its renewable energy commitments:

The Chief Executive of Bord na Móna has said the Oweninny Wind Farm, which is set to be Ireland's largest onshore wind farm, represents a "significant step" towards meeting the country's renewable energy targets. The Oweninny project is a joint venture between ESB and Bord na Móna representing a total investment of €320m.

Wind energy is part of the Government's national target to generate five times more clean electricity and move to 80% renewable electricity by 2030.

The Oweninny Wind Farm in Moneynierin has been built over two phases with a total output of 192MW, enough to power 140,000 homes and businesses annually. The project site stretches across almost 2,500 hectares between Crossmolina and Bangor Erris.

The land was formerly used for peat harvesting by Bord na Móna to provide fuel for the ESB Bellacorick peat-fired station which ceased operation in 2005. Bord na Móna said the peatland rehabilitation programme and low-carbon operations is part of its Brown to Green strategy.

RTE (2024)

RTE (2024) goes on to outline how this joint initiative will contribute greatly towards ESB's and Ireland's Net Zero by 2040 targets and the transition to green energy generally thereby reducing our dependency on fossil fuels. The wind farm will also provide insight into the technology, a history of the land, its historic use and its transformation, via a new on-site visitor centre:

There were 29 turbines erected in 2019 during phase one, with a further 31 entering commercial operation during the second phase at the end of 2023. Oweninny is Ireland's largest onshore wind farm, and is a joint venture between the ESB and Bord na Móna.

ESB Chief Executive Paddy Hayes outlined how the project will help to support ESB's Net Zero by 2040 targets: "Oweninny Wind Farm is another important step for ESB and for Ireland towards Net Zero. "I would like to commend Bord na Móna for their partnership approach as we worked together to deliver what is now Ireland's largest wind farm. Oweninny builds on our long-standing history of delivering projects of scale in north Mayo and the wider west of Ireland region.

"Renewable electricity reduces Ireland's dependence on gas markets and contributes to Ireland's ambitious climate action plan targets, supporting a Net Zero future for the customers and communities we serve." Bord na Móna Chief Executive Tom Donnellan said: "In Ireland, we are putting more renewables on the grid than ever before, which is essential if we are to meet our targets of achieving 80% renewable energy by 2030.

"Oweninny Wind Farm represents a significant step towards meeting those targets, and we look forward to continued expansion of our wider renewables output to bolster national progress further, including developments across wind, solar, hydrogen and biomass."

The site also includes a purpose-built €3m visitor interpretative centre that focuses on the science, engineering and technology behind renewable energy while raising awareness of climate change and considering the landscape in which the wind farm is based. It provides insight to the history of power generation, peat production, wind energy development, the bog rehabilitation programme, ecological interests and the social history of the area. It will be formally opened at a later date.

RTE (2024)

Powering Prosperity – Ireland’s Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy.



An Roinn Fiontar,
Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment



The Irish Government Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment((2024), informed us this week of the launch of its ‘Powering Prosperity – Ireland’s Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy’, the first strategy of its kind for Ireland. The strategy aims to build a successful, vibrant and impactful offshore wind energy industry in Ireland, ensuring that the sector creates as much value as possible throughout Ireland and maximises the economic benefits associated with government ambitions to deliver its 2030, 2040 and 2050 offshore wind targets:

Ireland has a maritime territory approximately ten times the size of its land area, with our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) approximately seven times our land mass. This sea area provides a strong and consistent wind supply, which is unmatched by most of our European neighbours. Harnessing this abundant source of renewable energy will be transformative for our country, helping accelerate Ireland’s decarbonisation and revolutionise our export led economy. In the future, Ireland will be powered by renewable energy. Now is Ireland’s offshore opportunity.

This Strategy, which is focused on action in 2024 and 2025, sets out a pathway to 2030 for Ireland to become internationally recognised as a source of growing entrepreneurial companies offering innovative value propositions to the offshore wind sector both at home and overseas, as well as a high potential market for foreign direct investment (FDI) to complement our domestic capability.

Powering Prosperity, which includes 40 actions that will be implemented in 2024 and 2025, was developed as part of close ongoing collaboration between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and other government departments and agencies within the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce (OWDT).

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2024)

These actions aim to deliver some key targets and ambitions and according to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2024), a core strategic objective is to build a strong and resilient offshore wind supply chain in Ireland, as well as exploring opportunities for Irish companies to play a major role in the development of offshore wind projects in Ireland and abroad:

The strategy explores opportunities to leverage Ireland's existing strengths in RD&I and to help find ways to support the sector to reach the cutting edge of future developments in offshore wind. In the longer term, the strategy will consider routes to market for Ireland's abundant clean renewable energy, as well as assessing regional development opportunities in areas central to the production of offshore wind energy.

Ireland is on the path towards a new model for our economy and society, perhaps marking the most significant shift in energy use and associated economic and social development since the industrial revolution. The development of an abundant supply of green energy, led by offshore wind, will deliver a sea change in Ireland's global competitiveness that can enable a new era of export led growth.

Ireland, by 2030, will...

- Develop an innovative enterprise ecosystem, with indigenous and multinational companies, that will provide world-leading service to the offshore wind sector.
- Dramatically scale up the enterprise base that will service the offshore wind sectors in Ireland and around the world.
- Deliver up to 5,000 jobs in the offshore wind sector and related industries.
- Maximise opportunities for companies and investors to develop a vibrant and successful supply chain.
- Proactively assist enterprise, workers, and the RD&I ecosystem in availing of these opportunities through targeted funding and supports.
- Seek to establish an Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence OWCE and a new Floating Offshore Wind Demonstrator to support growth and innovation.
- Pursue strategic partnerships with like-minded countries in Europe and beyond.
- Work with stakeholders to develop world-class property solutions powered by renewable energy. In collaboration with other Departments, develop major industrial hubs around key deployment and O&M ports.
- Transform Ireland's regional capability, and deliver opportunity for the people of Ireland, throughout Ireland, by developing industrial hubs and balanced regional economic growth.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2024)

References

RTE (2024) 'Dairygold to power processing plants with renewable solar electricity from Co-Op member's farm'. *RTE.ie March 11*. Available at: Dairygold in renewable electricity deal with co-op member (rte.ie) . (Accessed 12 March 2024).

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Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment((2024) 'Powering Prosperity – Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy'. *Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment(gov.ie) March 08* Available at <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/publication-files/powering-prosperity.pdf>

(Accessed 13 March 2024).