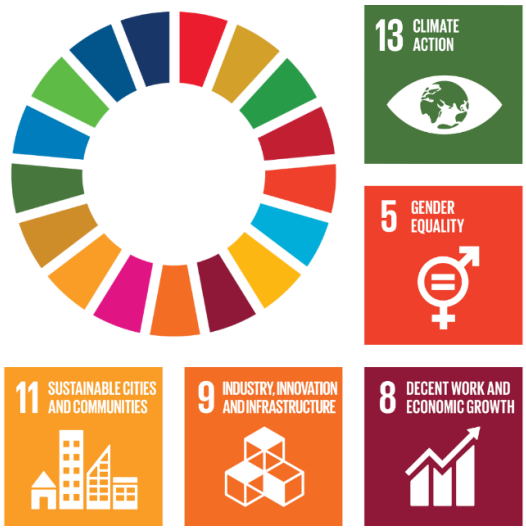
Chambers Ireland

Advancing business together



Proposed offshore wind energy development - Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 - Located off the coasts of Co. Wicklow and Co. Wexford

July 2026

Case reference: 319864

Name: Chambers Ireland

Address: 11 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland D02 FY84

Contents

About Chambers Ireland

Chambers Ireland is an all-island business organisation with a unique geographical reach. Our members are the Chambers of Commerce in the cities and towns throughout the country – active in every constituency. Each of our member Chambers is central to their local business community and all seek to promote thriving local economies that can support sustainable cities and communities.

Key Points

- Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 supports the State's offshore wind targets of 5GW by 2030, 20GW by 2040, and 37GW by 2050.
- The project would support the development of an indigenous offshore wind supply chain across ports, marine services, engineering, fabrication and maintenance.
- Much of the project is de-risked with a Maritime Area Consent and separate consents in place for onshore cabling, the substation, and the South Dock operations.
- Arklow has more than 20 years of experience with offshore wind, having hosted Ireland's first offshore farm, which gives it existing infrastructure and a skilled workforce that lowers delivery risk compared to a greenfield location.
- The project would deliver long-term economic benefits to Wicklow and Wexford through local procurement, supply-chain activity and expenditure over its operational lifetime.
- Delays in delivery carry a broader cost and prolonged uncertainty in offshore wind projects raises the State's perceived risk premium for renewable investment generally.
- The project aligns with Government policy objectives set out in the offshore wind and industrial development strategies, including ambitions to build a domestic offshore wind industry.

Our Perspective

We have long supported the development of renewable energy - both onshore and offshore - and view it as a significant economic opportunity for Ireland that is critical to achieving our climate targets.

We support the granting of consent for Arklow Bank Wind Park 2. For the reasons set out below and given the project is already advanced through the consenting system, we are hopeful it can proceed within a reasonable timeframe.

Progress in Renewable Electricity Generation and Wind Capacity Deployment

Energy security remains one of the foremost concerns for our members. Ireland's heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels leaves businesses across every sector exposed to volatile energy prices and supply uncertainties that are entirely outside of its control.

In recent years businesses have consistently raised concerns about the cost and affordability of energy. This uncertainty makes it more difficult to plan investment, and limits their ability to recruit and retain staff, particularly when businesses must compete in international markets while facing energy costs driven by global factors over which Ireland has little or no influence.

A key driver towards bringing down the cost of energy and ensuring we have an indigenous source of energy will be the delivery of onshore and offshore wind. The State's renewable energy sector has made some progress in recent years, with renewable sources providing approximately 41% of electricity generation in 2024, up from 40.7% in 2023. However, much more needs to be done.

Wind energy remains the dominant renewable technology and contributes over one-third of the State's electricity demand and installed wind capacity reached approximately 4.9 GW by the end of 2024. Substantial acceleration will be required to meet national targets of 9 GW of onshore wind, 5 GW of offshore wind and a further 2 GW of offshore wind capacity dedicated to green hydrogen production by 2030.

While we acknowledge the progress achieved to date, the scale of deployment required over the remainder of the decade highlights the need for policy measures that maximise delivery. Accordingly, projects such as Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 are central to creating an indigenous source of energy that is reliable and resilient to global fluctuations in supply. If approved, then this project will by extension help bring prices down for consumers.

The Need to Accelerate Offshore Wind Delivery to Meet Climate Targets

Achieving our climate targets will depend on the successful deployment of offshore wind at scale and this project sits at the heart of the national effort to meet those targets. The target of connecting at least 5GW of grid-connected offshore wind by 2030, rising to 20GW by 2040 and 37GW by 2050[1] will be dependent on ensuring that the approval process does not get prolonged to such an extent that feasibility is severely impacted to the point it cannot proceed.

Ireland has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030,[2] with the decarbonisation of the electricity system expected to deliver a significant proportion of those reductions. While there is acknowledgment that offshore wind is central to this ambition, despite this, offshore wind deployment remains at an early stage, with only a limited amount of operational offshore capacity currently in place.[3] This is despite the recent ORESS auctions and project development milestones - while representing progress - the latest emissions projections indicate that Ireland remains significantly off-track in meeting its 2030 targets, with emissions

[1] https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/publication-files/powering-prosperity.pdf

[2] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/press-releases/government-approves-climate-action-plan-2025/

[3] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/future-framework-for-offshore-renewable-energy

now projected to fall by up to 23% rather than the required 51%.[4] These figures demonstrate the importance of accelerating delivery for Arklow Bank Wind Park 2.

Macroeconomic considerations

A secure energy supply is a material factor in Ireland's continued ability to attract and retain foreign direct investment, particularly in energy-intensive sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical technology and advanced manufacturing, where the availability of secure, competitively priced and low-carbon energy now features directly in site selection decisions. Ireland competes for this investment against jurisdictions that are moving faster than we are on renewable generation and every project that is delayed unnecessarily in our planning system is a project that strengthens the competitive position of other jurisdictions.

We note the economic assessment that is included within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. It estimates the overall national economic benefit of the project at up to €800 million, supporting 2,300 direct and indirect jobs across its delivery and operational lifetime[5]. If realised then these would also be of significant benefit to the local economy.

More broadly, the Government's Powering Prosperity strategy for offshore wind[6] is explicit in its ambition to build an indigenous supply chain in ports, cabling, fabrication, marine services and specialist engineering with the requisite expertise, rather than simply importing capacity built elsewhere. Consistent with our point elsewhere in our submission, approving the project will mean the State is one step closer to building its own indigenous energy source. This will help

[4] https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2025/epa-projections-show-ireland-off-track-for-2030-climate-targets.php

[5] https://www.sserenewables.com/news-and-views/2023/11/arklow-bank-wind-park-2-could-generate-irish-economic-benefit-of-up-to-800-million-and-support-2-300-jobs-over-project-lifecycle/

[6] https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/powering-prosperity.html

improve its resilience against external supply shocks while also building energy security into the system.

Countries that moved early and consistently in this sector, such as Denmark, built globally significant industries on the back of steady, predictable project delivery[7]. Ireland's opportunity to do the same depends on projects such as Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 actually being built on a reasonable timeline, rather than remaining in the consenting system.

Socioeconomic considerations

Separate consent has already been secured for a permanent operations and maintenance base at Arklow Harbour's South Dock and according to the applicant is expected to support in the region of 80 full-time jobs over the operational life of the wind farm[8]. These constitute long-term, skilled roles based permanently in the area, of exactly the kind that regional economies need to retain young people and offer them a career without requiring them to relocate to large urban areas or further afield. The construction phase itself will bring a further wave of opportunity, in apprenticeships, technical training and graduate engineering roles at a moment when the State is trying to build precisely this kind of skills base in the marine and renewable energy sectors.

There is a significant value in diversifying the employment base of coastal communities that have traditionally depended on a narrower set of industries. Offshore wind development of this kind need not come at the expense of existing marine, fishing or tourism activity and, if properly managed, it can sit alongside those activities and add a further, resilient strand to the local economy.

Beyond direct employment, projects of this nature typically bring with them developer-funded community benefits and numerous examples exist of these at other Irish sites. This is important

[7] https://www.iea.org/reports/denmark-2023/executive-summary

[8] https://www.sserenewables.com/offshore-wind/projects/arklow-bank-wind-park/offshore/

as they provide a direct channel of investment into local facilities, education programmes and other initiatives that benefit the local community directly. Such initiatives matter to the communities hosting this kind of infrastructure. We would encourage their continuation and, - where appropriate - their expansion as the project moves from consent into delivery.

Benefits to Arklow and the wider region

Local supply chain businesses across Wicklow and Wexford stand to benefit directly from sustained contracts over both the construction period and the multi-decade operational life of the project. According to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, of the projected €800 million national economic benefit, €400 million is expected to be local to the Wicklow and Wexford region[9].

Arklow's relationship with offshore wind is not new as the town has hosted Ireland's first offshore wind farm since the early 2000s[10], and the local workforce, harbour infrastructure and business community have accumulated more than two decades of familiarity with this industry as a result. That existing base of experience and infrastructure puts the locality in a strong position to absorb and benefit from a project of this scale, rather than starting from a standing start as other locations might have to. Consent has already been secured for the onshore cabling and substation required to connect the project to the national grid and for the South Dock operations base itself, and this means that the offshore infrastructure now under consideration is, in effect, the final piece required before an already substantially de-risked project can proceed.

[9] https://www.arklowbank2offshoreplanning.ie/downloads/eiar/abwp2-appendix-21.1-socio-economic-impact-report.pdf

[10] https://www.irishtimes.com/special-reports/2025/10/30/winds-of-change-reviving-irelands-stalled-offshore-energy-industry/

Regulatory certainty

Regulatory certainty is of utmost importance in the energy sector given that capital is mobile between jurisdictions and investment decisions are made years in advance. Bringing this well-advanced application to a timely and positive conclusion would send a valuable signal that the planning system is capable of dealing with applications of this complexity in a reasonable timeframe once the necessary information has been provided.

A prolonged or uncertain consenting process does not merely delay this particular project and it raises the perceived risk premium attached to Ireland as a location for renewable energy investment more generally. This point is amplified at a time when the State is trying to attract the capital that is required to meet its offshore wind targets over the coming decades.

Export opportunity

While the domestic market should take priority, there is a significant economic opportunity on our doorstep in the form of renewable energy and, in particular, offshore wind. Projects like Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 have the potential to ensure a sustainable and secure energy source, but also to become a net exporter of excess energy to Europe.

As the technology matures, there will be an opportunity to use excess wind-derived electricity to support hydrogen production which can also have the benefit of replacing the CO_2 emissions that are associated with the operation of heavy goods vehicles, home heating, and other carbon-intensive activities that continue to underpin significant portions of our transport, residential and industrial activity.

Capitalising on this opportunity requires a rapid acceleration of plans, tackling outstanding fundamental development obstacles in the planning system and grid network, and investing in the innovative technologies and skills that are required to accelerate this progress.