



Meitheal na Gaoithe

Social Acceptance of Wind
Energy

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Background

- Irish Wind Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd.
- Founded in 2000.
- 200 members.
- Most members are local, small scale and independent developers.
- Individual members.
- Not open to corporate membership.
- Proposals for approx 700MW.
- Worth €1bn.
- We play a key role technology acceptance in rural communities.

Mnag Policy

- To maximise the local and community benefits of wind energy
- To play a positive role in the advancement of the technology
- To facilitate members interests through
 - Education
 - Lobbying
 - Networking
 - Advising members and public

Organisation

- Office based in Kilkenny
- Secretariat run by Jane Wickham CKEA
- Annual conference in Autumn
- Spring Workshop
- Contact info@mnag.ie
- www.mnag.ie

What is a Small Developer ?

- Generally used to describe projects with < 5MW capacity i.e. small wind category
REFIT
- Not necessarily the full story
- Member projects range in size from 250KW to +100MW
- Independent developers

Challenges for Members

- Extraordinary delays in realising projects some almost 10 years due to planning, grid moratorium, stop-go AER / REFIT.
- Long drawn out process means developers are carrying costs for longer than desirable.
- Independent developers with large number of projects are facing difficult choices.
- Grid connection; High up front costs outside project finance.
- Planning still an issue in spite of new guidelines, environmental designations causing havoc with planning applications and renewals

Challenges for Members Contd.

- Access to finance is a general issue although small projects are being banked with higher equity requirements
- Some turbine suppliers are not as cooperative as others on smaller projects, thankfully we have very solid relationship with a particular turbine supplier
- Irish Bank costs extremely high
- Irish legal and engineering costs are high
- Need to develop new financial models with European banks and investors

Big Issues

- Uncertainty about future market for energy in Ireland due to economic downturn
- Question mark over future of REFIT due to U turn on additional categories i.e. offshore, wave and biomass.
- We need feed in tariffs and costs similar to other countries
- Full economic impact of constraining is an unknown
- Planning issues and huge delays likely with grid connections
- Need an NRA approach to grid development
- Planning extensions for wind farms needed now.

Where to for the Small Developer ?

- Future is as good it ever was in spite of the challenges
- Niche projects on good sites will succeed
- Higher costs must be tackled esp. Grid
- New financial models being created
- Very determined and driven sector

Outlook

- Positive
- Role of local and community developments must be formally recognised in grid process and REFIT
- Interconnection
- Electricity for transport
- Development of energy storage

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not:

Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not:

Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not:

The world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.

What we do in life echoes in eternity "

Author: Calvin Coolidge