



# Meitheal na Gaoithe

Social Acceptance of Wind  
Energy

Thomas Cooke  
Chairman MnaG

## 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](mailto:info@mnag.ie)
- [www.mnag.ie](http://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**