Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Energy Security Framework

One-Year Report

June 2023

Prepared by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
www.decc.gov.ie

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Overview

Over a year has passed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The war continues to have a devastating impact on the lives of millions of Ukrainians. Recent analysis[1] by the UN documents that there have been at least 8,000 civilians killed with over 14,000 injured in the conflict. The war has also displaced millions of Ukrainians with nearly 80,000[2] refugees recorded in Ireland alone and c.4 million across the European Union. In addition, infrastructure across the country has been destroyed with its economy estimated to have shrunk by more than 30% since the invasion began.

In addition to its humanitarian consequences, the war has also had a significant financial impact on households and businesses in Europe. The initial invasion triggered a shock to energy and food markets, bringing prices up to unprecedented levels. Throughout 2022, energy prices, in particular, remained elevated and were the most significant driver of inflation in the euro area which climbed from 2.6% in 2021 to 8.4% in 2022[3]. The energy implications of the war have triggered a significant response across EU Member States who are estimated[4] to have spent c.€650 billion on supports to combat its effects on consumers.

In April 2022, the Irish government launched the National Energy Security Framework (NESF) to provide a single overarching and initial response to address Ireland's energy security needs in response to the implications of the war. The NESF coordinated work connected to energy security across the electricity, gas and oil sectors and detailed 31 Policy Responses which were focused across three themes:

1. Managing the impact on consumers and businesses,
2. Ensuring security of energy supply in the near-term, and
3. Reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU.

In order to assist the development and implementation of the NESF, and related work in the context of impacts of the war on the Irish energy sector, an Energy Security Emergency Group (ESEG) was established featuring membership from key energy agencies and government departments.

One year on since the invasion, there are signs that the financial effects from the war are moderating. International energy prices on wholesale markets have softened considerably, though winter prices remain high. Gas supply issues continue in Europe and are forecast to persist in the medium term. There are also significant policy challenges in energy security remaining in Ireland. The NESF will be discontinued with its remaining actions transferred to the Energy Security Package and the Climate Action Plan.

This document is set out as follows:

Section 1 details the impacts that the war has had on the energy system including its effect on wholesale and retail markets. Government actions taken to mitigate the effects of these impacts are also detailed. The section also provides an update in developments in gas, electricity and oil security of supply.

Section 2 describes the work of the ESEG over the past year. This includes a description of the group's oversight functions and its role in coordinating the NESF, emergency planning and communication campaigns.

Section 3 outlines the work that has been done under each of the 31 Policy Responses that were included as part of the NESF.

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1 These figures are estimated by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Further details are available at the following link Ukraine: civilian casualty update 10 April 2023 | OHCHR.

2 Source: Eurostat, data as of the end of March 2023.

3 Source: European Central Bank, euro area inflation.

4 Source: Bruegel, National fiscal policy responses to the energy crisis (bruegel.org).

1 Impacts on the Energy System

1.1 Market Developments

2022 saw a turbulent year for energy prices. The invasion in February caused a shock in international energy prices, with European gas prices in particular rising to unprecedented levels. This section details the movements in prices over the past year in gas, electricity and oil sectors, their impact on consumers and on government support in this area.

1.1.1 Natural Gas

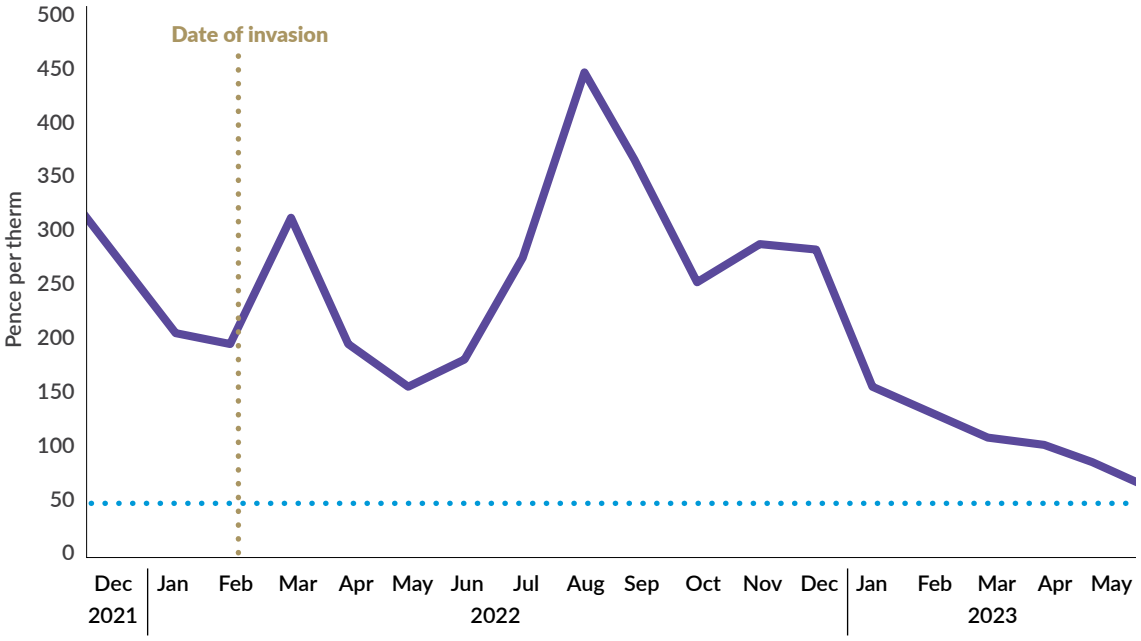

Figure 1: UK Wholesale Natural Gas, National Balancing Point, GBP pence/therm (Source: Refinitiv)

For most of the last twenty years, the average price of wholesale gas was c.50p (GBP) per therm (demonstrated via the dotted black line in Figure 1 above), although there was some strong upward pressure on prices during the second half of 2021 as supply struggled to keep pace with the strong rebound in economic activity after the Covid-19 pandemic.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the invasion in February 2022 caused a significant shock in wholesale gas markets and the price paid for natural gas in Ireland escalated to beyond 500 pence per therm during the month of March 2022. Price increases of similar magnitude were seen in Europe. During the month of August 2022, a myriad of supply chain problems caused prices to surge again to historically high levels to an average of c.450 pence per therm.

With some exceptions, wholesale gas prices have declined since, in part due to relatively mild weather across Europe, strong levels of storage and imports of LNG. As of the end of June 2023, they are still however above the long-term average price.

1.1.2 Electricity

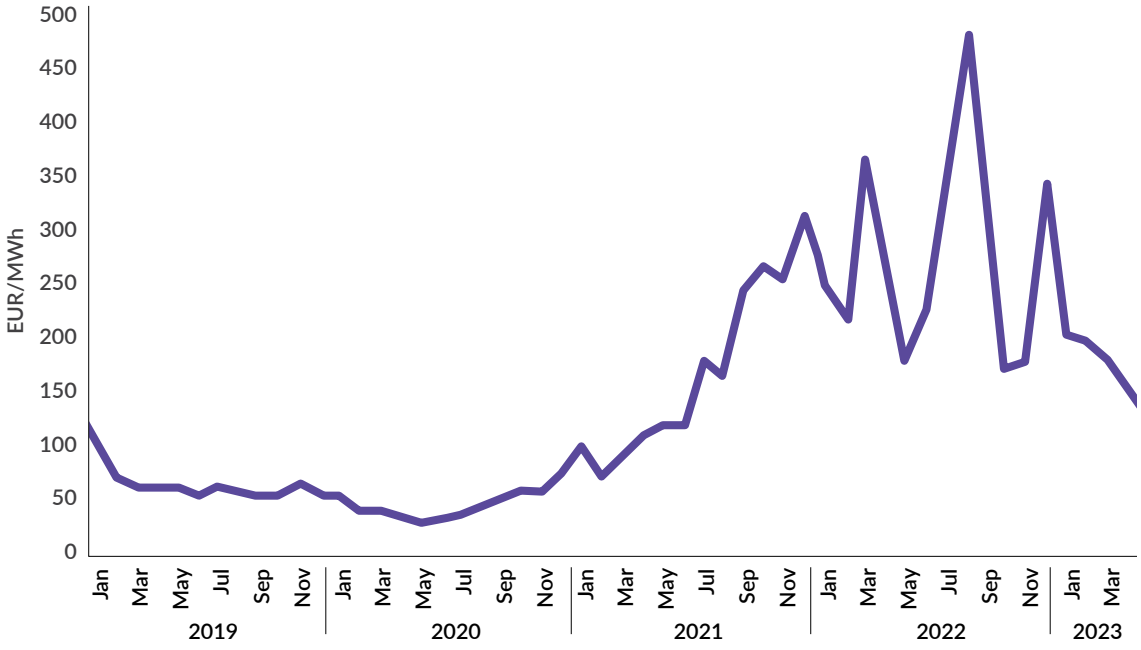

Figure 2: Wholesale price of Electricity, Island of Ireland – EUR/MWh (Source: Refinitiv)

Natural gas generates circa 50% of Ireland's electricity and is also the principal determinant in setting the marginal price of wholesale electricity on the island of Ireland. As a result, wholesale electricity prices have followed a similar trajectory with strong upward pressure on prices throughout 2021 followed by significant increases in the months following the invasion in February 2022. At its peak, in August 2022, wholesale electricity prices increased around 5-fold (or c.500%) compared to the levels seen in January 2021.

Similar to the recent fall in wholesale gas prices, wholesale electricity prices have reduced at the start of 2023. Prices in May 2023 were c.20% less than those seen in January, although they still remain significantly above their long-term average.

1.1.3 Retail Electricity Prices

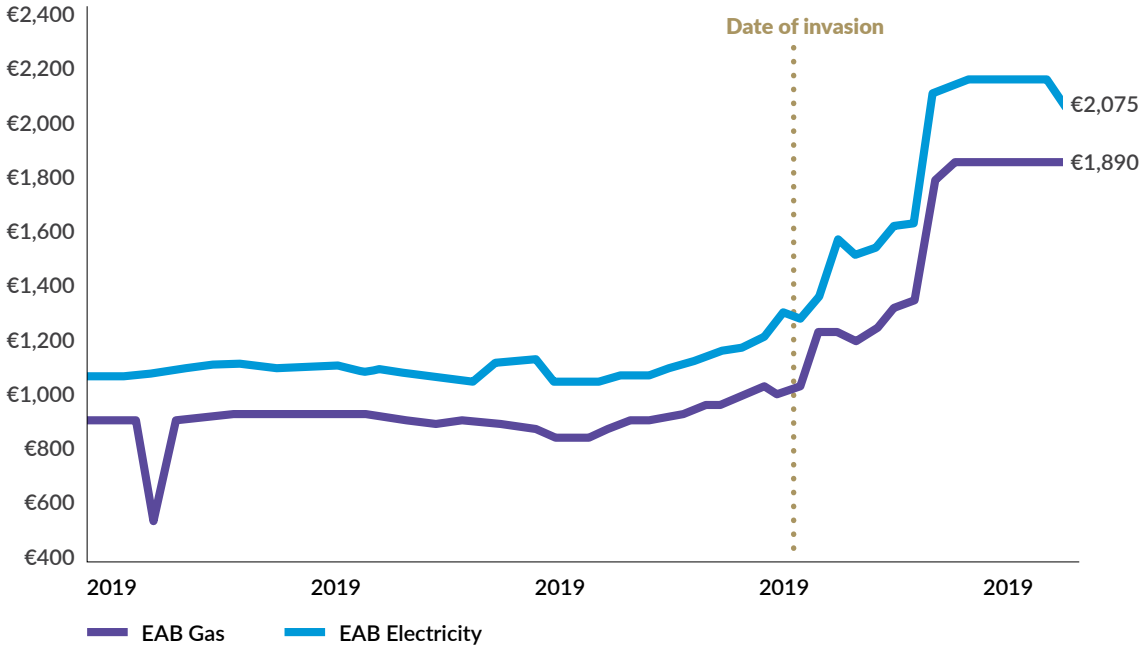

Figure 3: Estimated Annual Electricity and Gas Bills – Euro per Households (Source: CRU)

The rise in wholesale electricity prices over the past two years referenced in the previous section, has had a clear influence on the retail price for electricity that households pay. Prices grew steadily in 2021 and have increased significantly after the invasion in February 2022 as demonstrated in Figure 3 above. Based on Estimated Annual Bill data from the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU), retail gas and electricity prices that an average household would pay, were 107% higher for gas and 90% for electricity in May 2023 compared to May 2021. The difference in the level and speed of fluctuation in wholesale markets compared to that seen in retail prices demonstrates the extent of supplier hedging strategies, which have to a degree sheltered consumers against the full extent of market volatility.

In the year since the publication of the National Energy Security Framework (NESF), there has been a strong level of government support for households to cope with higher energy costs. In June 2022, the Irish government announced additional changes to the Public Service Obligation (PSO) levy, beyond those announced earlier in 2022, which resulted in an indicative annual saving of €75 on a typical household electricity bill. Further supports[5] for households were announced as part of Budget 2023 which included an enhanced electricity credit of €600 for all electricity accounts, with a total value of €1.3 billion. The credit has been supplemented by a suite of targeted cross-government measures aimed at protecting those most at risk of energy poverty. This included revisions to eligibility criteria for the Fuel Allowance to capture a larger number of households, as well as significant lump sum payments.

[5] These supports are detailed in the original National Energy Security Framework document. They include, among others, the Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Payment of €176.22 (excluding VAT) which was applied to each domestic electricity account between April to June 2022.

The past two years have also seen retail prices for businesses increase by a similar magnitude. At the end of 2022, electricity prices[6] in the sector had increased by c.50% compared to those in the previous year and by over c.110% compared to those seen twenty-four months previously. Gas prices in the sector increased by c.56% and by c.176% for the same respective periods[7].

In order to support qualifying businesses with increases in their electricity or gas costs, the government introduced the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS) via the Finance Act 2022. Following a review in January 2023, the scheme was extended to 31 July 2023, with the qualifying threshold for energy cost increase being decreased from 50% to 30%. Businesses can now also claim 50% of the eligible energy costs in relief, up from 40% previously. The latest statistics reported by Revenue note that, as of 4 May 2023, c.28,500 businesses had registered for the scheme and over 38,000 claims have been approved with a value of €84.6 million of which €77.8 million has been paid out.

Greater detail on government supports to households and businesses is available under the update for Policy Response #10 in Section 3.

1.1.4 Oil

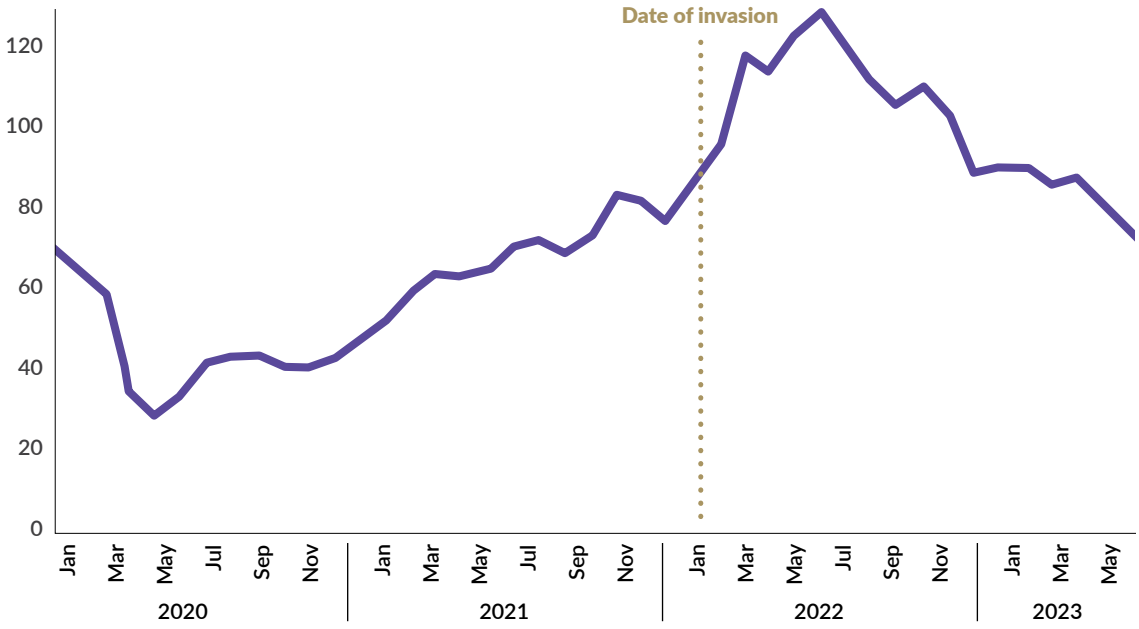

Figure 4: International Oil Price, Brent Crude $ per barrel (Source: Refinitiv)

Prior to the invasion, global oil prices were on a steady increase due to strong demand as the world emerged from the post-pandemic recovery and supply was hampered by lack of capacity in the sector. While a multitude of global economic forces drive the price of oil, Russia's invasion of Ukraine undoubtedly had an immediate effect of driving upward pressure on prices which, in turn influenced the price of oil products in Ireland (see Figure 5 below). To ease market concerns, on 1 March 2022 and on 1 April 2022, member states of the International Energy Agency, including Ireland, agreed to release stocks. Prices remained elevated and volatile throughout most of the summer and autumn.

[6] Business electricity prices (ex VAT) weighted average across all suppliers as of 2022 S2 (i.e., July to December 2022) compared to 2021 S1 and 2020 S1 respectively, source SEAI.

[7] Business gas prices (ex VAT) weighted average across all suppliers, 2022 S2 (i.e., July to December 2022) compared to 2021 S1 and 2020 S1 respectively, source SEAI.

In the summer of 2022 sanctions were imposed on Russian oil by the European Union, the United States and other countries. As of May 2023, the industry in Europe appears to have adapted to the sanctions and have replaced imports from Russia with crude and oil products from the Middle East and Asia. Prices of crude oil have declined significantly in recent months to c.$75 a barrel which is in the region of the long-term average.

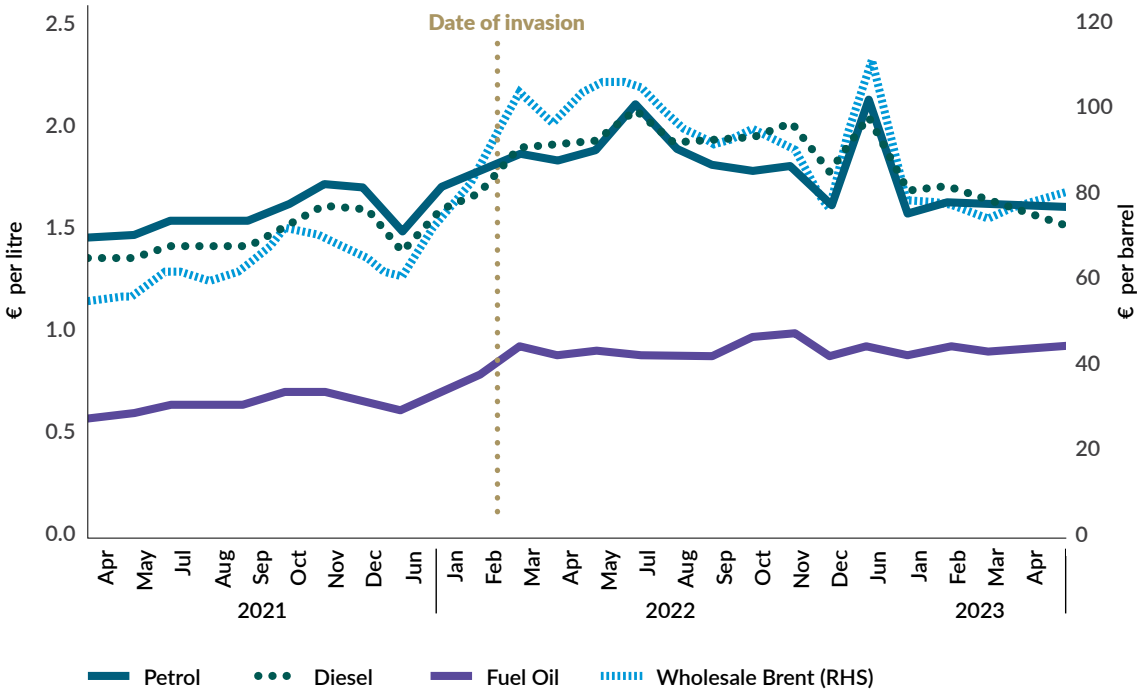

Figure 5: Retail Oil Product Prices, inclusive of taxes (Source: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, based on market information)

The effect of the invasion on oil products is demonstrated in Figure 5 above. Despite some significant increases in the months following the invasion, prices for most products are now at or below their pre-invasion levels. In order to reduce the effect on consumers of price increases, in March 2022 the government introduced an excise cut for diesel and petrol by 15c and 20c a litre respectively (see Policy Response #1 in Section 3 for more detail). On 1 June 2023 a phased restoration of these rates will begin with two further restoration dates in September and October 2023.

1.2 Developments in Energy Security

While the war in Ukraine has significantly affected energy security for many EU Member States, the magnitude of the war's effect on energy security in Ireland to date, has not been as severe. Despite this, the war has highlighted vulnerabilities in Ireland's energy security of supply policy, and since the NESF, significant work has been undertaken to identify and implement actions to improve Ireland's security of energy supply. During 2022, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) carried out a Review of the Security of Energy Supply of Ireland's Electricity and Gas Systems. In addition, at the end of 2022, DECC received a report of the findings from the independent review of the security of electricity supply, carried out by Mr. Dermot McCarthy, which contained recommendations for improving the security of electricity supply in the short and medium term. Both of these reports are included as Annexes to the Energy Security Package. This section details additional updates in the gas, electricity and oil sectors since the original publication of the NESF in April 2022.

1.2.1 Gas

During 2022, Ireland had a total gas demand of 57.1 TWh[8] of which c.25% came from indigenous sources with the remainder 75% being imported through gas interconnectors from Scotland. While the Russian invasion of Ukraine had destabilised supply chains for gas across Europe the flow of gas from the UK to Ireland has not been directly disrupted or reduced as a consequence of the war[9].

Throughout 2022, DECC officials liaised closely with counterparts in the UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to discuss cooperation on gas security of supply with the goal of agreeing a draft Memorandum of Understanding (see Policy Response #13 in Section 4).

During 2022, gas security of supply has also been a major focus of coordinated policy at EU level. In June 2022, legislation was agreed[10] which set the ambitious target for Member States to achieve an 80% gas storage target by 1 November 2022. This target was exceeded with an average storage level of over 90% being achieved by the target date.

Coordination action was also agreed[11] in 2022 for Member States to implement gas reduction measures. The regulation included a voluntary reduction of natural gas demand by 15% for winter 2022/2023. This target was surpassed with average EU consumption of natural gas dropping by 17.7% between August 2022-March 2023 compared with the average gas consumption for the same months (August-March) between 2017 and 2022. Ireland was granted an exception to the mandatory element of the reduction target as it is not directly interconnected with the gas system of other Member States however it did achieve a gas reduction of 0.2% for this period.

1.2.2 Electricity

Natural gas is the crucial fuel input to electricity supply and accounts for c.50% of Ireland's electricity generation in 2022[12] with the rest of electricity being generated from other sources including renewables, coal, oil, peat, and waste. Renewables have become a far greater proportion of the electricity mix in recent years.

All large gas-fired generation plants in Ireland are required to have secondary fuel (i.e., oil) capability along with stocks that would allow them to operate for several days without natural gas. This provides the electricity system a limited level of resilience to cope with short-term issues with natural gas supplies. Over the course of 2022, DECC, in conjunction with National Oil Reserve Agency (NORA) and EirGrid, have further advanced the production of an emergency plan to replenish secondary fuel stocks of oil, in the event of a shortage of natural gas. The production of the final draft of the Plan is included as an action in the Energy Security Package.

Ireland's largest power station, Moneypoint in County Clare which is operated by the ESB, uses coal which has, in recent times, been sourced from Russia. In April 2022, the European Union adopted a package of sanctions which included an import ban on all forms of Russian coal. Ireland fully supported this import ban. It means that ESB were required to source coal for Moneypoint from alternative sources from August 2022 when the import ban came into effect.

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8 Source: Gas Networks Ireland, https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/news/active-news-articles/gas-report-2022/

9 The UK imports 50% of its gas needs of which the majority is from Norway with the remainder from LNG.

10 Regulation (Eu) 2022/1032 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 June 2022 Amending Regulations (EU) 2017/1938 and (EC) No 715/2009 with regard to gas storage, OJ L 173, 30.6.2022, p. 22.

11 Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1369 of 5 August 2022 on coordinated demand-reduction measures for gas.

12 Source: SEAI, Electricity | Monthly Energy Data For Ireland | SEAI

There has been significant demand growth in the Irish electrical system in recent years brought about by greater electrification in the heat and transport sectors, demand from large energy users and from changes in demographics. There are also challenges on the supply side, as outlined in EirGrid's All-Island Generation Capacity Statement[13], concerning deteriorating availability of existing plant and of the failure of forecasted new generation to materialise. This has led to reduced margins between supply and demand which, in turn, has brought a greater risk of disruptions to the electricity system. This risk is being managed in Ireland through the CRU's Security of Supply programme. The CRU have statutory responsibility for security of supply in Ireland. Throughout 2022 and Q1 of this year, the CRU have progressed this work under the Programme which contains an extensive set of actions with the objective of improving generation capacity, demand side responsiveness and the stability and resilience of the energy system. Greater detail on the Programme and recent work undertaken is provided in Section 3, under the summary of Policy Response #15.

As part of the Security of Supply Programme, temporary emergency generation capacity is being developed, in order to secure Ireland's supply of electricity over coming winters. Temporary emergency generation capacity is to be used when other capacity has been exhausted and there is a potential risk to the electricity system. The intention is for this to be used to safeguard secure supplies of electricity for households and businesses as enduring generation capacity is deployed.

1.2.3 Oil

Ireland maintains 90 days of strategic oil reserves to draw on in the event of significant shortages. These reserves are managed by the National Oil Reserve Agency and are required by EU law and by the terms of Ireland's membership with the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Twice during 2022, member countries of the IEA agreed to a coordinated release of strategic oil stocks to help ensure stable international energy markets. The amounts agreed to be released represented a relatively small share of the overall international strategic oil stocks. In January 2023 NORA replenished stocks that were released. Further details on monitoring of oil security of supply are available under Policy Response #12 in Section 3.

In early 2023, legislation in the form of the Oil Emergency Contingency and Transfer of Renewable Transport Fuel Functions Act 2023[14] was introduced. The main purpose of the Act is to strengthen the statutory provisions available to government to respond to a severe or prolonged oil emergency. This includes the placing of oil emergency planning on a statutory basis and the reinforcing of the Minister's powers to protect fuel supplies to critical services.

The Act places a statutory requirement on the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications to produce an oil emergency response plan, specify the main elements to be contained within the plan, and require oil industry cooperation in the making of the plan, and allows the Minister by order, where there is a fuel emergency, to provide for direction making powers to ensure the supply of fuel to protect the operation of the electricity grid and other essential services.

The Act also provides for the transfer of oil related excise data from the Revenue Commissioners to assist in oil emergency contingency planning and provides for the Establishment of an Oil Suppliers Emergency Register, in order to allow for timely communication between the Minister and oil suppliers during an oil emergency.

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[13] The full report is available on EirGrid's website on the following link EirGrid_SONI_Ireland_Capacity_Outlook_2022-2031.pdf (eirgridgroup.com)

[14] For more detail, please see Oil Emergency Contingency and Transfer of Renewable Transport Fuels Functions Act 2023 (irishstatutebook.ie)

2 The Energy Security Emergency Group

In March 2022 the Energy Security Emergency Group (ESEG) was established for the purpose of coordinating Ireland's response to the impacts of the war in Ukraine on Ireland's energy system. The group is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) and includes representation from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), Gas Networks Ireland (GNI), EirGrid, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

The ESEG has, at the time of writing, met over twenty times since its creation[15] and has been supported by the work of a number of subgroups which focus on the following areas:

- Electricity and Gas Security of Supply
- Communications
- Oil Security of Supply
- Policy Response
- Data and modelling
- Business Energy Users
- Consumers and Vulnerable Households

The specific focus of each subgroup has allowed for the close monitoring of emerging energy issues in Ireland and Europe. These subgroups have also allowed for closer engagement of specialists between energy bodies, engagement with academia, the facilitation of stakeholder cooperation and the leveraging of industry insight.

2.1.1 The Activity of the ESEG

The primary function of the ESEG has been to oversee the creation, monitoring and implementation of the National Energy Security Framework (NESF). The Framework, which was published on 13 April 2022 outlined Ireland's energy response to the war in Ukraine. The ESEG has reviewed quarterly progress updates on the implementation of the NESF's Policy Responses, on which further information can be found in Section 3 of this report.

The ESEG has also received sectoral energy updates for gas, electricity and oil at each meeting. These updates included detail on any recent or potential system alerts, variations in prices and demand, progress on emergency scenario planning and on international developments.

The Group has also monitored developments of energy policy at an EU level, particularly the REPowerEU Plan (see Text Box 1 below), regulations to reduce electricity and gas demand, regulation to address windfall gains in the energy sector, details on proposed EU electricity market reform.

[15] ESEG meeting minutes which provide an overview the activities of the group are uploaded regularly to the DECC website: gov.ie - Energy Security Emergency Group (ESEG) (www.gov.ie)

Text Box 1: REPowerEU

In May 2022, the European Commission launched REPowerEU[16] which is its plan to eliminate European dependence on fossil fuels following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The plan outlines measures to reduce European imports of Russian fossil fuels, while also increasing EU energy resilience and accelerating the green energy transition. Reducing energy demand is also a key aim of the plan, with contingency measures put in place should supply interruptions arise. REPowerEU plans to increase investment in renewable and clean energy and enable industries to phase out fossil fuels at a heightened pace. The plan will safeguard member states from energy shortages and demonstrate solidarity with, and support for, Ukraine.

REPowerEU has entailed the mobilisation of approximately €300 billion in supports for Member States, of which €72 billion will be in grant form, and €225 billion is in loan form. This includes about €10 billion towards addressing missing links for gas and Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) and up to €2 billion for oil infrastructure in order to cease shipment of Russian oil. The remainder of the funding will go toward the acceleration of the clean energy transition.

Key achievements of this plan to date include:

- Saving 20% of EU energy consumption,
- Introduction of the gas price cap and the global oil price cap, and
- Doubling the additional deployment of renewables.

The ESEG also examined shortlisted projects proposed by DECC for consideration for funding under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). Under the REPowerEU plan, which was published in May 2022, additional NRRP funding is being provided to Member States in the form of grants and loans. In order to receive REPowerEU grant funding, an additional chapter will need to be added to the NRRP which will set out the projects requesting funding and the reforms which are being made in line with the REPowerEU plan. The additional chapter to the NRRP is being led by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDPR) with input from DECC and analysis is underway on eligible projects for inclusion.

2.1.2 ESEG and Energy Emergency Planning Oversight

The work of ESEG has also included oversight of energy emergency planning, which ensures plans are up to date and stress tested. In order to align with prudent and ongoing energy contingency planning, emergency training exercises are held to test a coordinated response. In the unlikely event of a disruption to Ireland's gas or electricity supplies, these exercises will play an essential role in ensuring continuation of supply.

Joint gas and electricity emergency training exercises were held in September 2022. The purpose of these exercises was to test a coordinated response, from numerous stakeholders to a hypothetical and unlikely disruption to Ireland's gas or electricity supplies. During these exercises, various hypothetical scenarios were considered, and responses were stress-tested. The exercises formed part of regularly tested and well-established emergency plans. Feedback from these exercises

[16] More information is available on the European Commission website: REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe (europa.eu)

has been analysed and learnings have been implemented. A key conclusion has been that public messaging and the communication of critical information is essential in the case of such an emergency.

Similarly, oil emergency training exercises are also conducted as part of regular and ongoing contingency planning. Measures identified include the prioritisation of fuel to emergency and critical services.

While a significant disruption to energy supplies is unlikely, it would have an impact across multiple sectors. The government is acutely aware of the effect that such a disruption would have on Irish households and businesses and is committed to ensuring that the risk is minimised and prepared for. For more information, see Policy Response #11 and #12 in Section 3.

2.1.3 Strategic Communications, Engagement and Insight Generation

As part of ESEG, an Energy Security Communications Subgroup, chaired by the DECC Head of Communications, was established in March 2022. This Subgroup is comprised of representatives from the lead energy agencies, energy operators, energy related government departments, Government Information Services, and the CRU.

Working closely with the ESEG, the Subgroup was and continues to be accountable for ensuring that consistent and clear information is available on all aspects of energy security and affordability, as well as highlighting where to find relevant advice and support from Government. A key objective for this Subgroup was to maximise the amplification of communications from all members for maximum reach, in advance of and during the 2022/23 heating season. Live monitoring of the situation and changing public sentiment, with a particular focus on those experiencing financial hardship or who are vulnerable, was critical. Of particular note was the introduction of the 'Reduce Your Use' public information campaign which is described in greater detail below.

Text Box 2: Reduce Your Use

'Reduce Your Use' is a nationwide public information campaign to promote and encourage energy efficient behaviour. As the cost-of-living crisis developed, the campaign also highlighted the range of supports and relevant advice available to families, households and businesses.

The first phase was launched by DECC in April 2022 and ran for four weeks with ads in print, on radio and across social media, primarily focused on the energy efficiency message to support security of supply and manage energy costs. From the outset, it was acknowledged that the campaign would evolve, as required, to meet the changing information needs and concerns of the public.

As the heating season progressed across Winter 2022/2023, media weighting increased accordingly as the effects of rising prices became more apparent due to colder weather and increasing cost of living pressures. An intensive, evidence based, multi-channel campaign was maintained until the end of the winter heating season (March 2023), which aimed for maximum audience reach and according to the Amárach energy consumer tracker, the 'Reduce Your Use' advertisements were seen by 88% of respondents, as recorded on March 30, 2023.

continued

As high energy costs persisted past heating season, the campaign was maintained at a focused and targeted level into Q2 2023. This ensured that those struggling to pay their energy bills continued to be made aware of the supports and services available, particularly their rights as energy consumers.

Fortnightly research on consumer energy behaviours and attitudes has informed the campaign messaging and channel selection throughout. It has ensured that a key objective of the campaign strategy is upheld i.e., to continuously monitor the situation and listen to people's needs. Messaging has been selectively balanced between reducing energy use call-to-action, the necessity to stay warm and well during colder periods and promoting supports for those struggling to pay for energy bills, particularly in later stages of the campaign (Q2 2023). Self-reported behavioural changes among the population to reduce energy use/costs continued at high levels throughout the campaign, with numerous methods being employed, and a common pattern of behaviour evident. Over 70% of respondents to the fortnightly tracker reported increasingly consistent energy reduction behaviour, which included using large energy appliances more sparingly, turning off lights in unused rooms and using central heating less often. Campaign paid media analytics, as well as traffic to gov.ie/ReduceYourUse also confirmed significant public demand for the information and the high level of engagement with the content was evident in the campaign page traffic generated.

Research showed a remarkably high level of awareness amongst the public of the Reduce Your Use campaign activity. From January 2022, over 80% of respondents said they had seen or heard about the campaign. The figure rose from 48% recall in October 2022 to 88% by the end of March 2023. There was considerable awareness of the campaigns' ads across more at risk groups. In advertising standards, figures for ad recall represent as close to universal awareness as can be reached in the Irish market.

2.1.4 Future of the ESEG

Following the publication of the Energy Security Package, it is proposed that an Energy Security Group (ESG) serve as a permanent and long-term replacement for the ESEG. The role of ESEG has been to coordinate, oversee and direct all national level activity and responses in relation to the impact of the war in Ukraine on energy security. While the initial range of uncertainty has diminished in the year since the invasion, some of its impacts – such as high energy prices and elevated risks to security of supply of gas – are forecasted to remain in the medium term. Therefore, a strong case remains for close cooperation and regular oversight among senior energy policy makers and regulators to continue into 2023.

The ESG will be chaired by the Secretary General of DECC with membership drawn from principal energy agencies. Representatives from other relevant departments may also be included. Final membership composition will follow from the allocation of the suite of actions from the Energy Security Package.

3 The National Energy Security Framework

This Section details the progress made for each of the Policy Responses since the publication of the original report in April 2022. The National Energy Security Framework (NESF) outlined 31 policy responses to Ireland's energy needs in the context of the war in Ukraine, as follows:

- **Theme 1:** Managing the impact on consumers and businesses.
- **Theme 2:** Ensuring security of energy supply in the near-term.
- **Theme 3:** Reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU.

The implementation of these responses has been overseen by the Energy Security Emergency Group (ESEG) over the past year, with updates being provided by the group's secretariat on a quarterly basis. Of the 31 responses identified, 22 are now complete. The outstanding nine responses are underway and are carried over to the Energy Security Package and the Climate Action Plan.

Theme 1: Managing the Impact on Consumers and Businesses

1. Continuation of the excise duty reduction on petrol, diesel and marked gas oil until the Budget in October 2022

Led by: The Department of Finance **Status:** Complete

As part of supports provided for consumers and businesses facing increased energy costs, the Mineral Oil Tax (MOT) on petrol, diesel and marked gas oil was reduced in March 2022. The October 2022 Finance Bill provided for the extension of these reductions until 1 March 2023 with a subsequent government decision on 21 February 2023 provided for a further extension of these reduced rates. On 1 June 2023 a phased restoration of these rates will begin with two further restoration dates in September and October 2023.

2. VAT will be reduced from 13.5% to 9% on gas and electricity bills from the start of May until the end of October

Led by: The Department of Finance **Status:** Complete

The intention of this response was to contribute to a reduction in the cost of electricity and gas bills for consumers. The COVID Finance Act was signed on 2 June 2022 and reduced the VAT on gas and electricity bills from 13.5% to 9%. This reduction has since been extended twice and will remain in place until October 2023, in order to continue to offset the impact of rising energy costs on consumers.

3. An additional payment of €100 will be made to all recipients of Fuel Allowance

Led by: The Department of Social Protection **Status:** Complete

The Fuel Allowance scheme is a means tested payment to assist pensioners and other long-term social welfare dependent households with their winter heating costs, at a rate of €33 per week from late September to April. In order to further support households most at risk of energy poverty, additional payments of €125 and €100 were made to all recipients of Fuel Allowance in March and May 2022 respectively. All fuel allowance recipients also received an additional one-off lump sum payment of €400 in November 2022.

In addition, in Budget 2023, measures were announced to expand eligibility for the Fuel Allowance Scheme with effect from 1 January 2023 through a new means test for those over 70 and an increase in the means test for those under 70.

4. Reduce Public Service Obligation Levy to zero by October 2022 and review the price drivers behind electricity and natural gas bills (including network costs) with a view to mitigating cost increases for consumers and businesses in the near term

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities **Status:** Complete

As a result of unprecedented and sustained levels of wholesale electricity prices, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) published a decision paper[17] in July 2022 which calculated that the PSO Levy would for the first time be negative. On 1 October 2022 the levy was set to zero and on 28 February 2023 the CRU announced that final electricity customers will receive PSO payments on their electricity bills, beginning in March 2023 and continuing to the end of the 2022/23 PSO Year (end September 2023).

During the first half of 2022, the CRU also reviewed network charges behind natural gas and electricity bills. On 3 June 2022 the CRU issued a decision paper on transmission tariffs and allowed revenue for 2022/23 for Gas Networks Ireland (GNI). The estimated impact of changes in transmission and distribution tariffs equated to a €16 increase on an average residential gas customer's annual bill however this would have been €51 per annum without the implementation of mitigating measures.

For electricity, in September 2022 the CRU published[18] its decisions on the 2022/23 allowed revenues and electricity network distribution and transmission tariffs. The unwinding of the Large Energy User rebalancing subvention will have a positive effect on the network charges and mitigates other increases in costs by an estimated average of €40 for the year for domestic customers.

Additionally, in the same decision paper, the CRU introduced peak pricing across a number of domestic, small and large-scale consumer segments. This features a 10% increase in network charges during the peak period of 5pm-7pm, and this increase has in turn been offset by a corresponding decrease of prices during off-peak periods. The intention of this intervention was to incentivise suppliers to promote appropriate off-peak products and services to customers.

The CRU also worked closely with stakeholders to accelerate and expand ESB Network's (ESBN) 'Beat the Peak[19]' demand reduction measures for Winter 2022/2023. This campaign encourages consumers to shift their energy use from peak to off-peak hours where possible.

[17] The Decision Paper is available on CRU's website via the following link CRU Publishes Public Service Obligation Levy for 2022/23 | CRU.ie

[18] The Decision Paper is available on CRU's website via the following link Electricity Network Tariffs 2022/23 – National Energy Security Framework Response Proposals | CRU.ie

[19] Further information is available on ESB Network's website at the following link Overview (esbnetworks.ie).

5. Introduce a programme of communications which will inform consumers and businesses what actions they can take to reduce their energy demand, how they could lower energy bills and what supports are available to them

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the SEAI **Status:** Complete

The 'Reduce Your Use' (RYU) public information campaign was launched on 28 April 2022, with rapid adaptation of messaging prioritisation based on research to respond to evolving public sentiment and temperature changes. The media channels expanded across the heating season as required to provide the necessary advice and information. Channels included TV, print, radio, digital, social media, media partnerships and a national door drop.

The design and implementation of the campaign was led by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) incorporating input from members of the Energy Security Communications Subgroup which includes representatives from DECC, Department of the Taoiseach, Department of Transport, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Social Protection, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), CRU, GNI, EirGrid, ESB and National Oil Reserve Agency (NORA). For further information on the campaign please see Section 2.1.3 of this report.

6. Implement a package of measures to enhance protections for financially vulnerable customers and customers in debt including:

- Ensuring more manageable payment/debt repayment plans by extending the time for repayment.
- Ensuring more manageable payment/debt repayment for customers on financial hardship prepayment meters.
- Enhancing protection for financial hardship prepayment meter customers.
- Ensuring customers in debt are on a metering/payment plan that is suitable for them.
- Ensuring suppliers proactively identify customers in debt who should not be on prepayment meters and help find other options.
- Optimising the involvement of NGOs by ensuring all suppliers nominate specific contacts to support customers in debt.
- Improving protection from disconnection for all domestic customers.
- Promoting greater awareness and uptake of supplier procedures for dealing with customers in, or at risk of energy debt.
- Enhancing vulnerable customer protections.

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities **Status:** Complete

The purpose of this response is to ensure that existing energy customers are supported in accessing competitive rates. In order to ensure they access the most appropriate tariff and discounts available consumers must be supported to engage with their suppliers, or switch to other suppliers.

In August 2022[20], the CRU published a suite of customer protection measures, including: extended disconnection moratoriums over the winter months, extended debt repayment period, reduced burden on PAYG top-ups, a "cheapest tariff" obligation on suppliers for customers with financial hardship meters and proactive promotion of the Vulnerable Customer register by energy suppliers.

[20] More information can be found on the CRU website at the following link CRU Reminds Customers of Protections in place with Energy Suppliers | CRU.ie

continued

In March 2023 the CRU published their 2023 Electricity and Gas Supplier's Handbook[21]. This handbook includes measures to enhance protections for customers with a focus on financially vulnerable and otherwise vulnerable customers. Stakeholders provided feedback on these proposals during development, including GNI and ESB-N regarding how quickly such measures could be implemented.

7. Supporting existing customers to access a competitive rate for their energy

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities **Status:** Complete

As mentioned under Policy Response 6 above, in March 2023 the CRU published their 2023 Electricity and Gas Supplier's Handbook[22] which included measures to support customers in debt or in financial hardship. This includes an obligation on suppliers to offer the cheapest available tariff to customers on Financial Hardship meters. In addition, the CRU Winter Communications Campaign focused on customer protections including for vulnerable customers and those who may have issues paying bills. The campaign provided consumer messaging on remaining active in the marketplace to extract the most value possible from switching supplier and smart meters.

8. Introduce a targeted scheme for installation of PV panels for vulnerable customers/ households with a budget of €20m

Led by: SEAI **Status:** Complete

This scheme aims to provide grant support to approximately 4,000 vulnerable customers on the ESBN's Priority Services Register to install solar PV systems at their homes. The design of the scheme has been completed with outbound comms to eligible participants to begin early in Q2 2023.

The electricity generated from these installations will displace approximately 30% of these customers' consumption of purchased electricity and will reduce their electricity bills with immediate effect, and for the next 20 years.

The grant will be structured as a fixed amount payable for each home. There will be no capital investment required by the electricity customers. Electricity suppliers will promote the scheme and will have responsibility for the design and installation of the solar PV systems. Grant payments will be made by SEAI to the electricity suppliers, which will pass through the full value of the grants as discounts to the customers.

[21] The full handbook can be found at the following link Microsoft Word - CRU Suppliers' Handbook 2022 Tracked Change Version 17.06.2022 (divio-media.com)

[22] The full handbook can be found at the following link Microsoft Word - CRU Suppliers' Handbook 2022 Tracked Change Version 17.06.2022 (divio-media.com)

9. Work with the European Commission and other Member States to consider the policy proposals outlined under REPowerEU designed to aid consumers and businesses deal with the increasing costs of energy.

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

Status: Complete

In May 2022, the European Commission announced its REPowerEU[23] plan in response to the challenges arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, particularly those facing the energy market. The aim of the plan is to end EU reliance on Russian fossil fuels, while also advancing the EU's climate objectives. This is to be achieved via energy savings, diversification of energy supplies, and accelerated rollout of renewable energy across Member States. The Plan also provides the potential for further EU funding via the Recovery and Resilience facility.

Under the REPowerEU plan, funding is being provided to Member States in the form of grants and loans. In order to receive this funding, an additional chapter is required to be added to a Member State's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). The overall objective of Ireland's NRRP[24] is to contribute to a sustainable, equitable, green and digital recovery effort, in a manner that complements and supports the government's broader recovery efforts from the health and economic crises caused by Covid-19.

As of the end of Q1 2023, the composition of Ireland's REPowerEU chapter was still in development. The new chapter will set out the measures (projects for which grant funding is to be provided) and reforms (changes which are being made in line with the REPowerEU plan). The development of the chapter is being led by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, with input from DECC and with close collaboration with the European Commission.

In addition to the above, DECC have also been tasked with the implementation on Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1854 on an emergency intervention to address high energy prices. The Regulation seeks to address windfall gains in the energy sector through a temporary solidarity contribution based on taxable profits in the fossil fuel production and refining sector and a cap on market revenues of specific generation technologies in the electricity sector.

A General Scheme of the Energy (Windfall Gains in the Energy Sector) Bill 2023, which will implement the temporary solidarity contribution and the cap on market revenues, was approved by government and published on gov.ie[25] on 21 March 2023. The Report on the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme was published on 18 May 2023. The next steps for the Energy (Windfall Gains in the Energy Sector) 2023 Bill are for it to be brought to Government before being published and introduced in the Oireachtas.

The Council Regulation sets out that the proceeds can be used to the benefit of energy consumers. The government will determine, in due course, how best to distribute these proceeds.

[23] More information on REPowerEu and its launch can be found at the following link REPowerEU (europa.eu)

[24] More information on the National Recovery and Resilience Plan can be found at the following link gov.ie - Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021 (www.gov.ie)

[25] The full text is available on the following link gov.ie - Government approves the General Scheme of legislation to address windfall gains in the energy sector (www.gov.ie)

10. Government will continue to examine supports for consumers and businesses, including taxation measures, subsidies and welfare supports

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Finance, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Transport

Status: Complete

Budget 2023 included €2.5 billion of once-off supports for households. This included a total of €600 of electricity bill credit to all domestic consumers which was paid in 3 instalments at a cost of €1.2 billion. As outlined under Responses 1 and 2, there was an additional one-off payment of €400 to Fuel Allowance recipients and an extension of the 9% VAT rate for gas and electricity. €340 million has also been made available to help community groups, schools, health services, sports clubs and other organisations to pay energy bills. Other measures government has taken to alleviate the cost-of-living increase include social welfare lump-sum payments and the Christmas Bonus, the increase in core social welfare and pension rates, income tax reductions, the rent tax credit, the increase in the minimum wage and reductions in childcare costs.

On 13 December 2022, Government approved a new Energy Poverty Action Plan, which provides for the establishment of a €10 million fund to further support people in, or at risk of, energy poverty, including people on PAYG meters. The fund will provide a further safeguard in addition to the supports from suppliers and the Additional Needs Payment operated by the Department of Social Protection.

In addition, on 21 February 2023, government agreed a new €1.2 billion package of measures to assist households with increases in the cost-of-living and to ensure there is no cliff-edge for the temporary measures already implemented. This included the further extension of the 9% VAT rate to the end of October 2023, and the extension of the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS).

Under the €1.25 billion TBESS initiative, qualifying businesses have been provided with up to 40% of the increase in electricity or gas bills up to €10,000 per month. The scheme has been particularly targeted towards small businesses, but medium and large businesses have benefitted also. The original iteration of the scheme ran until February 2023, at which point an extension to 31 May 2023 was announced. The threshold for qualification has been lowered from a 50% increase in electricity/gas costs to 30% and these changes will apply retrospectively from the start of last September. The level of relief will also increase from 40% to 50% of eligible costs and the payment limit will be extended from €10,000 to €15,000 a month. Payment is now subject to an overall cap of €45,000, up from €30,000 where the business is carried on from more than one location and the cost of the extended scheme will be met from the allocation provided in Budget 2023.

Theme 2: Ensuring Security of Supply in the Near-term

11. Review and test oil, natural gas and electricity emergency plans and procedures against scenarios of escalating severity in the context of the war in Ukraine and its impacts.

11.1 Gas and electricity emergency exercises

Led by: Gas Networks Ireland and EirGrid **Status:** Complete

Gas Networks Ireland is the lead body on gas-related exercises, while EirGrid lead on electricity-related exercises. The CRU oversees the overarching emergency plans and works in conjunction with DECC. Gas Networks Ireland and EirGrid - the latter working in conjunction with ESB Networks - have robust procedures in place with regard to gas and electricity supplies, and regularly participate in simulation exercises to test a range of potential scenarios. The role played by these bodies is critical in ensuring a coordinated response to major incidents in the rare event that they might occur.

In line with prudent and ongoing contingency planning, joint gas and electricity emergency training exercises were held in September 2022. The purpose of these exercises was to test a coordinated response, from numerous stakeholders to a hypothetical and unlikely disruption to Ireland's gas or electricity supplies. During these exercises, various hypothetical scenarios were considered, and responses were stress-tested. The exercises formed part of regularly tested and well-established emergency plans. The running of such exercises is in compliance with EU legislation on security of supply and also forms a key part of Ireland's preparedness for potential disruptions to gas or electricity, however unlikely or remote the possibility of such disruptions may be.

Feedback from these exercises has been analysed and learnings have been implemented. The exercises demonstrated clearly that the communication of critical information is essential in the case of such an emergency. A presentation on actions taken was given to the Government Task Force meeting on Emergency Planning in February 2023. Additionally, GNI submitted a revised and updated National Gas Emergency Plan, which was subsequently approved by the CRU. ESB Network's Load Shedding Plan has also been revised and was published on the ESB Networks website in October 2022.

While a significant disruption to energy supplies is unlikely it would have an impact across multiple sectors. The government is acutely aware of the effect that such a disruption would have on Irish households and businesses and is committed to ensuring that the risk is minimised and prepared for. As such, the established Strategic Emergency Management (SEM) Framework structures for dealing with a major emergency would ensure a 'whole of government' response, if such circumstances arose. In an emergency, DECC would become the lead government department and if required would convene and chair the National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG) in the National Energy Coordination Centre – to coordinate the government's response to the energy emergency.

11.2 Oil emergency exercises

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the National Oil Reserves Agency **Status:** Complete

DECC chairs oil emergency training exercises as part of regular and ongoing contingency planning. In May 2022, DECC chaired an Oil Emergency Exercise which was hosted by the National Emergency Coordination Centre (NECC). It featured c.60 participants drawn from government departments, agencies (such as the HSE, Irish Rail, Dublin Port, NORA), local authorities, and representatives of the fuel industry.

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Learnings from the exercise have progressed to creating legislative provisions where were included in the Oil Emergency Contingency and Transfer of Renewable Transport Fuels Functions Act 2023 (the 'Oil Emergency Act'). The act was published in early January, was enacted on 24 February 2023 and commenced on 28 February 2023. The main purpose of this act is to strengthen the government's ability to manage oil stocks in the unlikely event of a curtailment of oil supplies. The act places the Oil Emergency Response Plan (OERP) on a statutory basis and provides for further measures to strengthen oil emergency planning. The OERP is a live document, being updated as necessary to reflect ongoing developments. Work is ongoing on the further development of the Oil Data Pack, which will provide a basis for selecting Designated Critical Service Stations and for the mapping of oil movements to large consumers within the State. The Oil Data Pack is also a live document which will be updated as necessary to reflect up to date oil related data.

DECC, in conjunction with NORA and EirGrid, have also further advanced the production of a Plan to replenish oil secondary fuel stocks, in the event of a gas emergency. The production of the final draft of the Plan will be included as an action in the upcoming Energy Security Package.

12. Continue to work closely with the oil industry to monitor the supplies of oil in Ireland on an ongoing basis and keep under review the need to release strategic oil stocks to the market

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the National Oil Reserves Agency

Status: Complete

DECC and the National Oil Reserves Agency work closely with the oil supply sector to plan and prepare for any issues that may arise in relation to oil supply. In the unlikely event of an Oil Emergency, the NORA Emergency Response Model (ERM) will be activated, and the supply situation can be monitored closely by the DECC and the National Oil Reserves Agency.

Ireland is a member of the International Energy Agency and as a result receives oil market reports on a regular basis. DECC and NORA also attend regular meetings of the International Energy Agency and the EU's Oil Co-Ordination Group. All of this ensures that relevant Irish actors have a strong understanding of international developments.

As part of the work of the Energy Security Emergency Group, an Oil subgroup consisting of government officials from the DECC and the Department of Transport and industry representatives met regularly in order to closely monitor the situation, particularly in light of sanctions on Russian oil introduced by the European Council in late 2022. Meetings have typically covered updates on supply and from NORA, updates on any relevant EU business, discussion of relevant legislation and any relevant emerging information on potential supply chain issues which are used to monitor and respond to the situation.

The oil supply situation has been (and will continue to be) closely monitored by DECC and NORA. NORA remains ready to release product onto the market at short notice, if required. Any release of stocks would be done in conjunction with other member countries of the International Energy Agency.

13. Ensure frameworks for cooperation on natural gas supplies to Ireland are reviewed and updated as required in the context of the EU's gas market and security of supply legislative proposals.

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Status: Ongoing – response to be carried over to the Energy Security Package

Ireland does not have any indigenous gas natural gas storage and is dependent on UK imports for approximately c.75% of our natural gas needs[26]. Gas storage regulation was agreed by the EU in mid-2022 and Ireland has received a derogation due to having no storage facilities.

Throughout 2022, DECC officials liaised closely with counterparts in the UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to discuss cooperation on gas security of supply. A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared on gas emergency planning is being finalised. In addition, there has also been cooperation between the gas transmission system operators in both countries on gas security of supply issues.

Ireland's supply of natural gas has not, to date, been directly interrupted or reduced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, Gas Networks Ireland have closely monitored the situation from the outset and will continue to do so.

14. Prepare the electricity system and plan for potential disruptions to supplies of natural gas and manage potential impacts on final electricity consumers

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities and EirGrid

Status: Complete

Disruptions to natural gas or oil supplies have the potential to disrupt the generation and supply of electricity – particularly during times of high electricity demand and low wind generation.

Under this Policy Response, an updated electricity load shedding plan[27] was approved by CRU and published by ESB networks in October 2022 and will be kept under review for any necessary changes. In addition, the Natural Gas Emergency Plan was published by the GNI in October 2022[28] which sets out procedures including load shedding for use in emergency situations and disruptions. All large gas-fired power stations in Ireland can operate using oil as a secondary fuel which provides a level of resilience from a reduction in supplies of natural gas.

Complementary to this Policy Response, in 2022 DECC, in conjunction with NORA and EirGrid, advanced the production of a Plan to replenish oil secondary fuel stocks in the event of a gas emergency. Progress to date was presented to ESEG in February. The production of the final draft of the Plan will be included as an action in the upcoming Energy Security Package.

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[26] Source: Gas Networks Ireland, https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/news/active-news-articles/gas-report-2022/

[27] The Distribution System Operator Load Shedding ESBN Plan is available on ESB Networks website at the following link https://www.esbnetworks.ie/docs/default-source/publications/approved-dso-load-shedding-plan-01.10.2022.pdf

[28] The Natural Gas Emergency Plan is available on GNI's website at the following link Natural Gas Emergency Plan (gasnetworks.ie)

15. Implement as a priority the programme of work set out by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities to ensure security of electricity supply

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Status: Ongoing - response to be carried over to the Energy Security Package

The challenges to Ireland's security of electricity supply are well established. The level of dispatchable generation capacity will need to increase to ensure the expected demand for electricity can be consistently and reliably met. The war in Ukraine has further highlighted the urgent requirement to address these challenges.

In September 2021, the CRU set out a significant programme of work[29] to improve electricity security of supply which aimed to improve generation capacity and demand side responsiveness to provide additional stability and resilience to the energy system over the coming years. A Security of Supply Programme Steering Group (comprising CRU, DECC and EirGrid) receives continual updates and ensures the prioritisation and delivery of the work programme and mitigations. Since the publication of the NESF, two updates on this programme have been published, in July 2022[30] and February 2023[31].

Updates under the Programme are organised into the following pillars:

1. System Operations and Emergency Planning

EirGrid and ESB Networks have continued to develop and update emergency response protocols to respond to potential supply issues. This includes an update to the DSO Load Shedding Plan in Q4 of 2022, which introduced a new provision to reduce demand from classes of large energy users in the event of a System Emergency, along with enhancements to emergency planning and communications processes.

2. Temporary Emergency Generation

Temporary Emergency Generation capacity is being delivered in two tranches to provide a backup generation source to existing dispatchable capacity. This temporary capacity is only likely to be used at periods of low renewable generation coinciding with peak demand. It will only be used where it is evident that market-based measures alone are not sufficient to prevent a further deterioration of the electricity supply situation.

Work is underway with multiple stakeholders to deliver this temporary generation capacity as quickly as possible, with the majority aimed for delivery in Q4 2023.

3. Retain Existing Units

This pillar is concerned with the possibility of extending the operational life of a number of older units, on a temporary basis, for a period until new capacity has been delivered to replace them through the Capacity Remuneration Mechanism (CRM). EirGrid continues to explore the feasibility of retaining in service a number of units in this context.

[29] The full programme of work can be found at the following link CRU21115-Security-of-Electricity-Supply--Programme-of-Actions.pdf (divio-media.com)

[30] The July 2022 update can be found at the following link CRU202264-Electricity-Security-of-Supply-Programme-of-Work-Update.pdf (divio-media.com)

[31] The February 2023 update can be found at the following link CRU202317_Electricity_Security_of_Supply_Programme_of_Work_Update_February_2023.pdf (divio-media.com)

4. Long Term Capacity Provision

The CRU commissioned Ernst and Young to carry out a review of the performance of the CRM in the SEM to date, and to propose recommendations for any improvements that could be made to ensure sufficient procurement of capacity. A Call for Comment was published in August 2022 by the SEM Committed to seek input from industry on this EY review.

A number of improvements to the design of the Capacity Remuneration Mechanism (CRM), informed by the EY review, have been implemented already or are in the course of being implemented.

5. Capacity Market Auctions for 2022/23 to 2025/26

Auctions were held in January and March of 2022 for new generation capacity in Ireland, for delivery beginning in October 2024. A recent Capacity Auction took place in March 2023 for delivery in October 2026 with over 1,500MW of new capacity being procured.

This pillar has also established a reporting process for developers of projects that have won capacity contracts, which facilitates a closer monitoring of successful projects than previously conducted, and the early identification and mitigation of barriers to their delivery where this is in the power of the state, its various agencies and network and system operators.

6. Policy Development and Implementation

This pillar is focused on maintaining a policy environment that supports the overall programme. The team provides ongoing support to the programme through advising on national and regulatory policy and legislation, ongoing monitoring of contingency, and managing and progressing interactions with other agencies.

Theme 3: Reducing our Dependency on Imported Fossil Fuels

16. Develop a National Policy Statement on Heat based on the outcomes of the National Heat Study including a key focus on the decarbonisation of our building stock and the development of district heating

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Status: Ongoing – response to be implemented under the Climate Action Plan 2023

The National Heat Study was published[32] by the SEAI in February 2022 and contains detailed analysis to inform the development of options, policies and measures to decarbonise the heating and cooling sectors to 2050. It identified the need for greater use of electrification (including the use of heat pumps) and district heating.

A Heat Policy Statement, based on the outcomes of the National Heat Study, is currently under development. Screening for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be undertaken in addition to a consultation process. The Heat Policy Statement is due to be published in Q3 2023. This is also included as Action BE/23/26 (TF) in the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) Annex of Actions[33].

In addition, a Heat and Built Environment Taskforce has also been established to accelerate delivery of policy goals in retrofitting and in renewable and district heat. The overarching aim of the Taskforce is to: identify work on the critical paths to key targets under each area; ensure alignment in the development of polices and activities underway across government departments; and proactively manage risks to ensure targets are achieved. The development of an implementation plan for the Heat and Built Environment Delivery Taskforce is set out in Action BE/23/23(TF) in the CAP23 Annex of Actions.

[32] The full report is available on SEAI's website at the following link National-Heat-Study-Summary-Report.pdf (seai.ie)

[33] The full list of Actions in the Climate Action Plan 2023 can be accessed at the following link gov.ie - Climate Action Plan 2023 (www.gov.ie)

17. Building on the detailed sectoral analysis of the National Heat Study, we will develop proposals for regulatory options to accelerate the phase-out of fossil fuel heating throughout our building stock including effectively ending the use of fossil fuels for space and water heating in all new buildings with limited exemptions for specific applications such as for example industrial structures, building on our ambitions set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Status: Ongoing – response to be implemented under the Climate Action Plan 2023

The 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP23) emphasised that Ireland is committed to accelerating the wider phase-out of fossil fuels for heating in all sectors and to put in place the required supporting measures to achieve this. As per Action BE/23/2(TF) of the Climate Action Plan 2023 Annex of Actions, a detailed roadmap will be published by December 2023 which will include the required policy and regulatory instruments to accelerate the electrification of heating and the phase-out of fossil fuels for heating. This roadmap will include an examination of financial and regulatory incentives and disincentives for the switch to non-fossil heat in use in Ireland (informed by experience across the EU).

Additionally, through the updated Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, in principle, the public sector should not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023 in new buildings and in major renovation retrofit projects, subject to specified exceptions.

18. Accelerate the delivery of home retrofits by implementing the National Retrofit Plan, including by providing supports to homeowners in the private rental and Approved Housing Body sectors and continuing to deliver the Local Authority Retrofit Programme

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and SEAI

Status: Completed

The National Retrofit Plan sets out how the government will deliver on the targets of retrofitting the equivalent of 500,000 homes to a BER of B2/cost-optimal and installing 400,000 heat pumps in existing homes to replace older, less efficient heating systems by the end of 2030.

The plan is designed to address barriers to retrofit across four key pillars: (i) driving demand and activity; (ii) financing and funding; (iii) supply chain, skills and standards; and (iv) governance.

A particularly important aspect of the Retrofit Plan was the launch, in February 2022, of a new package of enhanced SEAI retrofit supports. The grant supports have also been made available to non-corporate landlords and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to undertake home energy upgrades, with lower energy bills and to improve the efficiency of their rental properties, with higher supports available for AHBs.

The key measures included:

- A new National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme (NHEUS) providing increased grant levels of up to 50% of the cost of a typical deep retrofit to a B2 BER standard;
- A new network of registered One Stop Shops to offer a hassle-free, start-to-finish project management service, including access to financing, for home energy upgrades;
- Higher grants for those taking a step-by-step approach to retrofit with a special enhanced grant rate, equivalent to 80% of the typical cost, for attic and cavity wall insulation. These grants are available to all households, to reduce energy use as part of the Government's response to exceptionally high energy prices.
- Expanded delivery under the SEAI free energy upgrade schemes for those at risk of energy poverty as well as a new approach to prioritising the worst performing homes under the Warmer Homes Scheme.

In addition to these supports, a new tax incentive to encourage small-scale landlords to undertake retrofitting works while the tenant remains in situ was announced last year. This measure provides for a tax deduction of up to €10,000 per property, against Case V rental income, for certain retrofitting expenses incurred by the landlord on rented residential properties, for a maximum of two rental properties. Full details are set out in Section 32 of the Finance Act 2022. Since the launch of these supports, demand for SEAI schemes has been very high. Figures from SEAI for 2022 and to date in 2023 show:

- Approximately 50,000 applications received in 2022, and a further 20,313 applications processed to end April this year.
- 13 One Stop Shops are now in place offering a start-to-finish project management service for the NHEUS, including access to financing, for home energy upgrades.
- 27,200 home energy upgrades were supported in 2022, representing a 79% increase on 2021 figures. Figures to the end of April show 13,304 home energy upgrades completed.
- Of these, 8,481 upgrades were to a post works Building Energy Rating (BER) of B2 or better, representing a 95% increase on 2021 figures. Figures to the end of April show 4,478 B2 upgrades completed.4,448 free upgrades for households at risk of energy poverty were supported under SEAI's dedicated energy poverty schemes, representing an 85% increase on 2021. Figures to the end of April show 1,320 homes supported. In addition, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage funded upgrades in 2,283 Local Authority owned homes in 2022 under the Local Authority Retrofit Programme.

19. Review existing business and public sector retrofit supports to accelerate delivery

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and SEAI in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Status: Complete

The SEAI has undertaken reviews of support schemes, including Excellence in Energy Efficiency Design (EXEED), the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) and a mid-term review of the Support Scheme of Energy Audits (SSEA).

These reviews and the identification of barriers and challenges have formed the basis for modifications to the support schemes to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The revised and updated EXEED and SSRH schemes were launched in March 2023. A new grant support scheme for the commercial sector which will seek to facilitate access to support for retrofits by small and medium-sized enterprise is in development and due to be launched in 2023.

20. To enable the public sector to lead by example in reducing energy demand, a coordinated programme of communications will be delivered to the sector, identifying the actions it could take to save energy.

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the SEAI and OPW **Status:** Complete

The Reduce Your Use initiative was part of a whole-of-government national campaign to reduce energy use. It ran from September 2022 to March 2023 and included a specific energy awareness campaign for public sector staff, as well as a set of energy saving measures for public bodies to implement regarding heating, lighting, hours of operation and energy auditing in buildings occupied by the public sector. A number of surveys were carried out to assess the impact. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland have produced some case studies on the impact of the campaign[34].

21. Implement the National Sustainable Mobility Policy as a priority including establishment of a Leadership Group to drive implementation and devise a programme of measures for the transport sector to increase energy efficiency and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Led by: The Department of Transport **Status:** Complete

The Department of Transport's Sustainable Mobility Policy aims to support a significant shift towards more sustainable modes such as public transport and active travel between now and 2030, and includes expanding behaviour change measures, including the Smarter Travel Workplaces.

In Q2 2022 a 'Leadership Group' was established by the Department of Transport to oversee the implementation of its Sustainable Mobility Policy. The purpose of this group is to identify energy efficiency measures that can be implemented over the short to medium term. In addition, an Action Plan on potential transport demand restraint measures was developed and was approved by the Minister for Transport in November 2022.

22. Leverage the successful roll out of the National Smart Meter Programme by providing electricity customers with access to their data and greater insight into their consumption patterns thus enabling them to select the more appropriate tariff. The Commission for Regulation of Utilities will also examine the charges within its remit to ensure that the differential between peak and off-peak tariffs provides the opportunity for electricity customers to save money by moving some consumption to off peak times.

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities and ESB Networks **Status:** Complete

As outlined in the NESF, in February 2021 the CRU made it an obligation on electricity suppliers to provide Time of Use tariffs to their customers. Smart meters are set up to record consumption in day, night and peak time periods, as well as in shorter half-hour intervals. This allows for electricity to be charged, based on the time of day it is used – known as Time of Use, or smart tariffs. Accurate energy usage information across the day enables consumers to be more efficient in their use of electricity and save money (for instance by using appliances at off peak hours). In this way, smart metering also contributes to the development of the smart grid and will facilitate better network planning, improving the network resilience, reducing the need for less efficient and more costly generation at peak times and facilitating the increase in renewable power on the electricity system.

[34] See more information here: Energy Efficiency Campaign | Reduce Your Use | SEAI

continued

As of February 2023, 6.7% of customers with a smart meter were availing of a Time-of-Use tariff. This is an increase of almost 1% since September 2022, when 5.7% of customers were on a time-of-use tariff. These figures will be collected on a monthly basis moving forward. Additionally, more than 1 million smart meters are now in place.

In October 2022, CRU announced network tariffs which entail a 10% increase in electricity price during the peak hours of 5-7pm, and a corresponding 10% reduction in price outside of these hours.

23. Ensure the review of the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy provides a strategic policy direction for data centres to reduce their burden on the grid and provide demand flexibility at peak times.

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the SEAI and OPW

Status: Complete

Throughout early 2022, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment worked closely with DECC and other key stakeholders to develop a revised Data Centre Statement, which included bilateral consultations and written inputs. A revised statement was brought to cabinet in July 2022 and published shortly thereafter.

The Statement highlights that 'islanded' data centres, i.e., those not connected to the electricity grid and powered mainly by on-site fossil fuel generation, are not in line with national policy.

The government is committed to ensuring the principles are effective in prioritising future data centre development that, ensure energy security, delivers strong economic benefits, sustainable energy plans, and a willingness to promote Ireland's national decarbonisation objectives through a fully supportive planning system and other regulatory regimes.

24. Work with SEAI's Large Industry Energy Network to assess additional demand reduction and flexibility options, including consideration of peak demand reduction incentives and higher peak time networks charges.

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Status: Complete

As outlined in CAP 2023, Large Energy Users (LEUs) have a critical role to play in the acceleration of decarbonisation that is required for the sector in delivering high levels of flexibility across time and geographical locations, and matching energy consumption with renewable energy generation on an hourly basis.

In Summer 2022 the CRU consulted on a range of network tariff proposals for 2022/2023, and issued a decision paper in September 2022 (Electricity Network Tariffs 2022/23: National Energy Security Framework Response[35]), which set out peak tariffs to reduce demand from customers including LEUs. CRU have continued to monitor the delivery and performance of demand response and flexibility. The result of this analysis will contribute to future actions.

[35] More detail is available on the CRU's website at the following link Electricity Network Tariffs 2022/23 – National Energy Security Framework Response Proposals | CRU.ie.

While the Block, System Stress or Decarbonisation for large energy users were not implemented in Winter 2022/2023, the CRU continues to work with EirGrid to develop a process for communicating forecasts of system alerts and periods of low renewable generation to suppliers and customers to facilitate demand response.

Other demand response measures are continually being pursued, including Mandatory Demand Curtailment targeted at high voltage consumers and Voluntary Demand Reduction (during times of system stress); enhancement of signals to Demand Side Units in the Single Electricity Market; communications exercises (including behavioural campaigns and reactive alert notices in times of system stress).

25. Align all elements of the planning system to fully support accelerated renewable energy development

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	**Status:** Ongoing – response to be implemented under the Climate Action Plan 2023

As outlined in the NESF, supportive policies across government and state agencies can reduce barriers and fast track permitting for renewable energy generation projects. A number of measures are in development to adapt the planning system in order to better support the timely delivery of additional renewable energy sources and the required supporting infrastructure.

Prioritising renewable projects is in line with the requirements of the recast Renewable Energy Directive and the European Commission's REPowerEU action statement. The Commission has also called on Member States to ensure that renewable energy generation projects and associated infrastructure are considered in the overriding public interest, and the interest of public safety, which Ireland fully supports.

The General Scheme of the Planning and Development Bill 2023 was brought before government in December 2022 and approved to go to Pre-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) stage. PLS commenced on 7 February 2023 and has concluded, with the JOC issuing its recommendations in April. These recommendations are currently being considered by DHLGH. The bill is expected to be initiated in 2023 with a target for enactment subject to the Oireachtas processes.

The draft of this bill contains many of the elements required to align the planning system, including embedding climate action, renewable electricity and energy security at national and regional levels in the planning hierarchy. The draft bill also proposes mandatory consenting timeframes for An Bord Pleanála which will aid in the accelerated roll-out of renewable electricity and accelerated timelines for judicial review procedures.

DECC will also publish in June 2023 the draft for consultation of the national Renewable Electricity Spatial Planning Policy Framework (RESPF), which will ensure a more facilitative and supportive spatial planning framework for the delivery of increased onshore renewable electricity generation. The RESPF will translate the national energy policy objectives to the regional assembly level in a consistent manner and shall set out regional targets for onshore renewable electricity development to inform spatial plans.

Allied to this, will be the publication of the Regional Roadmaps for the development of renewable electricity by the Regional Assemblies, which will set out how each assembly will reach the targets set by the RESPF. Both of these items[36] are also captured in the CAP23 Annex of Actions and reporting on their implementation will be through that framework.

[36] The relevant Action Numbers are EL/23/2 and EL/23/3. The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) Annex of Actions can be accessed at the following link gov.ie - Climate Action Plan 2023 (www.gov.ie).

An Bord Pleanála has established a Marine and Climate Directorate, with the Director of Planning in post and a range of new posts sanctioned and the associated requirement underway. This new unit represents a significant organisational change in ABP and will also assist in the accelerated roll out of renewables, enabling it to dedicate resources to renewable energy applications and the supporting grid infrastructure, both on land and in the maritime area. The board has also just significantly increased the number of board members, to the maximum 15 no. members, which is the first time the board has been at full capacity for a number of years.

26. Review grid connection arrangements for renewable electricity projects and the development of system services to accelerate the growth in renewable electricity

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Status: Ongoing – response to be carried over to the Energy Security Package

It is essential that new renewable energy generation, such as solar, onshore wind and offshore wind, be able to connect to the electricity grid as soon as the generation is available. This requires an efficient system for allocating and delivering these connections.

The CRU published the Enduring Connection Policy (ECP-1) in March 2018 which was the first step in a fundamental redesign of the Irish grid connection policy. The principal objective was to allow projects which were 'shovel ready' (i.e., with Planning Permission), the opportunity to connect to the network while also providing more regular opportunities for the processing of connection offers (i.e., more frequent batches) in the future. CRU published the Decision Paper for the second stage of the Enduring Connection Policy process (ECP-2) in June 2020, followed by the corresponding ECP-2 Rules. ECP-2 builds on the objectives of ECP-1, with increased prioritisation of large renewable energy projects and community-led renewable energy projects, helping to facilitate a low-carbon future with well-regulated networks. Under ECP-2, windows for applications are opened for a set period each year. In 2023 batch connection offers will take place in accordance with the recently published CRU ECP 2.4 decision37. ECP 2.4 will see a window for applications of 2 months commencing in October 2023. The CRU is also currently in the process of developing a new connection policy which will incorporate recent national and international policy developments to include timelines for renewable connections. The CRU have recently published a Call for Evidence as part of its policy development, with a consultation to be published in the coming months. A new connection policy decision paper is to be published by the CRU by year end. Work is also ongoing to facilitate hybrid projects, whereby various forms of renewable generation will be facilitated to share a connection point.

The CRU, along with the Utility Regulator in Northern Ireland, wrote to the Transmission System Operators (TSOs), EirGrid and SONI, in June 2022 requesting that they commence implementation of the TSO activities set out in the SEM Committee's High-Level Design for System Services Future Arrangements (SEM-22-012), this included implementation of the procurement framework in the pre-day ahead timeframe. In September 2022 the Regulatory Authorities requested that the TSOs develop an option to procure reserve services through this framework for consultation. Following further engagement with the TSOs and industry the Regulatory Authorities decided to develop a consultation paper to provide further guidance to the TSOs on the implementation of the procurement framework and the approach to the transition away from regulated tariffs towards competitive markets for system services this paper is expected in Q2 2023.

[37] For further information please see Enduring Connection Policy 2.4 (ECP-2.4) | CRU.ie

In relation to long-term procurement the SEM Committee published a decision paper in January 2023 approving the TSOs recommendations on procurement of Low-Carbon Inertia Services through long-term contracts. A TSO consultation on the contractual arrangements is expected in Q2 2023.

27. Accelerate investment in the electricity grid and the development of storage technologies

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and EirGrid	**Status:** Ongoing – response to be carried over to the Energy Security Package

In their 'Shaping Our Electricity Future[38]' roadmap, EirGrid outlined that increased levels of renewable power require the electricity network and associated systems to be reinforced and expanded. We need energy to be easily transmitted from new sources of generation to centres of demand in order to enable the shift from fossil fuels to renewable technologies. Additional systems services and flexibility will also be needed in order to operate the electricity grid with higher levels of renewables. In this vein, there is significant potential for storage projects to play a role in aligning supply and demand for renewable energy. This is recognised in the revised version of EirGrid's 'Shaping Our Electricity Future' Roadmap. This revised Roadmap is currently being finalised and is expected to be completed in Q2 2023.

Storage technologies are already playing an important role in supporting the energy transition in Ireland. To further support energy storage development, DECC has committed to developing an Electricity Storage Policy Framework by Q3 2023. To help inform this work, DECC opened a public consultation on the Framework from 21 November 2022 to 27 January 2023. The responses are currently being considered and will help to inform the final Framework.

Additionally, CAP23 includes a commitment[39] to undertake a public consultation on Private Wires with a published policy to follow. Private Wires refers to individuals/ undertakings running their own electricity cables between generation and demand sites in order to transfer electricity outside of the national electricity grid, which if permitted for may contribute to an accelerated rollout of renewables. Work on the public consultation on Private Wires is ongoing and it is intended to be published during Q2 2023.

[38] The full report of the Roadmap is available on EirGrid's website at the following link Shaping our Electricity Future (eirgridgroup.com)

[39] Action: EL/23/15 in CAP 23, found here: 1c20a481-bb51-42d6-9bb9-08b9f728e4b5.pdf (www.gov.ie)

28. Expand the rollout of renewable microgeneration including the implementation plan for the Clean Export Premium

Led by: The Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Status: Ongoing – response to be implemented under the Climate Action Plan 2023

Since the launch of the NESF, progress has been made in the implementation of the Microgeneration Support Scheme (MSS). The MSS aims to deliver a range of measures to support micro-generation (both for self-consumption and for export) in Ireland and to meet commitments set out under the Climate Action Plan and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II).

There has been a phased introduction of supports, with the launch of the MSS domestic Solar PV grant in February 2022 which was followed by the non-domestic Solar PV grant in September 2022. The MSS final scheme design, which provides the background and context for the design of the grant schemes and assumptions regarding the uptake and costs for the MSS supports was approved by government in December 2022[40].

The overall MSS framework provides capital grant supports for domestic applicants and for small non-domestic applicants for installations up to 6kWe; as well as a feed-in tariff support, known as the Clean Export Premium (CEP),for installations greater than 6.0kWe up to 50kW in size.

The CRU have recently created a new team, "Smart Metering and Active Customers", who have commenced engagement with DECC around the next steps required for the implementation plan for the CEP – of which CRU aim to publish by Q4 2023 as outlined in under action EL/23/12 in the CAP 2023 Annex of Actions[41].

29. Appraise the introduction of supports for biomethane as a replacement for natural gas in the context of the changed outlook for natural gas supply and prices, and review supports for biomass/biogas in the heat sector under the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Status: Complete

In December 2020, a business case was undertaken to appraise the potential for an exchequer-funded support for biomethane production and injection into the natural gas grid. Based on a cost benefit analysis, it was determined difficult to justify an exchequer-funded support for biomethane and alternative supports, such as a Renewable Heat Obligation (RHO) should be considered.

In July 2022, DECC re-examined this initial appraisal considering the unprecedented rise in gas prices. This re-examination was found to be broadly consistent with the conclusions of the original appraisal and an RHO was again determined the more appropriate support mechanism for consideration. In line with the recent agreement on Sectoral Emissions Ceilings to deliver up to 5.7 TWh of biomethane to further accelerate the reduction of overall economy-wide emissions, government has agreed to the introduction of an obligation on the heat sector to include renewable heat by 2024.

[40] Details are published on gov.ie at the following link gov.ie - Micro-generation (www.gov.ie).

[41] The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) Annex of Actions can be accessed at the following link gov.ie - Climate Action Plan 2023 (www.gov.ie).

continued

In addition, the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) scheme was reviewed via the 2022 Annual Tariff Review. This was completed on 23 January 2023 - with approval granted by the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communication and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform – and featured a number of key changes to the scheme to increase uptake. The changes to the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) scheme were announced on 1 March 2023 and work to implement the changes is ongoing.

30. Prioritise the development of a hydrogen strategy

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Status: Ongoing – response to be implemented under the Climate Action Plan 2023

In 2020, the EU developed a hydrogen strategy which recognised the potential of hydrogen as a fuel source playing a part in the Union's targeting of achieving a climate-neutral society by 2050.

From July through to September 2022, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication conducted a consultation on the development of a Hydrogen Strategy for Ireland. The preliminary results of the consultation were presented to the Interdepartmental Steering Group and was discussed in December 2022. A review of the consultation results was completed and provided to DECC in January 2023 and the strategy is now being drafted with a target delivery timeline of Q2 2023. The implementation of this Policy Response will continue to be monitored under the Climate Action Plan 2023 reporting framework[42].

31. Prioritise the review of security of supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems

Led by: The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Status: Complete

Coinciding with the publication of this report, DECC have prepared an Energy Security Package with recommendations for strengthening Ireland's energy security. DECC has engaged with other government departments such as the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, Department of Finance and Department of An Taoiseach about the Energy Security Package.

The Package contains: the review of the energy security of Ireland's electricity and gas networks, the McCarthy Report in addition to this report (The National Energy Security Framework: One Year Report) as an annex.

[42] The relevant Action Number is EN/23/7. More details are available on the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) Annex of Actions which can be accessed at the following link gov.ie - Climate Action Plan 2023 (www.gov.ie).

www.gov.ie