

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /  
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee  
Cymru Sero Net / Net Zero Wales  
NZ07  
Ymateb gan EDF Renewables / Evidence from EDF Renewables



### **EDF Renewables' views on the Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views regarding the Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales Plan to yourself and colleagues on the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee. EDF Renewables' one page submission is attached to this letter.

In the wake of COP26, this is an important consultation as we start to plan for our clean energy future and enact plans that will deliver net zero and Wales's climate and environment priorities.

EDF is the UK's largest producer of low carbon electricity. Our goal is to combat climate change, and we are passionate about creating a net zero future where clean energy powers our lives. We are actively supporting Wales' transition to achieving net zero by building a smarter energy future using our growing portfolio of renewable generation including onshore and offshore wind, solar generation, and battery storage.

EDF Renewables currently operates 2 onshore wind farms in Wales; Cemmaes in Machynlleth (15 MW) and Llangwyrfron near Aberystwyth (9 MW). Furthermore, we are in the process of developing Garn Fach in Powys which will have a capacity of approximately 85 MW; we have secured two 50 MW grid connections near Swansea and Newport due to be used for battery storage; and, you will know with your other hat on as Member for North Wales that we have recently acquired from a previous developer, a 50 MW consented solar farm in Porth Wen, Anglesey, with the potential to support electric vehicles.

This demonstrates our strong commitment to renewable energy development in Wales. We are also developing a significant pipeline of future projects including 500 MW of onshore wind and 500 MW of solar power. According to independent research, our pipeline will create and sustain more than 2,000 jobs, unlock more than one billion pounds of investment in Wales, provide more than one hundred million pounds through our Community Benefit schemes, as well as support and develop local businesses and supply chains.

This work compliments and supports the ambition detailed in the Welsh Government's documents titled '*Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2*' and '*Working together to reach net zero: all Wales plan*'.

And there is much in both documents that EDF Renewables welcomes, which I will detail in the attachments.

However, in progressing on our shared ambitions by delivering necessary renewables projects, there still remains a number of core issues that are of concern when weighing up how such plans will achieve targets, and indeed maximise the opportunity that is presented to communities, the climate and the economy.

In writing this submission, we aim to provide this important Committee with the understanding from the viewpoint of a developer dedicated to working for Wales, for Welsh communities and for their future.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond with our views to this consultation and EDF Renewables looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on the important work of this Committee throughout the Sixth Senedd.

## Grid infrastructure

- All developers of renewable energy agree, the lack of sufficient grid capacity is a key barrier currently preventing further deployment of renewables in Wales.
- There is concern amongst the industry that Wales will fall behind the rest of the UK in terms of achieving the targets the Government of Wales has set out, and in achieving net zero in the given time frames.
- We strongly support the following statement made on pg 60 of the 'Carbon Budget 2' document:
  - *The other significant barrier is the need for strategic grid investment. We are working with the network operators to clarify the scale of the investment required but these costs should not all fall on bill payers. Given the pace of change needed and the time taken to consent and build grid infrastructure, investment ahead of need is absolutely vital.*
- Without investment or plans to build resilience and capacity in grid infrastructure across Wales, planned developments - including those in the Celtic Sea - may not be realised at the intended scale and production.
- The grid issue is both an immediate problem and also a long-term barrier, constraining Wales's economic potential.

## Energy targets

- EDF Renewables strongly supports the target outlined in the electricity and heat generation ambition statement that says "by 2025, 1GW additional renewable energy capacity will be installed."
- As a part of our strong commitment to Wales, our target of 1GW of renewable energy – 500MW in onshore wind and 500MW of solar – by 2030 would, according to our independently verified estimates, unlock more than £1bn of investment into the Welsh economy and £100m of investment directly into communities.
- To pursue a target of 2025, consideration must be given to planning, grid infrastructure and routes to market. For the Welsh economy to benefit from the 2025 target, wider consideration must also be given to local supply chains, capacity in local businesses and development of skills and education pathways needed to support all phases of development.
- As a part of our Community Strategy, we put in place obligations with our contractual partners throughout all stages of development, where we draw on the local economy to ensure benefits are kept in Wales. But in doing so, we regularly encounter capacity, skills and supply chain issues.
- Every project has its unique challenges. As we progress developments, we are openly and directly working with local stakeholders and partners to overcome these, putting in place plans that directly benefit local economies and communities.
- Therefore, in our strong support for the 2025 target, we are minded to encourage the Committee to view this target as an opportunity and advocate working with the Government in tackling the wider issues in the Welsh renewables industry.
- We also recommend that the Government considers specifying further renewable energy targets, for example for 2035 and beyond, to give a clear signal to all stakeholders of the long term ambition for Wales.

## Delivering Net Zero

- We support the intent of the following statement, pg 54:
  - *Delivering the smart energy system we need using a regionally planned approach, rather than a top down, market driven approach, is more likely to enable delivery at the speed demanded by the climate emergency, at optimal cost to the system, and in a way that delivers a more socially just system with no people or places left behind.*
- However, this approach needs an overarching strategy for Wales with long-term targets for 2030 and beyond, as a whole. The outcome will need to enable a substantial expansion of renewable generation capacity, to meet the increased demand for the electrification of heat and transport.
- Further consideration must also be given as a part of the overall strategy to the "regional approach", especially when appreciating how such richness and diversity of renewables sources across Wales can be best utilised, and best serve host communities. Each region has its own particular mix of low carbon opportunities and it will be a combination of these different regional contributions that delivers an overall net zero system for Wales.