**DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Meeting:** Celtic Interconnector Community Forum

**Date:** 29th September 2022

**Venue:** Carrigtwohill Community Centre

**Participating:**

Irish Rural Link – Fintan McCabe, Brendan Mulry

EirGrid - Michelle Walsh Avril Wilson

SECAD – Katie Kearns, Elaine Barrett, Nuala O’Connell, Clodagh

East Cork Community Representatives

**Compiled by** Irish Rural Link

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| Item | Description |
| 1. | **Introduction and Minutes of Previous Meetings**Fintan McCabe opened the meeting, facilitated participant introductions and introduced the agenda. The minutes of the two previous meetings (March 8th and July 17th ) were agreed, proposed by Ann O’Neill and seconded by Orla McGovern |
| 2. | **MaREI research centre at University College Cork research partnership with EirGrid.** Evan Boyle from MaREI attended the meeting on a observational capacity. He provided an introduction to the research project and explained that he will be in attendance at a number of Eirgrid community forum meetings over the coming months. This project intends to interrogate, assess, and ultimately critique and advise on the current community benefit approach in place. Explanatory documentation was distributed and forum members with any questions were encouraged to reach out to Evan or get in touch directly with the MaREI or the EirGrid team. |
| 3. | **Terms of Reference Review**Fintan McCabe and Michelle Walsh gave a short review on the forum Membership and Terms of Reference.Key messages included:* The importance of understanding the members role
* The key forum member role of working to communicate information in a two-way flow as widely as possible to groups represented
* Forum Membership is a fixed number. Some seats are rotated and it is important that this representation is properly managed. This will be followed up as needed after the meeting.
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| 4. | **Presentation from EirGrid on current status of the project**Michelle Walsh from EirGrid provided an update on the Celtic Interconnector Project. Key messages included: * The project is on schedule as planned
* The project has received full consent in Ireland Strategic Infrastructure Development Consent from An Bord Pleanálafor the onshore element of construction, the foreshore licence for the offshore and the marine licence for the marine management organisation in the UK. French approvals are also on timeline
* Final Investment decision will be made towards the end of October.
* Once the Final Investment Decision Process is completed the project will begin construction.
* It is envisaged that the AC cable will be first constructed (Likely Construction Date from June 2023) followed by the DC cable. Whole completed is likely to run from Mid 2023 to 2025.
* The convertor Station will be constructed sometime in the middle of that timeline. (Dates to be confirmed)
* The Marine Campaign will potentially not commence until 2025.
* Michelle can be contacted at any time for clarification.
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|  | **Questions** What direction will AC cable construction start from? | **Answer**It’s likely that there will be more than one crew working on the project in different areas at any one time  |
| 5 | **Presentation from SECAD on the on the development of the Community Benefit Strategy and the purpose of this evenings workshop.** Katie Kearns from SECAD provided an update on the Community Benefit Strategy. Key Messages:* The input of Forum Membership is critical to the formulation of this strategy in order to maximise the benefit it of the Strategy on a local level, leaving a positive legacy and that the fund is distributed in a planned fair and sustainable way.
* The strategy will establish the Goals of the Funds Evaluation criteria.
* There are three streams to the fund, Community, Sustainability and Biodiversity.
* The overall fund total is €2.4 million 40% will be released under each stream in 2023 upon strategy completion (Anticipated end of Q1 2023) and EirGrid approval. 30% in 2024 and 30% in late 2025, early 2026 subject to project progress.

Please see presentation attached. |
| 6 | **The meeting moved into a workshop session on the community benefit fund/strategy,****This was delivered by SECAD.** **The forum members were divided into smaller groups for the workshop and ideas/thoughts/challenges under the 3 steams were discussed.** **Presentation from SECAD on the development of the Community Stream of the Benefit Fund** Nuala O’Connell from SECAD provided an introduction to the Community Stream of the Fund and the forum work shopped this element with feedback provided at the end of this session. initial forum response under this stream |
|  | * **Presentation from SECAD on the development of the Sustainability Stream of the Benefit Fund**
* Clodagh from SECAD provided an introduction to the Sustainability Stream of the Fund and the forum work shopped this element with feedback provided at the end of this session.
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| 7 | **Presentation from SECAD on the development of the Biodiversity Stream of the Benefit Fund** Karen from SECAD provided an introduction to the Biodiveristy Stream of the Fund and the forum work shopped this element with feedback provided at the end of this session  |
| 8 | **Next Steps**Wider Community and Stakeholder consultation will take place in the coming months... Survey will be constructed and the forum is requested to disseminate it widely among their networks. SECAD will carry out some in person community consultations.  |
|  | **Questions/Queries** | **Responses** |
|  | Is the three-way funding structure set in stone? | At the moment the fund is to be evenly split between the three stream,howver given the question was raised at the forum meeting, the EirGrid team will bring this back to the internal team.  |
|  | Is it envisaged that EirGrid will continue to support Community Projects beyond this fund? | This question will be brought back to EirGrid internal team.  |
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| 9 | **Next Meeting**The next meeting will be confirmed in the coming weeks for a date in early November .. Fintan McCabe closed the meeting and thanked members for attending.  |