



Clean energy  
for EU islands  
**Regulatory barriers in  
Ireland: findings and  
recommendations**

Completed in: December 2022

Author: Clean energy for EU islands secretariat managed  
by the European Commission Directorate-General for energy  
**clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu** |  
**info@euislands.eu** | European Commission | DG ENER

Written by: Andries De Brouwer, Lucija Rakocevic, Malgorzata (Gosia) Matowska

Reviewers: Gabi Kaiser, Jan Cornillie

Special thanks to our Clean energy for EU islands Community  
for their input and support.

Graphic design: Agata Smok for Clean energy for EU islands secretariat  
European Commission DG ENER

Typeface: EC Square Sans Pro

Disclaimer: © European Union, 2022  
The Commission's reuse policy is implemented by Commission Decision 2011/833/  
EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330,  
14.12.2011, p. 39).  
Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under the Creative  
Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. This means that reuse is  
allowed, provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.  
For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission  
may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.  
This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects  
the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for  
any use which may be made of the information contained therein.  
The EU does not own copyright in relation to the following elements:  
Francesco Perego p.5, Marco Oriolesi p.8, Pedro Miranda p.13, Jorge Salvador p.15,  
the Red Fox Photographer p. 17, Mikael Kristenson p.19, Hansjorg Keller p.21, Luana  
Niemann p.25.

# FROM CLEAN ENERGY VISION TO CLEAN ENERGY ACTION

[clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu](https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu)



## Executive Summary

The Irish islands have been frontrunners in the energy transition. Multiple community-led renewable energy projects have been developed on islands such as the Aran islands, Cape Clear and Bere island. Several actions taken by the Irish national government have contributed to this objective, for example, an uplifted grant for islands within the energy efficiency programmes, that allows inhabitants on islands to get 50% more funding. Nonetheless, several challenges for the clean energy transition on the islands remain.

Based on an **inventory** of the current legislation, the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat carried out surveys and interviews to identify the barriers to clean energy deployment and the solutions to overcome them. These findings were discussed with all relevant stakeholders in two focus group meetings and a national stakeholder meeting. The results of that process are described in this booklet. The most important recommendations are summarised below:

- The bottlenecks and gaps in the legal framework for energy communities form a barrier particularly relevant for islands since clean energy projects on islands are mainly community driven. The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) should thus accelerate the regulatory work on peer-to-peer (P2P) trading and energy communities. Together with other actors such as the distribution system operator (DSO) it should work on levelling the playing field for community-led projects. This should go hand in hand with communication, information sharing and capacity building targeted at island communities.
- To cope with grid issues, modernisation plans should take a forward-looking approach, looking at where generation opportunities on and around the islands may exist. Energy storage should be supported via legal and regulatory frameworks and support systems.
- While cultural heritage and natural habitats should be preserved, a balance between nature conservation and clean energy generation must be sought, as having access to clean, affordable and reliable energy is important on the islands.
- The additional costs of importing, installing and maintaining renewable energy systems should be taken into account within the existing support systems.

The above mentioned barriers can be overcome through stakeholder discussions, Europe-wide island-to-island exchanges of best practices and leadership by the relevant authorities. The recommendations in this booklet serve as guidance for the accelerated renewable energy deployment on the Irish islands.

The proposed actions and measures in this booklet would be best included in the Irish Islands policy document, 'New National Policy for the Future Development and Sustainability of Communities on the Offshore Islands of Ireland'. An interdepartmental committee or task force should be empowered to follow up and implement the listed actions. The island communities should be involved in the (re-)shaping and implementation of this policy. Island policies should not be made for islanders but with them.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
Ireland and its Islands	
Main Barriers to the Clean Energy Transition	
<b>Barrier 1: Bottlenecks and gaps in framework for community energy projects and energy sharing</b>	<b>10</b>
Recommendations	
1.1 Revise permitting procedures, especially the Enduring Connection Policy (ECP)	
1.2. Accelerate the regulatory work on Peer-to-Peer trading and energy communities	
1.3 Set-up a one-stop-shop and provide capacity building for (island) communities.	
<b>Barrier 2: Spatial planning constraints and complicated permitting procedures</b>	<b>12</b>
Recommendations	
2.1 Provide spatial planning guidelines for implementation of clean energy projects	
2.2. Designate go-to areas and create simplified permitting procedures	
<b>Barrier 3: Grid constraints and absent energy storage framework to cope with it</b>	<b>14</b>
Recommendations	
3.1 Adapt grid development methodology from an ad-hoc approach to a future-oriented approach.	
3.2. Develop suitable frameworks for storage with particular attention for islands	
<b>Barrier 4: Renewable energy support system not adapted to island challenges</b>	<b>16</b>
Recommendations	
4.1 Develop support systems with particular attention for islands	
4.2. Use regulatory sandboxes for testing of innovative solutions	
<b>Barrier 5: Islands are not consulted in a systematic manner</b>	<b>18</b>
Recommendations	
5.1 Integrate islands views in the policy for the development of the islands around Ireland	
5.2. Relaunch the initiative to create an intergovernmental department to specifically focus on islands	
<b>Barrier 6: Lack of support from the regional and national government</b>	<b>20</b>
Recommendations	
6.1 Mandatory follow-up on decarbonization zones, mandatory development of Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies together with national guidance	
6.2. Channel funding from the EU towards clean energy development on islands	
<b>Comparison to other countries (map)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Further Reading</b>	<b>24</b>

Introduction

There are more than 2,200 inhabited islands in the EU. Despite having access to an abundant amount of renewable energy such as wind, sun and waves, many of them depend on petrol imports for their energy supply. Through the deployment of clean energy assets, EU island communities can have access to reliable, clean, and competitive sources of energy. Given their insular nature, they can even become leaders in the clean energy transition.

While it has often become technically and financially possible to develop renewable energy projects on islands, the current legal frameworks are not always fit for purpose. The Clean energy for EU island secretariat embarked on the mission to identify the legal, regulatory and policy barriers to clean energy deployment and provide recommendations to overcome them. This booklet contains the highlights of the more in-depth country study. It processes the insights gathered from literature review, surveys sent to 37 stakeholders, six interviews, two focus groups attended by six and ten participants and one national stakeholder meeting. The national stakeholder meeting was held on the Aran Islands with representatives from the national level such as the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Communication, the Department of Rural & Community Development, the Department of Housing, Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), and Electricity Supply Board (ESB) Networks. There was also a representative from the regional government (under which the Aran Islands fall), namely the Galway County Council. The Irish Solar Energy Association and Integrated Environmental Solutions were also present. The islands’ views were represented by the Aran Islands Energy Co-Operative, Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta (Cape Clear), Údarás na Gaeltachta, Clár Éifeachtachta Fuinnimh (Ceantar na nOileán) and Comhar Caomhán Teo (Inis Oírr). The barriers and recommendations represent the view of the Clean energy for EU island secretariat and does not bind the stakeholders who contributed to it.

Ireland and its Islands

Off the coast of Ireland there are 83 islands, 23 of which are inhabited. The largest of the inhabited Irish isles, Achill Island, has an area of 148 km². Many of the islands are much smaller, with an area below 30 km². Ireland has a total offshore island population of 8,756 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, which corresponds to 0.2% of its population<sup>2</sup>. Several of the Irish islands are electrically interconnected.

Regulatory best practice

The grants for energy efficiency projects foresee a ‘grant uplift’ of 50% for islands. Island inhabitants could thus ask for 50% more funding for energy efficiency renovations. The special funding applied to two schemes: the greener homes scheme<sup>3</sup>, which allows homeowners to install energy efficient technologies such as geothermal heat pumps, solar panels, biomass boilers and stoves, at a subsidised cost; and the home energy saving scheme, which provides assistance to improving the energy efficiency of homes. This extra allocation is still active on the Better Energy Homes Scheme (previously Greener Homes) and the grant is uplifted by 50% when there is an application from an eligible island.

1 CNA17: Population by Off Shore Island, Sex and Year (Link)  
2 Eurostat 2020 (Link)  
3 Greener Homes Scheme (iea.org)

## Main Barriers to the Clean Energy Transition

Based on the detailed assessment of the current regulatory framework and consultation with relevant Irish stakeholders (via surveys, interviews, and joint meetings), the most important regulatory barriers to a clean energy transition on Irish islands were identified.<sup>4</sup> The barriers are listed and ranked by order of priority according to the stakeholders consulted:

1. Bottlenecks and gaps in the framework for community energy projects and energy sharing

2. Spatial planning constraints and complicated permitting procedures

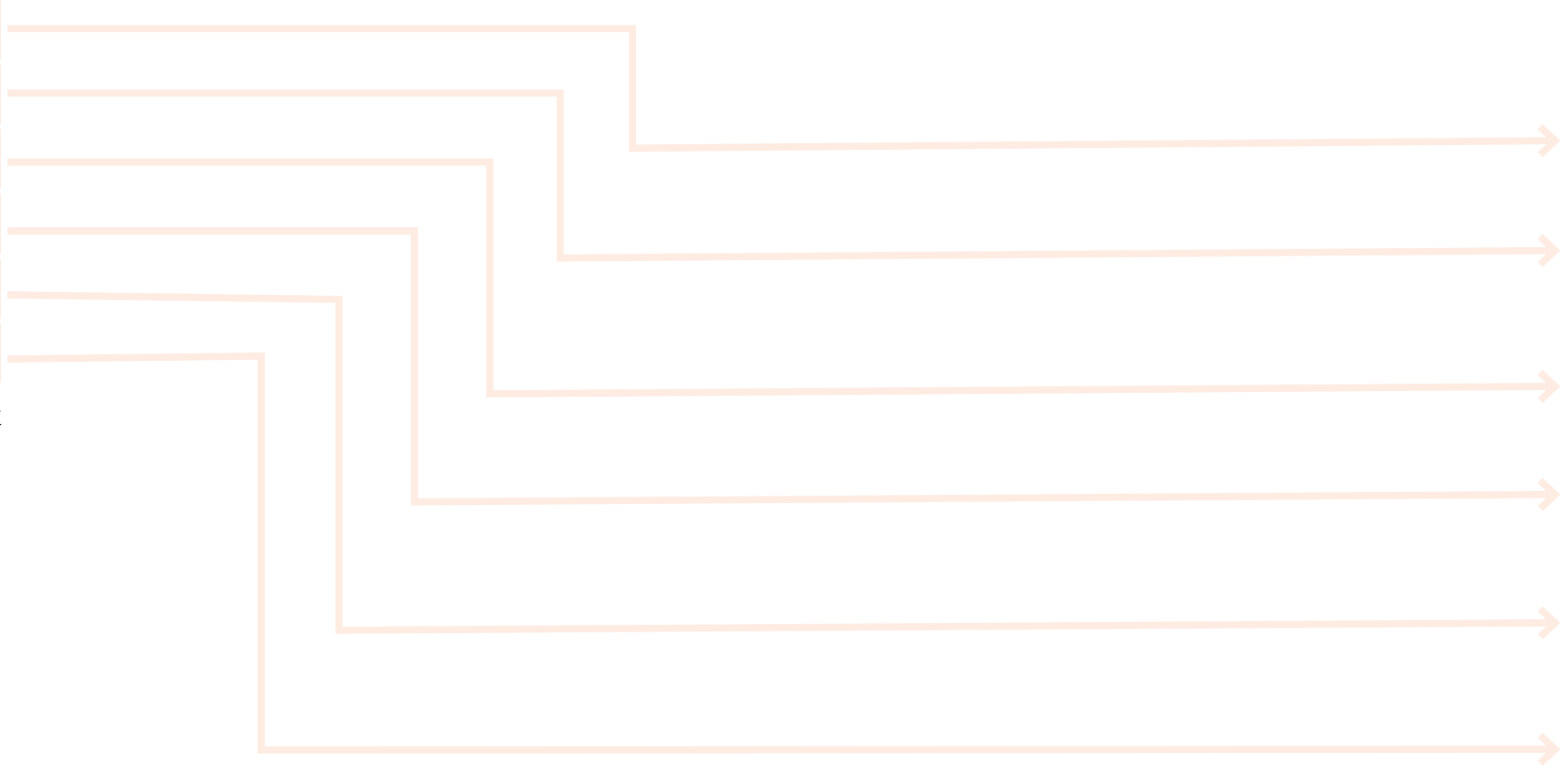
3. Grid constraints and absent energy storage framework to cope with it

4. Renewable energy support system not adapted to island challenges

5. Lack of systematic consultation of island communities

6. Lack of support from the regional and national government

Each of these barriers is presented including recommendations for overcoming them, examples of best practices and connections to the REpowerEU policy. For the presented recommendations, the actors who should be responsible to initiate implementation are highlighted.



<sup>4</sup> The content of this booklet is based on the "Regulatory barriers in Ireland: findings and recommendations" report to be found [here](#) | Clean energy for EU islands (europa.eu)



DID YOU KNOW?



ACTION FROM



USEFUL INFORMATION

Barrier 1: Bottlenecks and gaps in framework for community energy projects and energy sharing

↳ On the Irish islands, there is a strong sense of community. Cooperatives play a big role in the life of island citizens, comparable to a local government. A special category for community-led projects was taken up in the country’s first Renewable Energy Support Scheme auction. The provisions of EU law regarding energy communities are transposed into Irish legislation but the enabling legal and regulatory frameworks for community energy projects and energy sharing are missing. As clean energy projects on islands are mainly community driven, this barrier is particularly relevant for islands. For community energy projects there are bureaucratic barriers to grid connection including: complicated application procedures, uncertainty of approval, costs, and time-consuming administration. The strict timelines for obtaining the planning permission (2 years) form a particular barrier for community-led projects. Community-led projects do not need planning permission to apply for a grid connection, but the connection offer itself won’t be issued until planning permission is granted. Community projects are instead issued with a ‘connection assessment’ following some early engagement meetings with ESB Networks. Once the connection assessment is issued, communities have 2 years to secure planning permission. If they fail to do so, this capacity on the grid is released again to another project. This 2-year time limit is too short for community-led projects on islands which often have to deal with ‘Special Area of Conservation’ restrictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome the barriers for island energy communities, additional regulatory work and capacity-building actions are needed. These are explained in the following recommendations.

1.1 Revise permitting procedures, especially the Enduring Connection Policy (ECP)

↳ The strict timelines for obtaining the planning permission (2 years) in the ECP should be revisited by the regulator (CRU) and the transmission and distribution grid operators. Instead of losing the grid connection assessment if the community-led project does not get a planning permit within 2 years, a more flexible approach could be adopted. If a community – led project could demonstrate on the basis of transparent KPIs that it has advanced in its project development process and would only need some additional months to obtain planning permission, a deadline extension could be granted. Projects that have stalled would still be removed after 2 years to make space for other community-led projects waiting in line.

1.2. Accelerate the regulatory work on Peer-to-Peer trading and energy communities

↳ The CRU should prioritise further development of the regulation (financing, permitting procedures, social support) for energy communities, with particular attention for the island challenges. Up-front finance, covering the project preparation costs for community – owned projects, such as soft loans and grants, should be made available to level the playing field between professional developers and community – led projects. The regulation should provide a clear advantage to forming an energy community. The support can be in the form of incentives for specific projects, tax benefits, technical assistance for starting an energy community and simplified procedures for clean energy projects.

1.3 Set-up a one-stop-shop and provide capacity building for (island) communities.

↳ To foster and enable energy communities, the secretariat recommends creating a one-stop-shop for (island) communities to provide information and support for forming energy communities. The national government could help set up a platform, trainings or conferences with island stakeholders to foster the discussion, shed light to the best practices or even provide funding for mentorship programmes. Additionally, communication is important: the SEAI should clearly and transparently communicate the advantages and disadvantages of forming an energy community and availability of support.



↑ © Photo by Marco Oriolesi on Unsplash.



Did you know?

**REPowerEU** – Member States should implement simplified permit-granting procedures for renewable energy communities, including permits for the connection of community-owned plants to the grid, and reduce production licensing procedures and requirements to a minimum, including for renewables self-consumers. Member States should establish appropriate incentives and adapt administrative requirements to the specifications of energy communities. An integrated 3-step “learn-plan-do” programme could help energy communities build technical expertise and secure access to financing.



Further action is expected from:

- ✓ Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
- ✓ Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- ✓ Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI)



Useful information

- ✂ Renewable Energy Support Scheme
- ✂ Enduring Connection Policy
- ✂ Electricity Regulation Act
- ✂ One-stop-shops for energy communities
- ✂ Aran Islands Energy Cooperative
- ✂ Bere Island
- ✂ Cape Clear



Barrier 2: Spatial planning constraints and complicated permitting procedures

↳ Land-use conflicts form a major barrier, specifically on islands. Energy generation can be in conflict with historical buildings and tourism and the designation of an island as a ‘Special Area of Conservation’. Spatial planning legislation related to these protected areas impose restrictions on RES installations that are not adjusted to the local island’s characteristics. Due to spatial planning constraints, the authorisation and licensing procedures for clean energy projects are too complex for individuals or communities which do not have expertise in the sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To cope with some of these barriers, providing guidelines on spatial planning and indicating go-to zones are suitable measures. These are briefly explained below.

2.1 Provide spatial planning guidelines for implementation of clean energy projects

↳ To further support the islands in their energy transition, the secretariat recommends that the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government provides guidance on how clean energy projects should be planned and implemented in respect to land use priorities. These guidelines should consider the characteristics of islands and seek compromises between environment conservation, agriculture, preservation of historical sites, tourism and sustainable and clean energy.

2.2. Designate go-to areas and create simplified permitting procedures

- ↳ The secretariat recommends developing an integrated spatial planning and permitting approach via the creation of a detailed Master Plan (per island) that investigates and approves the areas or sites for clean energy development. This Master Plan should define go-to areas specifically for one or more renewable energy sources. Consequently, projects in these zones should be subjected to fast-tracked and simplified permitting procedures or lighter environmental impact assessments. Concretely, the Department of Housing could propose certain zones for a Ministerial exception.
- ↳ A possible simplification can be to explore options for a single permit, for instance for any clean energy project on the islands or for a specific size and type of the project which is considered priority in strategic documents.



↑ © Photo by Pedro Miranda on Unsplash.



Did you know?

**REPowerEU** – A faster roll-out of renewable energy projects could be supported by strategic planning carried out by Member States. Member States should identify the land and sea areas necessary for the installation of plants for the production of energy from renewable sources. Member States should designate as ‘renewables go-to areas’, those areas that are particularly suitable to develop renewable energy projects, which should benefit from predictability and streamlined administrative procedures.



Further action is expected from:

- ✓ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- ✓ Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- ✓ Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI)
- ✓ Regional authorities,
- ✓ Local planning authorities



- Useful information**
- ✂ **Overview of Spatial Planning regulation in Ireland**
  - ✂ **Example of a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**
  - ✂ **The RES Simplify report** contains some useful recommendations and examples for public provision of guidelines and documentation templates on the national level for authorities, project developers and stakeholders.

### Barrier 3: Grid constraints and absent energy storage framework to cope with it

↳ Several of the Irish islands are connected to the mainland electricity grid, but several of the underwater connection cables are too small to allow for clean energy development in and around the islands. Islands are thus unable to export excess energy beyond the capacity of the cable connecting them to the mainland. At the same time, the grids on the islands are not strong enough to incorporate any substantial amount of additional renewable energy generation facilities. Grid capacity upgrades are demand led. This means that the DSO projects how demand will grow and upgrades the grids accordingly. It is not based on potential generation capacity. So any (renewable) energy project, whether on an island or not, has to apply and then the grid could get upgraded if needed.

To cope with the insufficient grid capacity, energy storage is of critical importance. There is however no comprehensive framework for energy storage in Ireland. The Solar PV scheme provides subsidies for the purchase and installation for roof-mounted PV. If the roof-mounted PV is combined with battery storage, then an additional grant is offered. There is no support system for (residential/small-scale) storage as 'stand-alone'.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

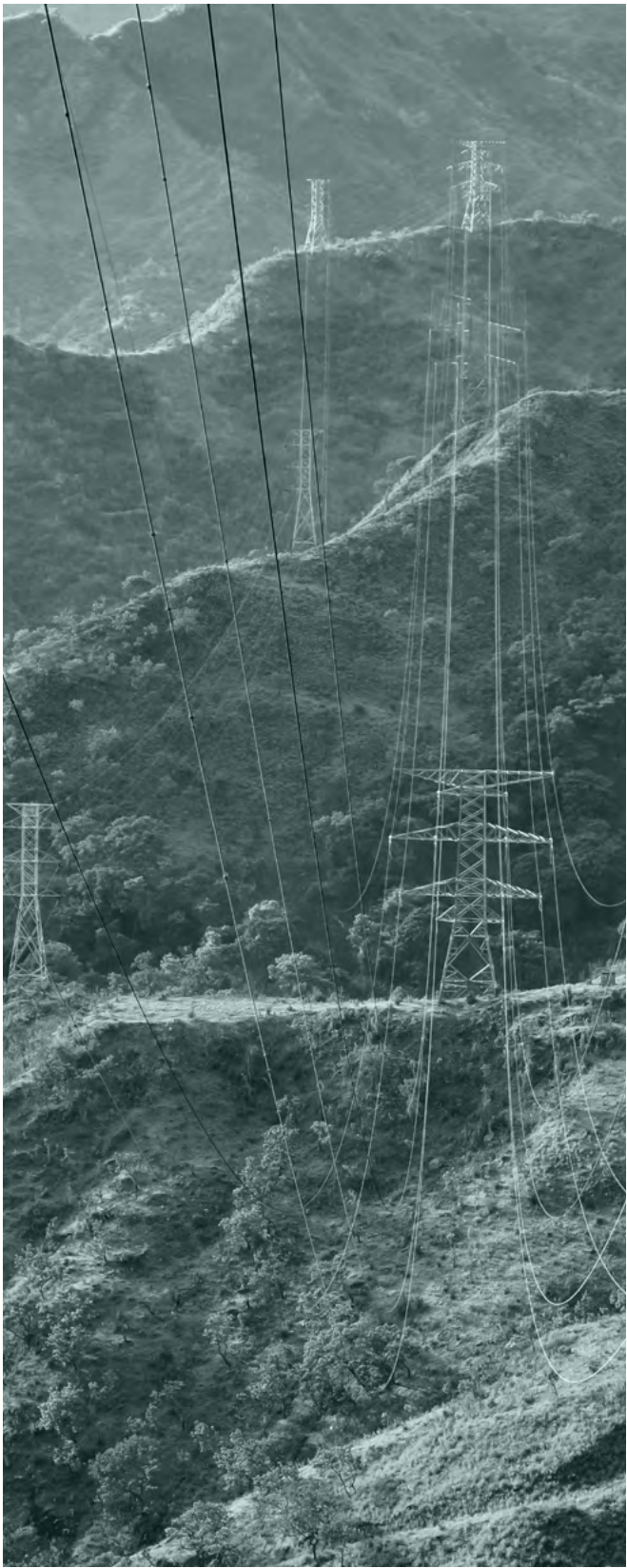
To cope with the grid constraints, grid planning should be revisited and at the same time storage should be further supported. Therefore the secretariat makes the following recommendations.

#### 3.1 Adapt grid development methodology from an ad-hoc approach to a future-oriented approach.

↳ To allow Irish islands to fully benefit from the renewable energy potential they have, the secretariat recommends turning the grid-planning logic around. A more forward-looking grid development policy is needed. The DSO should look, together with the islands, at the potential production capacity from renewable energy on the islands and tailor its grid development policy to this anticipated growth. Having designated go-to zones (see recommendation 2.2) would contribute to targeted grid upgrades. Based on these areas, DSOs could plan where and when to upgrade the network. This way, island stakeholders would know which areas are planned to be upgraded and when to plan their projects. The CRU and DECC should provide the DSO with the appropriate mandate for this.

#### 3.2. Develop suitable frameworks for storage with particular attention for islands

↳ To help cover storage investment costs, and this particularly in the light of higher costs of technical equipment installation and maintenance, the system of an uplifted grant as foreseen for energy efficiency projects on islands could be used. As mentioned above, the grants for energy efficiency projects foresee a 'grant uplift' of 50% for islands. Island inhabitants could thus ask for 50% more funding for energy efficiency renovations. When designing a support system for (stand-alone) energy storage applicable for the whole of Ireland, the DECC and the SEAI could be envisaged to have an uplifted grant for islands.



↑ © Photo by Jorge Salvador on Unsplash.



#### Did you know?

**REPowerEU** – In the necessary case-by-case assessments to ascertain whether: a plant for the production of energy from renewable sources, its connection to the grid, the related grid itself or storage assets is of overriding public interest in a particular case, Member States should presume these plants and their related infrastructure as being of overriding public interest and serving public health and safety.



#### Further action is expected from:

- ✓ ESB Networks – Distribution System Operator
- ✓ Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- ✓ Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- ✓ SEAI – Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland



#### Useful information

- ✂ ESB information page on **connection of the islands**
- ✂ Multi-year DSO/TSO **Work Plan Covering 2022 – 2026**
- ✂ **Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap** by EirGrid and SONI
- ✂ **Solar PV and storage support scheme**
- ✂ **Better Energy Homes Scheme**



Barrier 4: Renewable energy support system not adapted to island challenges

↳ There are no island-specific support systems in Ireland and no specific considerations for islands within the general renewable energy support system (RESS). This is contrary to existing practices in other EU countries with islands (see box: Useful Information). The absence of island-specific support systems, or at least particular attention to islands within the existing support systems, pose difficulties for clean energy development on islands. Islanders are in a different position because investments on the islands are usually higher, maintenance is more difficult and more expensive, and it is harder to have access to skilled workforces. In the application for support systems, these extra costs associated with islands puts the islands at a disadvantage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

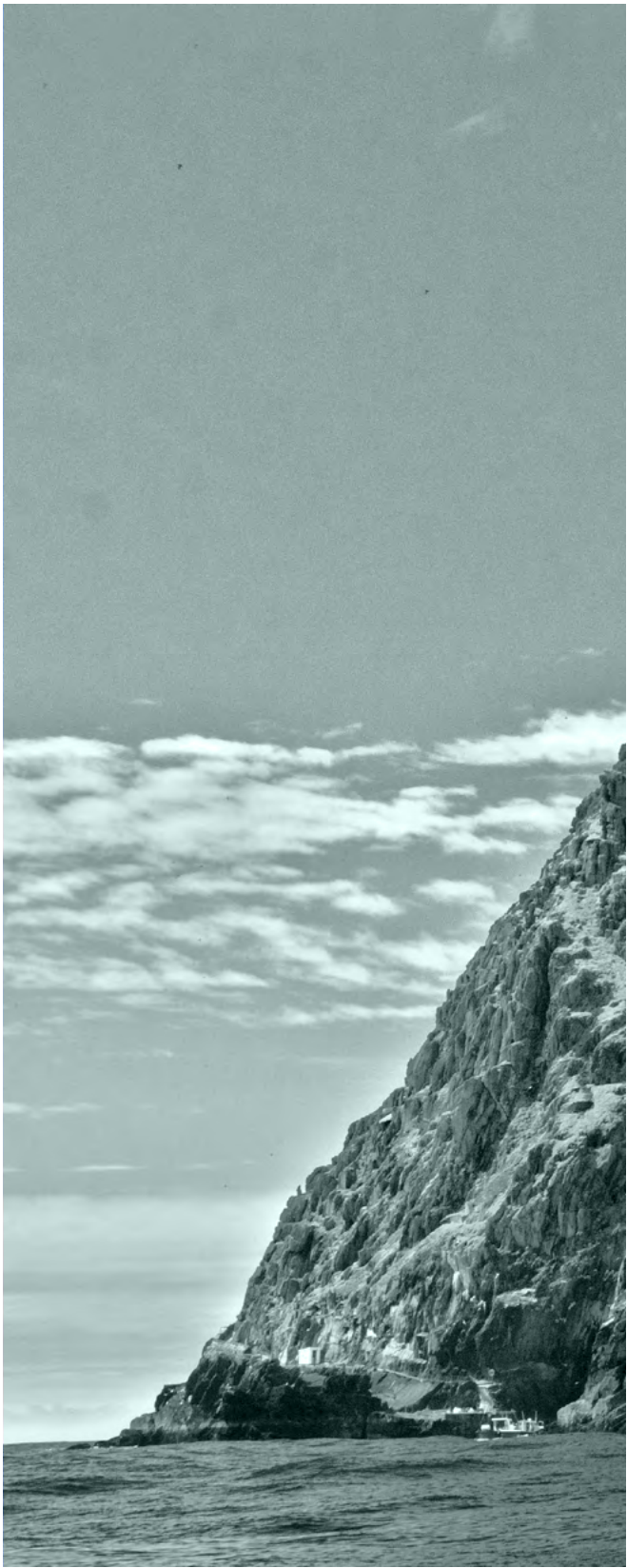
Support systems could be adapted taking into consideration the particular difficulties mentioned above. These could be tested by using regulatory sandboxes. Both recommendations are explained below.

4.1 Develop support systems with particular attention for islands

↳ The secretariat recommends providing additional support to the islands within the existing frameworks for renewable energy. The Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI) should provide additional support for the islands, taking into account island characteristics and energy peculiarities. This could be done by providing preferential categories or providing uplifted grants, as has been done before in Ireland. In the design of the next RESS (auction) the terms and conditions could provide for an adjusted calculation method, with a specific island coefficient, taking into account the higher investment and maintenance costs.

4.2. Use regulatory sandboxes for testing of innovative solutions

↳ In line with what has been done in other EU Member States, Irish islands could be put forward as innovative laboratories via regulatory sandboxes. We recommend using the regulatory sandbox approach to allow specific islands to experiment with different designs of electricity tariffs (hourly tariff, time-of-use tariff, etc.), for example. Regulatory sandboxes are ways for authorities, tasked with the implementation and enforcement of specific legislation, to test innovative approaches and technologies in real-life situations.



↑ Skellig, Bantry, Ireland © Photo by the Red Fox Photographer on Unsplash.



Did you know?

**REPowerEU** – In line with Union legislation, Member States are encouraged to put in place regulatory sandboxes to grant targeted exemptions from the national, regional or local legislative or regulatory framework for innovative technologies, products, services or approaches. This facilitates permit-granting in support of the deployment and system integration of renewable energy, storage, and other decarbonisation technologies.



Further action is expected from:

- ✓ Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI)
- ✓ Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- ✓ Department of Environment, Climate and Communications



- 🔗 **Useful information**
- 🔗 Greece – 🔗 **Renewable energy support system adapted to islands**
- 🔗 Estonia – 🔗 **Small Islands Programme**
- 🔗 Croatia – 🔗 **Public Calls** from the Croatian Environment Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund with uplifted grants for islands
- 🔗 More information on 🔗 **regulatory sandboxes**

Barrier 5: Islands are not consulted in a systematic manner

↳ The National Energy and Climate Plan for Ireland does not provide a clear strategy for the energy transition on the islands. It is currently not clear how islands and their energy potential or needs will contribute to the energy transition in Ireland. Island stakeholders are not consulted in a systematic manner to ensure that the island needs and priorities are addressed. The Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD) is working on finalising the Islands Policy document, which had stalled since the end of 2019. The goal is to have this ten-year action plan ready by the end of 2022. The interdepartmental committee that is currently drawing up the plan will also be following up its implementation with sequential 3-year action plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To support the islands, the two stalled initiatives should be revamped by the DRCD and DECC as described in the recommendations below.

5.1 Integrate islands views in the policy for the development of the islands around Ireland

- ↳ The barriers and recommendations formulated in this booklet can serve as examples for actions to be taken in the short-, mid – and long-term. Key points to be considered in this policy are the additional costs of equipment, installation and maintenance and obsolete grid infrastructure. It is also worthwhile to link some of the advantages that the energy transition can bring to other sectors such as employment.
- ↳ A broad stakeholder consultation was envisaged in the consultation paper in 2019. The secretariat recommends submitting an Islands Policy for public consultation to the Irish island community.

5.2. Relaunch the initiative to create an intergovernmental department to specifically focus on islands

- ↳ To foster the involvement of island stakeholders in national strategic & long-term energy planning and funding distribution, the secretariat recommends relaunching the intergovernmental department to specifically focus on islands. This would help bring in different views – also beyond energy – from different island stakeholders up to the national level. There is a clear need for a link between islands and national level in a cross-departmental way. This department would also help to align islands priorities and needs with the national planning and to coordinate across sectors needed for island energy transition.



↑ © Photo by Mikael Kristenson on Unsplash.



Further action is expected from:

- ✓ Department of Rural and Community Development
- ✓ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- ✓ Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- ✓ Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI)
- ✓ Regional authorities,
- ✓ Local planning authorities



Useful information

- ✍ New National Policy for the Future Development and Sustainability of Communities on the **Offshore Islands of Ireland**



Barrier 6: Lack of support from the regional and national government

↳ The Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019 requires each Local Authority to identify and develop plans for one decarbonisation zone. After identifying the most suitable area for the zone, each Local Authority must develop their implementation plan ahead of the deadline. Some of the Irish islands have been designated as the carbon free zone by the local authority but there has been no support from those Local Authorities in taking concrete actions. Certain regions of Ireland – for example the Midlands due to the presence of peat – receive particular attention for the national government under the Just Transition Fund. Islands are not particularly envisaged with supportive actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support from national and regional governments can take different forms and build further on existing frameworks as explained in the recommendations below.

6.1 Mandatory follow-up on decarbonization zones, mandatory development of Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies together with national guidance

↳ The secretariat’s recommendation is to introduce a mandatory follow-up and monitoring/reporting (with concrete actions, KPIs, etc. within a certain time limit) of the implementation of the regional/local decarbonisation zones by the Local Authorities. In addition to mandatory rules, the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage could provide guidelines for the development and implementation of local energy and climate plans. It could recommend, in coordination with national and regional bodies, implement support schemes to provide capacity building and/or technical assistance for the realisation of the decarbonisation zone. These could take the form of workshops for municipalities and communities, guidelines for energy transition and examples of roadmaps from similar municipalities or regions.

6.2. Channel funding from the EU towards clean energy development on islands

↳ The secretariat recommends paying particular attention to the island regions when developing plans allocating EU funding. In doing so, the responsible authorities should align the funding with the other plans for the energy transition on the islands, as discussed in the barriers and recommendations above (go-to zones under 2.2, and island-specific policy under 4.1), but also keep the link with the objectives set-out in the National Energy and Climate Plan. This could be coordinated and managed by the intergovernmental department on islands (recommendation 5.2).



↑ © Photo by Hansjorg Keller on Unsplash.



Did you know?

The Greek government provides financial support to six Greek islands through the Just Transition Fund in order to tackle issues expected following planned withdrawals of local petrol-fuelled power stations

Spain has a dedicated budget for clean energy development on islands under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

Italy has set up dedicated budgets for local governments on the islands to propose sustainable development, including clean energy projects to be covered under Recovery and Resilience Fund.



Further action is expected from:

- ✓ Department of Rural and Community Development
- ✓ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- ✓ County and City Management Association (CCMA), the 'representative voice' of the local government management network
- ✓ Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)





- Useful information
- National Planning Framework
  - National Development Plan
  - Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019
  - Climate Action Plan in 2021



Comparison to other countries (map)

Some of the identified legal and regulatory barriers in Ireland are also present in several of the other countries which were part of the study.

- 

If the type of barrier present in Ireland is also present in an other country, the corresponding icon is bright.
- 

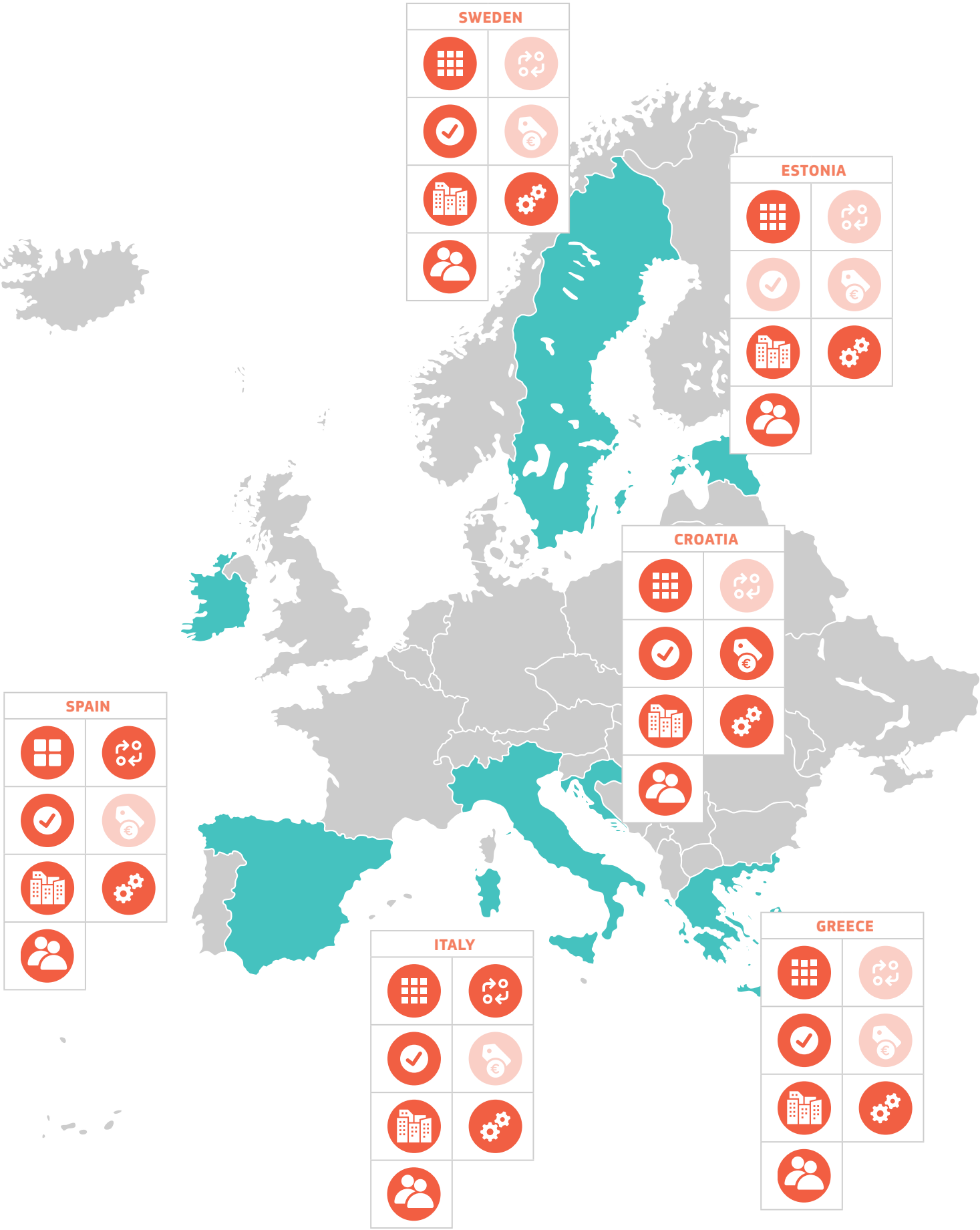
If the type of barrier is not present, the corresponding icon is faded.

Type of barrier

Irish barriers summary

	<b>GRID</b>	Grid constraints and absent framework for storage to cope with it
	<b>SYSTEM INTEGRATION</b>	Grid constraints and absent framework for storage to cope with it
	<b>PERMITTING</b>	Spatial planning constraints and complicated permitting procedures
	<b>SUPPORT SYSTEMS</b>	Renewable energy support system not adapted to island challenges
	<b>SPATIAL PLANNING</b>	Spatial planning constraints and complicated permitting procedures
	<b>COORDINATION &amp; STRATEGY</b>	Islands are not consulted in a systematic manner Lack of support from the regional and national government
	<b>ENERGY COMMUNITIES</b>	Bottlenecks and gaps in framework for community energy projects and energy sharing

→ Note that while the same type of barrier can be present across countries, the specificities and involved actors can vary. For a full comprehension, please refer to the full study to be found on [clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu/insights/publications/regulatory-barriers-ireland-findings-and-recommendations](https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu/insights/publications/regulatory-barriers-ireland-findings-and-recommendations)



## Further Reading

### Regulatory barriers in Ireland: findings and recommendations

📄 [Read here the full study | Clean energy for EU islands \(europa.eu\)](#)

### Irish islands with a Clean Energy Transition Agenda (CETA)

📄 [Aran Islands](#)

📄 [Cape Clear](#)

### Irish islands that have received technical assistance

📄 [Rathlin](#)

📄 [Valentia](#)

📄 [Bere Island](#)

### Regulatory Framework in Ireland

📄 [Ireland regulatory inventory](#)

📄 [Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan](#)

📄 [Policy Document 'Our Rural Future': rural development policy for 2021-2025](#)

📄 [New National Policy for the Future Development and Sustainability of Communities on the Offshore Islands of Ireland](#)

→ Irish island © Photo by Luana Niemann on Unsplash.





# GET INVOLVED – STAY IN TOUCH

Sign up for the latest news of the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat via [europa.eu newsroom](#)

Get in contact with Clean energy for EU islands secretariat via [✉ info@euislands.eu](mailto:info@euislands.eu)

Follow the activities of Clean energy for EU islands secretariat via the following channels:

- 🔗 [clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu](https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu)
- 🔗 [facebook.com/CE4EUIslands](https://facebook.com/CE4EUIslands)
- 🔗 [linkedin.com/company/CE4EUIslands](https://linkedin.com/company/CE4EUIslands)



↑ Andries De Brouwer from Clean energy for EU islands secretariat presenting during the Irish stakeholder meeting in 2022. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat



↑ The Irish stakeholder meeting on Inishmaan island which is the middle of the three main Aran Islands in Galway Bay, off the west coast of Ireland. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat



↑ Inishmaan has a population of about 183, making it the smallest of the Aran Islands in terms of population. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat



The Clean energy for EU islands secretariat is managed by the European Commission  
Directorate-General for Energy

