



**Friends of
the Earth
Ireland**

Renewables
Grid Initiative 



‘Our Energy Future’ project launched by Friends of the Earth Ireland, EirGrid and RGI

6th December 2021

Today, EirGrid, Friends of the Earth and the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) have announced the launch of a joint project to engage communities and groups around the country on Ireland’s energy transition.

Ireland now has in place the strongest climate action programme the country has ever seen, including a commitment to increase the share of renewable electricity to up to 80% by 2030. This will involve a transformation of Ireland’s grid infrastructure and require an energy transition which empowers citizens and supports open, equal and meaningful community participation.

In order to develop an inclusive vision of Ireland’s energy future, there is a need to facilitate broader discussion of the nature and impact of the transition and to develop an improved understanding of the choices, concerns and obstacles that we face.

EirGrid, Friends of the Earth and the Renewables Grid Initiative have come together to facilitate inclusive discussions and reflections with communities, civil society organisations, local groups, and other stakeholders. The 3-year project will support diverse and open dialogues on the challenges and opportunities associated with Ireland’s energy transformation, from development of grid infrastructure, to the need for a decarbonised, secure and affordable electricity, with a much higher share of community participation.

Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement at EirGrid said: ‘We very much welcome this partnership with both RGI and Friends of the Earth. The energy transition will radically change the way we produce, use and consume energy. Our strategy, Shaping Our Electricity Future, sets out the fundamental role EirGrid will play in providing the necessary grid infrastructure to facilitate this transition. Communities will be at the heart of this and it is vitally important that their voices continue to be heard and their views considered in our project outcomes. This partnership provides a unique opportunity to join together with two organisations that continually strive to promote and exhibit clear, equitable and transparent engagement.’

Jerry Mac Evilly, Head of Policy Change at Friends of the Earth Ireland said: “Friends of the Earth is committed to supporting a fair and fast transition to a zero pollution future. This means not only a focus on Ireland’s climate and energy commitments but also putting citizens and communities at the heart of transition. It is clear that the rapid decarbonisation of our energy system will require expansion of infrastructure combined with new, meaningful ways for the public to engage. Friends of the Earth is delighted to partner and collaborate with RGI and EirGrid and support open and honest conversations with stakeholders, particularly regarding opportunities for community engagement and community energy as part of Ireland’s energy future.”



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Antonella Battaglini, CEO of RGI said: “RGI’s decade of experience in bringing together grid operators and civil society organisations has confirmed time after time that broad collaborations, such as the one embodied by this project, are vital for the energy transition to accelerate and succeed. They enable an exchange of perspectives and expertise, allow actors to identify synergies and find new, more inclusive solutions, and broaden the scope of people ‘at the table’. With that in mind, we are delighted to begin this new endeavour between EirGrid, Friends of the Earth Ireland and the diverse stakeholders who will become involved as the project develops.”

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Notes

1. EirGrid operates and develops the electricity transmission grid in Ireland. This includes interconnection with neighbouring grids and the wholesale electricity market. The grid brings power from generators to the ESB distribution network that supplies every home, farm and business in Ireland. The grid is also used to deliver power directly to businesses that use large amounts of electricity. EirGrid ensures electricity is always available – today, tomorrow and for decades to come.
2. Friends of the Earth, is an active environmental organisation which campaigns for climate justice and sustainability. In relation to climate and energy policy its objective is to promote a rapid and just transition to a community centred, zero-carbon energy system for Ireland. Friends of the Earth seeks to ensure that everyone, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged groups who might be affected by policy, is considered and included in the conversation. It strives to expand and diversify civic engagement by creating spaces for everybody to participate and be included in activism and political change.
3. RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe engaging in an ‘energy transition ecosystem-of-actors’. RGI promotes fair, transparent, sustainable grid development to enable the growth of renewables to achieve full decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement. As part of its strategy, RGI initiates innovative approaches to enable a sensitive grid development. This includes that RGI actively instigates and facilitates cooperation between TSOs and NGOs to jointly work on better processes at local, regional and national level.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding between EirGrid, FoE and RGI for the project is available [here](#).