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Moderator questions in Bold, Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: Unable to decipher = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

Sam McCloskey: Good morning everyone. It's been a long time since I've had to worry about tripping coming up to a podium in heels, but managed safely. It is so fantastic to be here and I'd just like to applaud the ambition that Niamh's just described from, from Northern Channel offshore wind, and echo Niamh's thanks to Invest Northern Ireland to-, for, for putting on today's event. It's great to be the last speaker before tea break. I didn't think I would say that earlier on 'cause normally, you know, standing between people and their scones is not a good place to be, but actually it's giving me an opportunity to reflect on everything that's already been said this morning, and actually I don't really need to say very much else. You'd think we'd all got together and, and decided on how to present a, a common theme and a common message and we didn't, and my slides actually very much summarise the discussion that, that we've had already this morning. But I think first of all I'd like to really applaud again the ambition that we've heard this morning.

I'm ten years long in the tooth when it comes to offshore marine, or marine energy in Northern Ireland, and ten years ago there was a lot of ambition and, and there's much more ambition and a real sense of urgency. Particularly nice to hear from the Department for the Economy and Crown Estate being here this morning. Suppose I've got to introduce myself. So, I'm Sam McCloskey. I wear two hats in my working week, and today I'm wearing a hat for the Simply Blue Group. So, I'm the Northern Ireland adviser to, to Simply Blue and I'm seconded through my role as director of sustainability and climate resilience for, for Tetra Tech so-, so, I'm going to just cover a few things I suppose, just briefly, what you've already heard, the context and the need for offshore renewables, you, you probably don't need that again, the history and timeline, so I might just hark back to ten years ago and, and leave us with thinking about, you know, that renewed sense of urgency.

Where are we now? What do we need to do? What do we need to do from a Northern Ireland perspective? And, I suppose most of importantly from, from why I'm here, is, is how Simply Blue can, can fit in and some exciting news on, on that front. So, putting it into context you-, we've, we've heard a lot, and it's very, very easy to see the opportunity. If we just look at the UK, and, and we are world leaders in, in offshore wind, we meet 39% from a UK perspective of domestic needs and that's over a quarter of the global portfolio, generating enough for 10.8 million homes and-, but it's about the prediction to grow. We're not looking back. From 10.4 GW now to 19.5 in a very short space of time, in, in four years, and pipelines. But, but a pipeline that we had more recently, after the ScotWind leasing round, of 25-plus GW of, of offshore wind granted agreements for lease, including 15 GW of, of floating, and that's important from a Simply Blue perspective which I'll come back to.

But from a UK perspective there's also a focus on supporting. We've heard about the need to bring particularly the likes of floating and hydrogen, you-, to, to, to support that innovation journey, and there are things, support mechanisms, that are very much bringing those to the forefront. The Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult's Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence and specific support schemes designated to bringing the sector forward. And then there are a, a number of designated clusters, and you'll notice not one yet in Northern Ireland, and I'll just say yet, that support offshore wind. And Simply Blue's had a, a, a strong role to play in the Celtic Sea Alliance on, on that particular front, but there are others dotted around the UK where there is need for that particular type of, of support. So, if we, we, we-, I, I probably don't need to go through those, those bullet points as far as the need for offshore wind, even given that we've got this pipeline and, and we've got established technology.

We've already heard from, from the previous speakers about the, the, the need for growth in electrification and how green energy, offshore energy, will help to support that, not least the security of supply issues following the devastating issues that are happening in, in the Ukraine at the moment and the increasing in cost and the, the balance of cost that, that further renewables can provide. I suppose more importantly why floating offshore wind, and Niamh gave some excellent examples for-, from an SBM perspective. But why floating? Why is it important in the mix going forward? Well, we can use area of sea-, of sea bed and, and Russell already made mention of them earlier on, that are further out at sea, which is important from a Northern Ireland perspective. Which means that these 230m high, 15 MW turbines are going to be less visually intrusive than perhaps they, they-, obviously they would be closer to shore.

There's less a reliance than fixed-bottom turbines on a, a larger vessel so should ultimate make, make the deployment cheaper in, in the longer term. There's access further out at sea to greater wind resources, and they can be deployed in deeper waters where the continental shelf drops off. There's a gigawatt by 2030 in the UK's wider plans, and we already heard about the 30 GW potential from, from others in the programme for, for Government in, in Ireland. Should we talk about the history? I think it's, it's worth just recapping on the history of, of ocean energy in Northern Ireland, and it's probably when I came along to, to learn. It's been a journey learning for me in, in the last ten years. In 2012 we had the Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan which Richard has, has already made mention of, and then the, the leasing rounds which saw three offshore or ocean renewable energy projects given agreements for lease two that-, where Niamh and I met many years ago in tidal energy, the 200 MW sites off, off the North coast, and then the First Flight wind 600 MW offshore wind off the County Down coast.

But I think probably lesser known is the work that's being done on the project-by-project innovation support, the scientific licenses. So, it's been research work that's happened in Strangford Lough over the last ten years that's probably very much gone, gone under the radar, mostly supporting tidal energy projects for, for sure but helping to support the growth of the, the marine renewable industry over time.

And then the much long-awaited and very welcome energy strategy which commits to the 1 GW of offshore wind with the important word 'from' 2030, but again we are-, we're all here as, as a mobilized set of, of organisations hoping to, to move that forward. I suppose there's, there's three I suppose areas of importance. Niamh's talked about the importance of the supply chain and, and, and the work that was done, and, and I'll come, come on to that, back ten years ago when those three sites were granted agreements for lease.

But-, so, this is (inaudible 07.46) the academic capability and, and the leasing round of the three sort of important-, oh, well, I suppose the leasing history of three important things that I had, had wanted to cover. And we can't underestimate the importance of the R&D support. Richard mentioned the Bryden Centre which is very close to my heart, which is next generation of entrepreneurs in marine renewables coming through in industrial doctorate research programme, but that's a sister centre to the Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy and, and Martin's here today representing CASE who funded over £2 million's worth of, of research in marine renewables over the last ten years which, I must say, sounds like a drop in the ocean, excuse the pun. It is a small amount of money when you compare that to the sort of research funding that is happening in, in the rest of the UK but, but a small amount that goes a very long way because it's engaging the whole of the supply chain.

And Queen's itself has a history of over 30 years of research starting with wave energy, moving to tidal, and more recently floating offshore wind and floating solar projects. Ulster University have as-, a marine archaeology specialism and team, AFBI have the Christie's (ph 09.00), the research vessel, and we have Belfast Met who are brining on the, the hydrogen agenda through their, the GenComm project, so an awful lot of research capability. We're gonna hear from members of the supply chain, and I'm not going to steal your thunder but Invest NI have been working on supporting the supply chain through collaborative networks, through development of a-, of a database, and through events such as this, working hard. Sam Knox and I have, have talked long over long, long hours about the opportunities here in, in marine renewables, and, and I'm really excited to, to hear from some of the guys later on. So, you know, where, where are we? What is the current situation?

There's so much positive now, there are so many opportunities. We've heard about hydrogen and the eFuels economy. We've got an untapped resource just waiting for us to, to go and develop. We now have a new policy environment and an action plan, we've got a-, an engaged, Niamh's just talked about it, licensing team who've been through the process, probably one of the first in the UK to understand how offshore licensing or marine licensing happens, so so much expertise there. A mobilised supply chain. Look at you, how excited you are, ready to go. Wonderful port and harbour facilities, and I mentioned the academic expertise, but we do still have some challenges and there's no point in us pretending that we don't have them, brush under the-, under the carpet. I've said apathy and that's probably a, a, a wrong-, the wrong word, because I haven't heard any apathy in the-, in the room today. And maybe a little bit of complacency over the last while? It didn't work the first time but now it definitely is going to work. I, I heard that. Grid access is an issue.

I've said policy gap but I'm hearing that that's, that's changing, but Niamh mentioned a lack of skills, a lack of boats potentially, and, and a lack of people resource to be able to deliver on some of the ambition given that we're probably just running to catch up with, with some of the rest of, of the UK. So, what do we need to do? We do think we all shared slides. I think it's most important, and Richard mentioned it first off, that we learn from our successes of integration of onshore wind. Ten years ago I don't think we ever would have thought that we would have been so successful in meeting, meeting and exceeding those 40% targets in 2020 so we can do it for offshore, but we have to do it now. We need a new action plan that we're, we're hearing is-, the strategic environmental assessment work is starting. We need a leasing round. Will's here, that's fantastic. We need some form of contracts for difference, be that specific Northern Ireland or a ring-fenced pot for us.

New legislation, particularly around decommissioning of last resort, as Stephen's already mentioned. Targeted R&D support, that's probably something that I suppose in my former job would have been close to my own heart and probably hasn't been mentioned here today. We still need to support that R&D journey to reduce the levelised cost of, of energy, particularly in floating offshore wind. And why not, let's set up a Northern Ireland cluster just to bring this forward and make it run. So, how can-, how can Simply Blue help? We're committed to working with the oceans and enabling communities to benefit from blue growth. So, we're not necessarily a floating offshore wind developer, although that's part of what we do, but we're, we're a marine project developer. So, we lead early stage projects in floating wind, which I talked about mostly today, wave projects, sustainable aquaculture, and, and more recently in general blue economy hydrogen and, and eFuels.

And you'll see we've got offices in kind of key strategic areas around the world, from Cork where we're headquartered through to Portland in, in Oregon as well as, as an office in Pembrokeshire to support the Celtic Sea work that we're doing, Newquay, Edinburgh, Dublin, Hamburg, and hopefully soon Belfast. Be less of a commute for me. So, we work with a, a number of different partners on a portfolio that we've already got 9 GW of off, offshore wind, and I'll just bring up-, all of our projects up on the screen there. So, in floating wind we-, as I've mentioned, the Celtic Sea. We've got the Erebus Project which is a consortium under the Blue Gem wind portfolio, and Valorous which is a stepping stone project to help us build out Erebus. As you can see, there's sort of tantamount to 400 MW in the Celtic Sea. We have two projects in Irish coastal waters, Emerald and, and Western Star.

We have the Salamander project off the Scottish East Coast, and today we're very pleased to launch our new Nomadic project which will be between Northern Ireland and, and Scotland, and I'll come to that just a little bit later. We have a sustainable salmon farm, Loch Long Salmon in Scotland. Our Saoirse wave array, which is a 5 MW array project off the coast of County Clare, and starting work on a development of energy parks particularly around hydrogen and eFuels. So, back to I suppose this morning's news and, it's exciting to be here to officially launch our Nomadic offshore wind project in formal partnership with

MJM Renewables, who are, are in the room today. The project is the development of an up to 500 MW floating offshore wind farm, as I've said between the Northern Irish and Scottish coastlines. We are going to directly connect to the Ballykelly energy park which is the MJM energy park being developed, in Ballykelly strangely enough, with a direct power take off and power purchase agreement between our two organisations.

There will be a focus, and I was glad to hear Richard mention hydrogen earlier on, on helping to develop hydrogen and eFuels at the site, and we too have taken the risk similar to SBM. We've done some initial site scoping, identified some potential sites, and we're working on a consenting strategy, stakeholder engagement, and an environmental impact assessment scoping study, so we've made that investment in advance of I suppose the certainties that we are really, really keen to hear. So, for, for more information James from MJM is here, and my two colleagues Michael and Asher are on the table there, more than happy to tell you more about the project. And we're very keen to share our news with you as we-, as we move along with our dedicated Nomadic Offshore Wind website, so please do check in with us to have a look at that. And finally just it, it leaves me to say thank you. This is the team, although since this was taken in September, and that really is the ocean behind us, in, in our more-, I think we've probably doubled in, in size since, since then as, as an organisation. We're, we're sort of 60, 70 strong and every day we bring new people on from, from all around the world. I'd like to thank you for your attention and look forward to speaking to you later on today. Thank you very much.

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