MAKING COMPLEX EASY
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

PREPARATORY REPORT FOR THE REGIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY (RRES): METHODOLOGY FOR MEETING NATIONAL TARGETS

IE000528
A05
30 April 2025

rpsgroup.com

Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
A02	Preparatory Report for the RRES Methodology	MM	CB	CB	22/05/2024
A03	Preparatory Report for the RRES Methodology	MM	Regional Assemblies, DHLGH & DECC	MM	17/10/2024
A04	Preparatory Report for the RRES Methodology	MM	DECC	MM	19/11/2024
A05	Preparatory Report for the RRES Methodology	MM	DECC	MM	27/11/2024
F01	Preparatory Report for the RRES Methodology	MM	OGi	PC	30/04/2026

Approval for issue

Paul Chadwick	PC	30 April 2026

Contents

Appendices

1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the preparation undertaken by RPS between October 2022 and November 2024 pursuant to the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) Methodology with the Regional Assemblies.

1.1 Background & Context

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 enshrines the National Climate Objective *to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy*[1]. The Act frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition to delivering a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 51% by 2030. This will place the country on a trajectory to achieving climate neutrality no later than the end of 2050. The sectoral targets, measures, actions to meet these legislative requirements are set out in Ireland's Climate Action Plans (CAPs) (the first of which was published in 2019). CAP 2023 was the second annual update to CAP 2019; and the first to be prepared under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. It set out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050; by implementing carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings.

A number of measures to meet the electricity sector's carbon budget programme and sectoral emissions ceiling were set out in CAP 2023, including *accelerating renewable energy generation*. To support this measure, a number of actions were set out in the CAP's Annex of Actions including:

- Action EL/23/3 which required the Regional Assemblies to publish a roadmap for the development and implementation of Regional Renewable Electricity Strategies (RRES); enabling a unified methodology for national and regional spatial and capacity targets, identifying areas suitable for renewable electricity deployment at regional and county level.

In order to ensure alignment between national climate policy and planning policy, Government agreed that the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations, previously proposed to be incorporated into a draft Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF), should be given effect and integrated into the first revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF).

CAP 2023 actions were subsequently revised to continue to accelerate renewable energy generation, as part of CAP 2024; the third annual update to CAP 2019 (see **Table 1-2** below), as follows:

- Action EL/24/3), commits the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) to revise the NPF to include regional capacities for the allocation of national targets at a regional level in order to inform local development plan policy; and
- Action EL/24/4 which requires Regional Assemblies to publish RRES.

Subsequent to the publication of these CAP actions, the Planning and Development Act 2024 was enacted with Section 29(1)(a) stipulating that upon commencement of the relevant provisions of the Act, each regional spatial and economic strategy (RSES) shall, amongst other requirements, make provision for a strategy relating to onshore renewable energy to:

(i) Meet national targets (*note: the current focus is on meeting national renewable electricity targets*);

(ii) Identify and facilitate electricity grid infrastructure, including upgrade projects and support infrastructure;

(iii) Make provision for energy security; and

[1] Oireachtas (2021, s.3). Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. House of the Oireachtas.

(iv) Promote steps for coordination and cooperation between public bodies.

These strategies are broader in scope than the requirements stipulated under CAP 2023 – Action EL/23/3 and CAP 2024 – Action EL/24/4. In order to avoid duplication, the development of a RRES by each Regional Assembly should make provision for the points listed above and meet the requirements of CAP 2024 – Action EL/24/4 as well as Section 29(1)(e) of the Planning and Development Act 2024.

Each RRES should aim to deliver a regional balance of the distribution of renewable technologies and associated enabling infrastructure, while supporting the electricity carbon budget programme and the 75% cut in emissions within the electricity sector by 2030, ultimately enabling the achievement of national climate objective - - so as to reduce the extent of further global warming, pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy

1.2 Aims & Overview

The aim of the RRES methodology document is to provide a methodology and guidance to the three Regional Assemblies in developing and agreeing robust, coordinated, and sustainable minimum onshore renewable electricity capacity allocations, which will directly inform subsequent spatial allocation and designation by each Planning Authority (as part of City / County Development Plans), within their respective administrative areas, so that collectively national targets can be met.

The identification of potentially developable land identified through this RSES methodology, is done to support the allocation of Local Authority minimum renewable electricity capacity allocations, solely acting as a decision support tool. The RRES (forming part of the wider RSES) will not formally spatially designate or allocate where within Planning Authority administrative areas, renewable electricity capacity may be developed. The statutory designation of lands for renewable energy development is to be undertaken as part of the City / County Development Plan (CDP) process, which may include a Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy or Wind Energy Strategy. As such, each individual Planning Authority will determine which land areas are most suited and least suited for grid-scale renewable electricity development, following the completion of the RRES by their respective Regional Assembly.

In order to align with national and regional renewable electricity targets as included in the First Revision to the National Planning Frame work (NPF) and be fit for communication with a range of stakeholders (i.e. the public, industry, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and national and local government bodies), each RRES must be evidence-based and result in harmonised outputs, based on standardised processes and language.

This report summarises the steps undertaken in preparation of that Methodology.

1.2 Development

The RRES Methodology was developed over the period October 2022 to November 2024 through a mixed-method process including a benchmarking exercise, a number of working papers, and extensive stakeholder consultation. A detailed overview of these processes and their related outputs are set out in sections 2 and 3 below.

2 BENCHMARKING EXERCISE

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken in order to assess and determine the key elements of developing a regional renewable energy (RE) strategy. This benchmarking exercise entailed a review of a number of national, regional and county level RE plan-led development reports.

A summary of each report and the key findings/recommendations is set out below and the key factors to be considered in developing the RRES Methodology are set out in **Table 3.1** below.

2.1 Summary of benchmark analysis

- **National Land Use Review – Phase 1 (Government of Ireland, 2023)[2]**

The Programme for Government committed to a Land Use Review to ensure that optimal land use options inform all relevant Government decisions. In line with Action 393 of the 2021 Climate Action Plan, an Evidential Review was undertaken in order to provide an evidence base to determine the environmental, ecological, and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland. This was carried out with the support of a Land Evidence Forum chaired by the EPA and the oversight of a Land Use Review Steering Committee co-chaired by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

As part of this Phase 1 assessment, a Review of International Best Practice[2] was undertaken, comprising an assessment of other countries' approaches to national land use policy or strategies in order to see what approaches have been taken and what lessons could be learned.

The EPA determined that national land use policy in the form of spatial plans and land use designations are found in several countries, including at regional level (as planning at national level may not exist in the relevant country)[2]. The EPA noted that the scale of the regional level in those countries can be equivalent to Ireland in terms of land area or population or both (i.e. Austria, the Netherlands, Malta)[2].

In relation to RE development in Ireland, the EPA found that the current system of 'preferred areas' for RE development as set out in local county development plans (CDPs) reflects a "passive approach to allowing [RE] projects in certain areas (or not, as the case may be)"[2]. Overall, a plan-led approach to identifying potential areas of RE at a national level was recommended, together with the need for agreed metrics to measure and compare land cover data; as such data sets can help to appreciate spatial trends in terms of fragmentation and soil sealing[2]. In relation to the plan-led approach, the Netherlands' approach to developing RE Strategies[3] (RES) was highlighted, whereby RES are prepared by and for 30 regions in the country[3]. These RES seek to define search areas for RE (both wind and solar) that must be considered by municipalities in their zoning policies[3]. It was described how this approach results in a systematic examination of each part of the country for areas potentially suitable for RE projects, with these 'search areas' identified at a regional level for further determination in county-level development plans[2]. Overall, this case study was highlighted by the EPA as demonstrating how it is possible to adopt a plan-led approach to the planning of wind and solar energy development, and in particular maximise the scope for combining wind and solar projects in a densely populated country[2]. As the "low hanging fruit…runs out in terms of suitable land in Ireland for wind and solar," the Review stated that a plan-led approach and minimisation of the total land take seems essential[2].

As part of the Review, it was noted that the use of wind energy mapping is now well established in CDPs in Ireland, however, the maps are generally indicative and may lack spatial detail to identify precise boundaries on the ground[2]. In contrast, while the Austrian Wind Energy Zoning planning policy[4] shows a similar system to that currently adopted by LAs in Ireland of priority, suitable and excluded areas; the

[2] National Land Use Policy - Review of International Best Practice (Government of Ireland, 2023)

[3] The Netherlands - Regional Energy Strategies (RES) (Nationaal Programma RES, 2022)

[4] Austria – Wind Energy Zoning (Steiermak Entwicklungs programurm fur den Sachmereich Windenergie, 2013)

Austrian case study shows a high degree of precision of boundary definition. In terms of the outputs, under this policy, an Austrian regional wind energy plan will identify three types of areas[4]:

- Priority zones (dark green) – in these zones, development of new wind parks or expansion of existing wind parks is possible – the areas are chosen based on the sustainability for turbines but also grid connections;
- Suitability zones (light green) – these zones are considered second preference but wind energy infrastructure is generally possible; and
- Exclusion zones (red) – in these zones, wind turbines are not permitted.

Local municipalities are expected to include the zoning boundaries in their local plans, but for priority zones, the zooming objective is determined at regional level and cannot be challenged or changed in municipal plans.

In terms of the formatting, the EPA noted that these areas are mapped out via the production of 15 (easy-to-read, A4 format at 1:50,000 scale) maps, as follows[4]:

- A single map showing the entire region – this overall map is consistent with a set target of installed wind energy capacity in the region and is set down in a statutory planning document;
- Section maps that show sections of the overview map in greater detail; and
- Named priority zone maps where the identification of the precise boundaries of the various zones is possible.

Finally, in specific relation to RE development, the EPA noted that whilst Ireland currently has national Wind Energy Development Guidelines[5],national Solar Energy Development Guidelines are not currently in the process of being developed, but are a stated potential future objective included in the Accelerating Renewable Electricity Taskforce Implementation Plan and are also included in the 2025 Programme for Government (https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/317849/77762230-8dbf-4995-ad02-dc7ea8057979.pdf) In the meantime, it was noted from the Review that the Solar Farm Policy of Malta[6] is a case study of defining criteria for the location of solar farms; giving clear indicators as to which locations are preferred by stating a hierarchy of preference (e.g. building roof in favour of land based)[6]. The EPA concluded from this case study that in the absence of a zoning policy for solar energy developments, it is possible through national guidelines to indicate where a specific land use (i.e. solar energy developments) should be located[2].

Overall, this Review highlighted the need for a plan-led approach to identifying areas of RE at a national level, as well as the need for agreed metrics to measure and compare land cover data; a high degree of precision of boundary definition when utilising a hierarchical land-use system, supported by the provision of easy-to-read maps; and the use of defining criteria for the location of solar energy developments, in the absence of national technology-specific zoning policy[2].

Building on the evidence base from this Phase 1 assessment, Phase 2 of the Land Use Review will allow land use within the State to be better managed by identifying appropriate policies, measures and actions in the context of the government's wider economic, social, and climate objectives.

- **Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) Methodology (SEAI, 2013)[7]**

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI's) Methodology for Local Authority RE Strategies (LARES) was developed and issued in 2013, in order to provide a coherent planning approach for RE across Ireland[7].

[5] gov.ie - Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) (www.gov.ie)

[6] Planning Authority (pa.org.mt)

[7] Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) Methodology (SEAI, 2013)

The 2013 Methodology recommends that each LA in developing their RES incorporates five key steps (as outlined in **Figure 2-1** below) as follows[7]: first, a consideration of procedural alignment, including consultation and screening for Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs), Appropriate Assessments (AAs) and Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs); second, a RE policy review, comprising a review of the hierarchy of applicable international, national and local legislation and policy in order to provide context to key stakeholders, as well as signpost them to grants and financial incentives; third, the identification and assessment of RE resources and potential within the LA jurisdiction, though a baseline assessment of successful and unsuccessful RE projects, followed by an assessment of RE potential utilising the sieve approach (which is a methodology first outlined in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines[5] and which can be transferred to other types of RE); fourth, a constraints and facilitators review, which comprises a consideration of infrastructural constraints (i.e. various types of infrastructure necessary to facilitate transmission, distribution, storage, export and use of electricity, heat, liquid or solid fuel) and environmental considerations in respect of RE in order to identify any limiting or restrictive factors that may need consideration during project development - the results of this should build on the previous step (the baseline and RE resource potential assessment) and determine what RE resources are actually viable for future development; and fifth, the development of a RE policy detailing the implementation of the LARES within the LA jurisdiction.

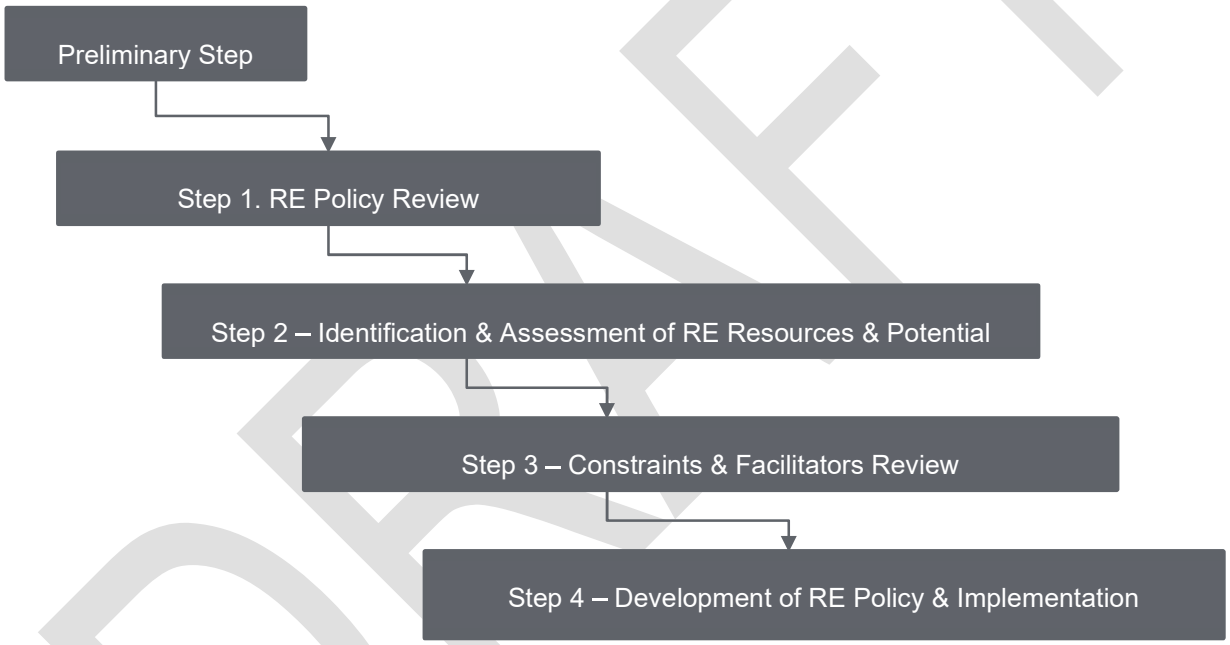

Figure 2-1: 2013 LARES Methodology – Outline of Steps[7]

- **Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Capacity Methodology (RLCECM) for the English Regions (UK Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Dept of Communities and Local Government, 2010)[8]**

In order to deliver a step change in the deployment across the country and reduce the inconsistences in the way RE capacity had been defined, assessed and fed through to the setting of targets in regional spatial strategies (RSS) up to 2008, the UK Government developed a robust methodological approach and criteria for assessing the opportunities and constraints for deploying renewable and low-carbon energy development in the English regions[8].

[8] Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Capacity Methodology (RLCECM) for the English Regions (UK Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Dept of Communities and Local Government, 2010)

The key objectives of the methodology were to help the regions assess the potential for RE in their area in a consistent way; for each regional assembly to underpin the evidence base for setting ambitious targets for RE and a clear strategy to support their delivery in the RSS; to help regions plan for substantial new development in locations and ways which provide for energy (in particular heat), to be gained when there were clear opportunities for new or extended decentralised energy systems; and support Government policies[8].

The RLCECM that was subsequently developed provides detailed guidance on the full range of parameters and assumptions that may be used by the regions in undertaking their regional renewable and low-carbon energy assessment (see Annex A of the RLCECM)[8].

The RLCECM involves a sequential process following Stages 1 to 4 per **Figure 2-2** below, whereby layers of analysis are applied that progressively reduce the total theoretical opportunities to what is practically achievable[8]. As described below, the RLCECM also includes a series of parameters for both RE category (see Annex A of the methodology) to support these stages of analysis[8].

The key phases of this methodology are outlined as follows:

- *Phase A: Opportunity Analysis*

This phase comprises an assessment of naturally available resources (Stage 1) and technically accessible resources (Stage 2). Overall, it represents the opportunity for harnessing the RE resource on the basis of what is naturally available vis-à-vis the limits of existing technology solutions[8].

- *Phase B: Constraints analysis*

This phase comprises an assessment of physical environmental constraints of high priority (Stage 3) and planning and regulatory constraints (Stage 4). Overall, it aims to identify the constraints to the deployment of technologies in relation to the physical environment and planning and regulatory limitations[8].

Stages 5 to 7 are not within the scope of the RLCECM, but these stages are recommended as necessary in order to set regional targets[8]. Stage 5 (economically viable potential) entails the analysis of 'economic constraints' and refers to the costs of the technology, energy commodity prices and the cost of capital[8]. Stage 6 (deployment constraints (supply chain)) refers to the maturity and capacity of the supply chain to deliver the required renewable fuel or technology (equipment) and to deploy the technology (including qualified engineers and installers)[8]. Finally, Stage 7 (regional ambition – target setting) entails the setting

of regional RE targets[8].

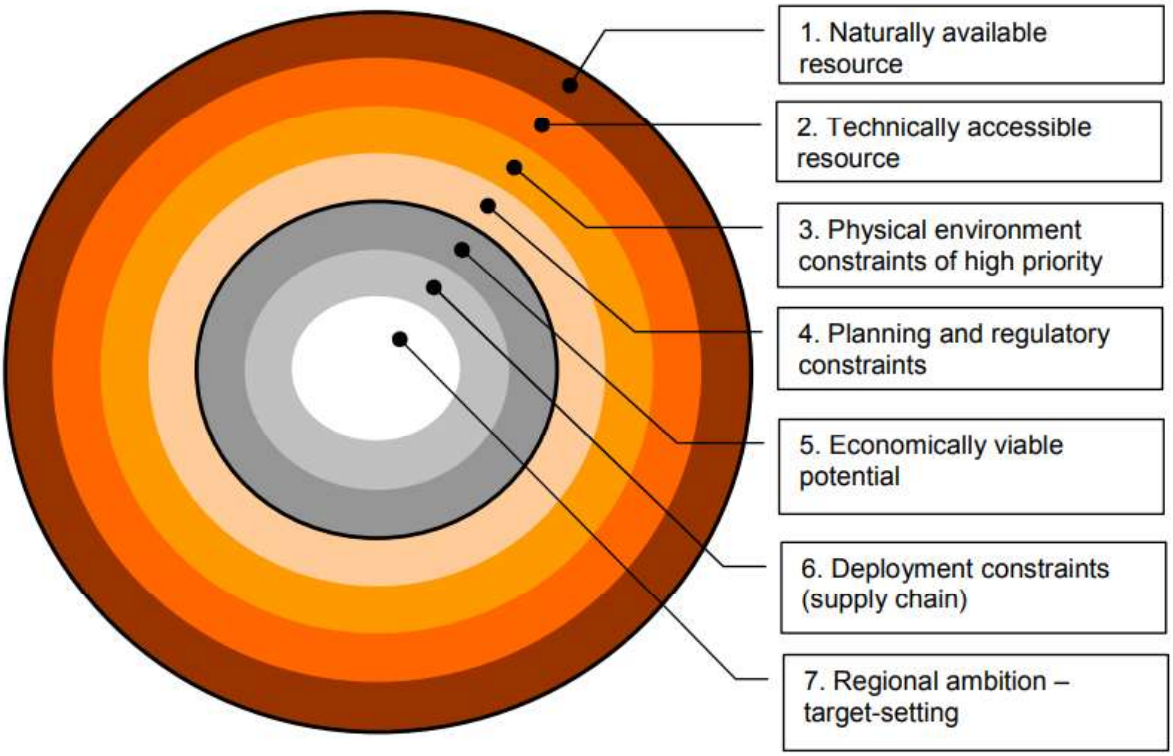

Figure 2-2: Stages for developing a comprehensive evidence base for renewable energy potential.[8]

Note: *in July 2024, the UK Government announced that they would be immediately removing the de facto ban on onshore wind in England, in place since 2015; and would be subsequently revising planning policy to place onshore wind on the same footing as other energy development tin the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). Further information can be found here: Policy statement on onshore wind - GOV.UK*

- **Factors influencing the Development of Local Renewable Energy Strategies (Silura, 2008)[9]**

This comprised a review of the main actors, as well as local and national factors for the development of renewable energy in Denmark[9]. Silura found that the main actors needed for the development of RE are national and local government, as they have the capacity to motivate the necessary factors; and businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), citizens and academia[9]. In terms of the key national and local factors for the development of RE, these were identified as follows[9]:

- National factors:
  - Political support for the development of technologies;
  - National commitment with ambitious international agreements; and
  - Public Service Obligations (PSOs) as a specific tax for funding the actual development of RE as well as research and development of technology.
- Local factors:

[9] Factors influencing the Development of Local Renewable Energy Strategies (Silura, 2008).

- Political support;
- Local economic strategy;
- Inclusion of the community;
- Distribution of benefits to the community; and
- Networks – the formation of coalitions/networks that can foster the adoption of RE implementation and help to reinforce political support and create solutions to barriers.

- **UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (2011 – 2020) (Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2009)[10]**

This Roadmap was published alongside the UK Government's Electricity Market Reform White Paper; the aim of it was to set out the UK's approach to unlocking their RE potential and set out a comprehensive programme of action[10].

In developing the Roadmap, analysis was undertaken to gather evidence on the potential deployment and costs of renewable energy technology to 2020[10]. This included analysis of the most recent data on current deployment levels and projects which were in the pipeline for possible deployment in the future[10]. The analysis of potential deployment to 2020 considered factors such as technology costs; build rates; and the policy framework[10].

The Roadmap identified a number of uncertainties in delivering against the UK's 2020 ambition: future energy demand (i.e. projected energy demand; this entailed uncertainty around factors such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth process, consumer behaviour and the impact of energy efficient policies); the costs of technologies; and the level of RE deployment which industry believes can be achieved[10]. Six key barriers to renewable energy deployment were identified: facilitation of access to the grid; ensuring long-term investment certainty; tackling pre- and post- consent development (i.e. delays in planning process or differences in discharge conditions attached to consents); ensuring sustainable bioenergy feedstock supplies; facilitating the development of renewables supply chain; and encouraging innovation[10]. Furthermore, it was found that the barriers to deployment (i.e. technology costs and innovative breakthroughs) will change over time[10]. As a result, to ensure that the UK Government adjust their approach accordingly, an annual process of monitoring and evaluation was recommended to be put in place monitoring five key performance indicators (KPIs) as follows[10]:

1. Consumption of renewable energy;
2. Renewable energy deployment and pipeline;
3. Reasons for project failure and barriers to delivery;
4. Impact of policy activity; and
5. Changes to technology costs.

- **Renewable Energy Capacity in Regional Spatial Strategies – Final Report (UK Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009)[11]**

This comprised a review of the potential RE capacities in England, as delivered through the RSS[11]. The report comprised an assessment of the 2006 UK Government Planning Policy Statement 22 – Renewable

[10] UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (2011 – 2020) (Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2009).

[11] Renewable Energy Capacity in Regional Spatial Strategies – Final Report (UK Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009).

Energy[12]; the draft 2007 UK Renewable Energy Strategy[13]; and the 2002 UK Regional Renewable Energy Assessment[14].

Overall, the UK Department of Communities and Local Government concluded that issues relating to planning control could be resolved through a more consistent and streamlined approach to planning decisions and delivery of RE development. In addition, the economic climate and availability of funding are significant concerns in relation to the delivery of RE targets[11].

In developing a RE spatial strategy, the following was recommended[11]:

- Targets:
    i. Regional RE spatial strategies should include targets for the minimum amount of installed capacity (expressed in MW). Targets may also be expressed in terms of the percentage of electricity consumed or supplied. Where appropriate, regional targets may be disaggregated into sub-regional targets. Targets for specific technologies should not be set, given that rapid technological change may mean new sources may be developed in the longer term.
    ii. Targets should be developed based on assessments of the region's RE resource potential and taking into account the regional environmental, economic and social impacts (either positive or negative) that may result from the exploitation of that resource potential. In addition, a consideration of constraints should also be undertaken by considering different scenarios and their changes of delivery/implementation. At the same time, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should not make assumptions about the technological and commercial feasibility of RE projects (e.g. identifying generalised locations for development based on mean wind speeds), as technological change can mean that sites currently excluded as locations for particular types or RE development may in future be suitable.
- Monitoring and evaluation:
    i. It was recommended that an annual process of target monitoring and evaluation be put in place in order to revise the targets (upwards if met).
- Criteria-based policies:
    i. Criteria-based policies should be set out in regional spatial strategies where these can be applied across a region or clearly identified sub-regional areas. These criteria should then be used to identify broad areas at the regional/sub-regional level where development of particular types of RE may be considered appropriate.

[12] Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22): Renewable Energy (UK Government, 2006)

[13] The UK renewable energy strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[14] A Report to the DTI and the DTLR: Regional Renewable Energy Assessments (UK Government, 2002)

Table 3-1: Key factors to be considered in developing the RRES Methodology.

Key Factors		Report Reference(s) (as per footnotes)
A. Politically enabling factors		
	i. National factors	
	- Political support across national government for the development of technologies; - National commitment with ambitious international agreements; - Public Service Obligations (PSOs) as a specific tax for funding the actual development of RE as well as research and development of technology; and - A streamlined approach to planning decisions and delivery of RE development.	9, 10
	ii. Local factors	
	- Political support across local government; - Local economic strategy; - Inclusion of the community; - Distribution of benefits to the community; and - Networks – the formation of coalitions/networks engaging cross-stakeholder groups (including business, NGOs, citizens and academia) that can foster the adoption of RE implementation and help to reinforce political support and create solutions to barriers.	9, 10
B. A spatial plan-led approach to identifying areas for RE development at and regional and local level		2, 3, 4
	i. Identification of land at a regional/local level for further determination and consideration by municipalities in their zoning plans.	
	ii. A high degree of precision of boundary definition	

Key Factors			Report Reference(s) (as per footnotes)
	iii. Production of easy-to-read maps, comprising (as an example):	- A single map showing the entire region, consistent with a set target of installed RE capacity in the region (set down in a statutory planning document); - Section maps that show sections of the overview map in greater detail; and - Named priority zone maps where the identification of the precise boundaries of the various zones is possible.	
C. A consideration of procedural requirements and alignment (i.e. AAs, SEAs, WFD,			7
D. A RE Policy Review		- This should comprise a review of the hierarchy of applicable international, national and local legislation and policy in order to provide context to key stakeholders, as well as signpost them to grants and financial incentives.	7
E. A robust methodology for the determination & spatial classification of RE resource potential within the jurisdiction			2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
	i. Assess the baseline and maximum theoretical RE resource potential (specific to each RE technology).		
	ii. Assess RE resource sensitivities and enabling factors (short/medium/long-term), incorporating input from:	- An evaluation of landscape and its sensitivities for RE development; - A review of infrastructural constraints and facilitators (including a consideration of deployment constraints (supply chain). In considering constraints, different scenarios and their changes of delivery/implementation should be considered. At the same time, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should not make assumptions about the technological and commercial feasibility of RE projects as technological change can mean that sites currently excluded as locations for particular types of RE development, may in future be suitable; - A socio-economic assessment (including an assessment of the regional social, economic and employment opportunities that could arise from renewable development, and support wider regional planning goals); and - An assessment of supporting financial incentives and grants.	

Key Factors		Report Reference(s) (as per footnotes)
	iii. Spatial classification of the regional/local jurisdictions into specific areas for RE development in line with a hierarchy of preference based on criteria for the location of RE development.	
F. A robust methodology for the setting of targets in line with national commitments, incorporating a consideration of:	- Targets should be developed based on assessments of the region/county's RE resource potential and ambition, and taking into account the regional environmental, economic and social impacts (either positive or negative) that may result from the exploitation of that resource potential, as well as the potential economic or deployment (supply chain) constraints. - Regional/county RES should include targets for the: i. Minimum amount of installed capacity (MW). ii. Targets may also be expressed in terms of the percentage of electricity consumed/supplied.	7, 8, 9, 11
G. Development of a RE policy & implementation strategy, including an annual monitoring & evaluation process.		7, 8, 9, 11
	- Six key performance indicators (KPIs) to be monitored & evaluated are recommended as follows: 1. Consumption of renewable energy; 2. Renewable energy deployment and pipeline; 3. Reasons for project refusal; 4. Impact of strategic objective; 5. Review of capacity intensity factors and project delivery rates; 6. Changes to technology costs; and 7. Review of RE targets (& review upwards if applicable).	

3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

In developing the RRES Methodology, two phases of consultation were undertaken:

- Phase A: initial scoping; and
- Phase B: a review of the proposed RRES Methodology.

A detailed overview of these two phases are set out below.

3.1 Phase A – Stakeholder consultation - Initial scoping consultation

The initial scoping phase comprised consultation with key stakeholders in the spatial planning of renewable electricity and energy development in Ireland. Three categories of key stakeholders were identified:

i. Electricity system operators;
ii. Research bodies involved in national landscape character assessment development; and
iii. Regional Assembly spatial planners.

Semi-structured group and individual consultations (see example agenda in Appendix A) with these three stakeholder groups took place between October 2022 and April 2023. A summary of the aim of and responses per stakeholder group is set out below, with detailed responses in Appendix B.

3.1.1 Electricity system operators

Over the consultation period, four separate interviews were undertaken with network system operators: three with EirGrid; and one with ESB Networks (ESBN). The aim of these sessions was to: discuss the general approach arising from Action 102 of Climate Action Plan 2021; gain an understanding of the interaction between developing a supportive spatial planning framework for onshore renewable electricity development and the electricity network; and identify the key risks, opportunities, issues and options for renewable electricity infrastructure deployment nationally within the context of both the transmission and distribution network.

Overall, both EirGrid and ESBN stated that the proposed forward planning policies for wind and solar would support them in transition to a more plan-led model of development. In view of the increase in renewable electricity targets in CAP 23, EirGrid recommended that the regions and Local Authorities needed to move together in line with the statutory targets. They also highlighted that onshore wind energy development requires significant grid reinforcements (more than solar); and in order to reach 2030 targets, it would be necessary to maximise existing grid infrastructure and minimise the need for new grid where possible, as 6-7 years is very short in terms of electricity planning. In terms of implementing this into each RRES, EirGrid recommended that grid accessibility and deliverability should be ranked alongside environmental and other factors when determining renewable electricity development locations, as not all areas/counties are equal in terms of grid infrastructure (i.e. it is currently stronger in the midlands, south and east). Beyond 2030, both operators recommended the development of energy parks (i.e. offshore renewable electricity hydrogen plants) and renewable electricity development 'clusters' (i.e. co-location of technologies). To support the development of each RRES, both operators acknowledged the need for a more streamlined process to better facilitate information exchange from all parties.

3.1.2 Research bodies involved in national landscape character assessment development

In 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) undertook research to reframe landscape character as a core environmental component in land-use planning and management (Reframe

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) project[15]). The aim of this research was to advance the established LCA methodology by highlighting ecosystem services (natural and cultural) and through scenario planning, identify and test a toolkit in conjunction with key actors and at different scales (regional, catchment, small area) as well as landscapes that have been heavily modified in the past and are subject to ongoing change. The key output was a robust LCA Toolkit developed for use in the agricultural context and targeting agri-environmental and rural development schemes. The aim was to design this Toolkit to have broader uses and applications for example through forward planning, strategic environmental assessment and other land-use sectors such as forestry, tourism and renewables. Minogue Environmental Consulting Ltd was the lead research organisation and was consulted in November 2022. Minogue advised that development of the LCA Toolkit is challenging as landscape is quite qualitative and does not lend itself well to a risk-based approach. Overall, a national landscape baseline is missing, and there are resulting inconsistencies and uneven character areas.

The first Revision of the NPF includes the following national policy objectives in relation to landscape character:

- NPO 64 In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, ensuring effective management of shared landscapes, heritage, water catchments, habitats, species and transboundary issues in relation to environmental policy; and
- NPO 91 Facilitate landscape protection, management and change through the preparation of a National Landscape Character Map and development of guidance on local landscape character assessments, (including historic landscape characterisation and including coastal landscapes and seascapes) to ensure a consistent approach to landscape character assessment, particularly across planning and administrative boundaries.

3.1.3 Regional Assembly spatial planners

Over the consultation period, as part of a wider consultation in the development of the Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF)[16], five separate interviews were undertaken with a group of eight spatial planners identified to represent all three of the Regional Assemblies. In terms of developing the RRES Methodology, the Regional Assembly representatives highlighted: the need for clarity in terms of timescales for implementation; the need for the RRES Methodology to be closely aligned with the policies set out in the first revision to the NPF, whilst enabling each region to shape a response appropriate to its geography, environmental and socio-economic specifications; and the need for the Regional Assemblies to be engaged in the development process and ultimately sign off on the Methodology itself. They also identified a number of issues outside the development of the RRES Methodology: highlighting the need for a national landscape strategy; the need for additional resources to support the development of RRESs; and the need for whole-of-government support to assist with the development and implementation of the RRES Methodology. They also identified the need for a methodology for allocating local-level targets; the need to be mindful of the changing legislative environment in order to give the methodology flexibility; and the need to emphasise the benefits of renewable electricity/energy development in the development of each RRES.

To support the Regional Assembly consultation process, and taking into account the emerging issues raised during consultation with the electricity system operators and the research bodies involved in national landscape character assessment development, the following working papers were developed and issued for comment during the course of the consultation process (see Appendix C):

- Draft Working Paper 1 – RSES Policy Review – January 2023
  - This comprised a review of the policies outlined in the RSES for each Regional Assembly.
- Draft Working Paper 2 – Stakeholder Engagement – January 2023

[15] Research 461: Reframe Landscape Character Assessment | Environmental Protection Agency (epa.ie)

[16] Now incorporated into the Draft Revised NPF, as detailed in Section 1.1 above.

- This comprised a summary of the background research carried out in order to present a draft methodology for consultation.

- Draft Working Paper 3 – Landscape Considerations – March 2023
  - This comprised a review of the policy background for landscape considerations at national and regional level, alongside an examination of current practice for landscape consideration in renewable energy planning.

A summary of each working paper is set out below in sections 3.1.4 – 3.1.6 below and set out in Appendix C.

3.1.4 Draft Working Paper 1 – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) Policy Review (January 2023)

A review was conducted of the renewable energy policies outlined in the RSES for the Southern (SRA), Eastern and Midland (EMRA), and Northern and Western Regional Assemblies (NWRA) and was issued to the Regional Assemblies for consideration on 30th January 2023. **Table 3-1** below provides a high-level summary of the breadth and depth of renewable energy policies contained within each RSES. Analysis of the strategies and the Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) found that, overall, there was strong support for renewable energy in general, however actual policies and targets for wind and solar PV were more limited.

Table 3-1: Renewable energy policy support within the RSES

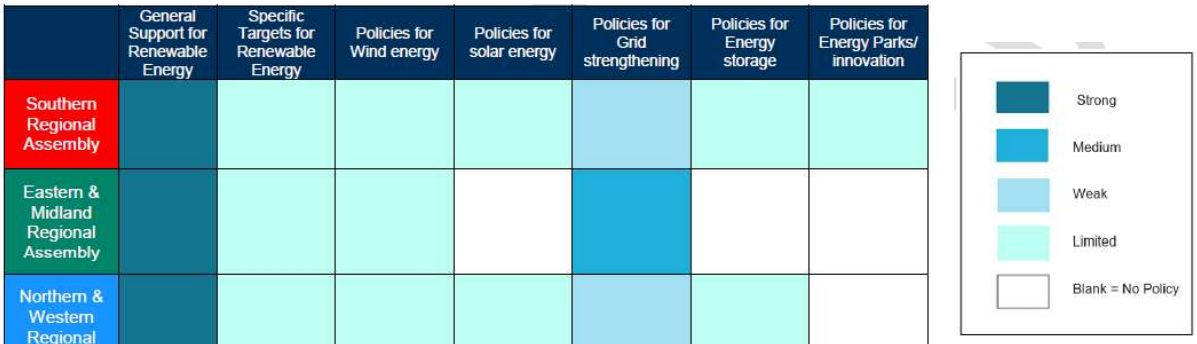

Table 3-2 below identifies several key RPOs within each of the RSES as they relate to wind energy, solar PV, grid development and energy/ innovation parks. While this list is non-exhaustive, it provides an indication of the priority afforded to different energy types by each of the Regional Assemblies.

Table 3-2: Key RPOs as they relate to Renewable Electricity and supporting infrastructure.

Regional Assembly	General renewable energy policies	Wind Energy Policies	Solar PV Policies	Grid Development Policies	Energy/ Innovation Park policies
Eastern and Midland	RPO 4.79 RPO 6.9 RPO 10.22	RPO 7.36		RPO 10.19 RPO 10.23	
Southern	RPO 95 RPO 98	RPO 99 RPO 114 (b)	RPO 102	RPO 96 RPO 222	RPO 9 RPO 104

Northern and Western	RPO 3.8 RPO 4.16	RPO 4.19	RPO 3.8	RPO 4.16 RPO 4.28 RPO 4.6	

In relation to renewable energy policies at Local Authority level, a review was carried out analysing which Local Authorities have a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES), wind energy strategy, solar energy strategy or any other energy strategy in place. The result of this review alongside the year in which the particular strategy was published is set out in **Table 3-3** below.

Four out of nine Local Authorities in the NWRA; four out of ten Local Authorities in the SRA; and only one out of 12 Local Authorities in the EMRA had renewable energy strategies. However, it can be seen in the 'other' section, that although some Local Authorities did not have renewable energy strategies, they do have other strategies in place – namely an Energy Master Plan (EMP), a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan, a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP, which has since been replaced by the SECAP), or an Energy Strategy.

Wind energy strategies were available for one out of nine NWRA Local Authorities; five out of ten SRA Local Authorities, and five out of twelve EMRA Local Authorities. Some of these strategies were older than others, with some strategies released as far back as 2008. At the time of the review, no Local Authority in Ireland was found to have a published solar energy strategy.

Region	Local Authority	Renewable Energy Strategy (RES)	Wind Energy Strategy	Solar Energy Strategy	Other Energy Strategy
Northern and Western Regional Assembly	Cavan				
	Donegal				
	Leitrim	2023			
	Galway City				
	Galway County	2021	2015		
	Mayo	2011			
	Monaghan				2022 [17]
	Roscommon	2022			
	Sligo				
Southern Regional Assembly	Carlow	2022	2008		
	Clare	2017	2011		
	Cork City				2018 [18]
	Cork County				2019 [19]
	Kerry	2012			
	Kilkenny		2021		
	Tipperary	2016	2016		
	Wexford		2013		2021[20]
	Limerick				
	Waterford				2016[21]
Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown				2018[22]
	Fingal		2009		2018[22]
	Kildare		2023		
	Laois		2011		
	Longford				
	Louth				
	Meath	2017			
	Offaly		2021		
	South Dublin				2013[23]
	Westmeath				

[17] County Monaghan Sustainable Energy Community: Energy Master Plan 2022

[18] Cork City Council Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan 2018

[19] Cork Energy Champion - Energy Master Plan 2019

[20] County Wexford Energy Strategy 2021

[21] Renewable Energy Strategy 2016-2030 - Waterford City & County Council

[22] Dublin Region Energy Master Plan 2018

[23] South Dublin Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2013

	Wicklow		2016		
	Dublin City				2010[24]

Table 3-3: Renewable energy, wind and solar strategies by region and Local Authority

Overall, it was found that the renewable electricity approach across Local Authority and Regional Assembly boundaries is fragmented. At the Local Authority level, it was found that there is a variance in the level of ambition shown towards enabling renewable electricity infrastructure development within an administrative boundary. While most Local Authorities have some form of statutory approach to renewable energy, it was found that eight Local Authorities (i.e. 26%) do not have any formal strategy in place.

Similarly, there is a variance in the level of ambition in relation to renewable electricity across the Regional Assemblies. While support in general for renewable energy is broad within the RSES, this general support is not fully crystallised within the RPOs.

It was found that while there are many and potentially justifiable reasons for a Local Authority not to have a formalised renewable strategy in place (e.g., county development plan review cycle, a real or perceived over-saturation of renewable infrastructure within a county boundary, local political disputes etc.), achieving the national ambition of 80% renewable penetration in the electricity network requires that the Local Authority level is aligned in a cohesive and consistent manner. It was recommended that enabling this alignment is a key function of the Regional Assemblies and the RRES. See Appendix C for further information.

3.1.5 Draft Working Paper 2 – Stakeholder Engagement (January 2023)

The purpose of this working paper was to create a clear process for collecting and incorporating stakeholder feedback on the methodology, and was issued to the Regional Assemblies for consideration on the 31st February 2023.

This paper covered accessibility in communication and the importance of the good practice principles when engaging with stakeholders. It also detailed the Regional Planning Context behind each RSES. **Figure 3-1** below shows the stages of engagement that the statutory consultation requirements are anticipated to require, and these can be merged (or synchronised) with the approach set out below.

[24] Dublin City Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2010-2020

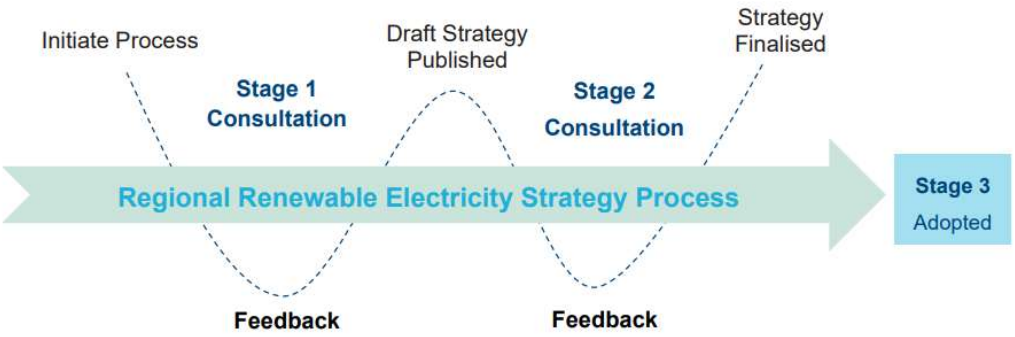

Figure 3-1: General schematic of stakeholder engagement process[25]

Figure 3-2 below shows the steps involved in Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the stakeholder engagement summary for the RRES.

- Stage 1 of the engagement process occurs while the strategy is under development. It includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping stage and is expected to take 2-3 months. Stage 1 also includes a period of gathering feedback, to inform the development of the draft strategy.
- Stage 2 begins when the RRES Draft Strategy is published and continues after publishing. Stage 2 includes receiving feedback on the Draft RRES as well as statutory SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood risk assessment (SFRA) processes. For Stage 2, the draft RRES (and associated SEA and AA) should be communicated through appropriate channels and publicly displayed for 6 weeks.
- Stage 3 then focuses on the adopted document, the outcomes of consultation and how the feedback from consultation affected the published document. Once consultation is completed, a review process must begin.

[25] Note: The original working paper referenced the 'Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy (RRES) Roadmap'. As detailed in Section 1.1 and 1.2, this has now been superseded by the 'Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) Methodology'.

Figure 3-2: Steps involved in stakeholder engagement.

Objectives of communication include informing stakeholders about the different aspects of the Methodology, to manage feedback and other inputs from stakeholders, and to build trust and confidence amongst stakeholders. The key messages that should be communicated can include:

- The benefits of renewable electricity development, and why it is important for climate action, economic competitiveness, and energy security;
- Potential impacts on local communities and employment opportunities;
- Potential impacts on the environment; and
- The measures that will be put in place to address these impacts.

The best channels of engagement to achieve this were also researched and an example communication plan devised, as set out in Appendix C.

3.1.6 Draft Working Paper 3 – Landscape Considerations (March 2023)

The purpose of this working paper was to explore the policy background for landscape at national and regional level, and to examine current best practice for landscape considerations in renewable energy planning, with a view to developing a methodology that could be applied for the regional renewable

energy methodology. This was submitted to the Regional Assemblies for consideration on the on the 31st March 2023.

An international benchmarking review was carried out on landscape character assessment and it was found that there are a variety of approaches taken to landscape character assessment. In addition, the policy context for landscape was analysed, in order to understand existing policy and how it will affect landscape characterisation. The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland (DHLGH 2015) and their relationship to the European Landscape Convention are outlined below in **Figure 3-3**, both of which are instrumental for landscape characterisation in Ireland.

National Landscape Strategy Objectives	European Landscape Convention
Recognise landscapes in law	Articles 5 (a) and 6 E
Develop a National Landscape Character Assessment	Articles 6 C and D
Develop Landscape Policies	Articles 5 (b) and (d), Article 9
Increase Landscape Awareness	Article 6
Identify Education, Research and Training Needs	Article 6 B
Strengthen Public Participation	Article 5 (c)

Figure 3-2: National landscape strategy objectives with corresponding European Landscape Convention articles

Based on this analysis, the paper recommended an approach comprising a step-by-step process for Local Authorities to carry out accurate and evidence-based landscape character assessment to influence siting of renewable energy projects (see **Figure 3-4** below).

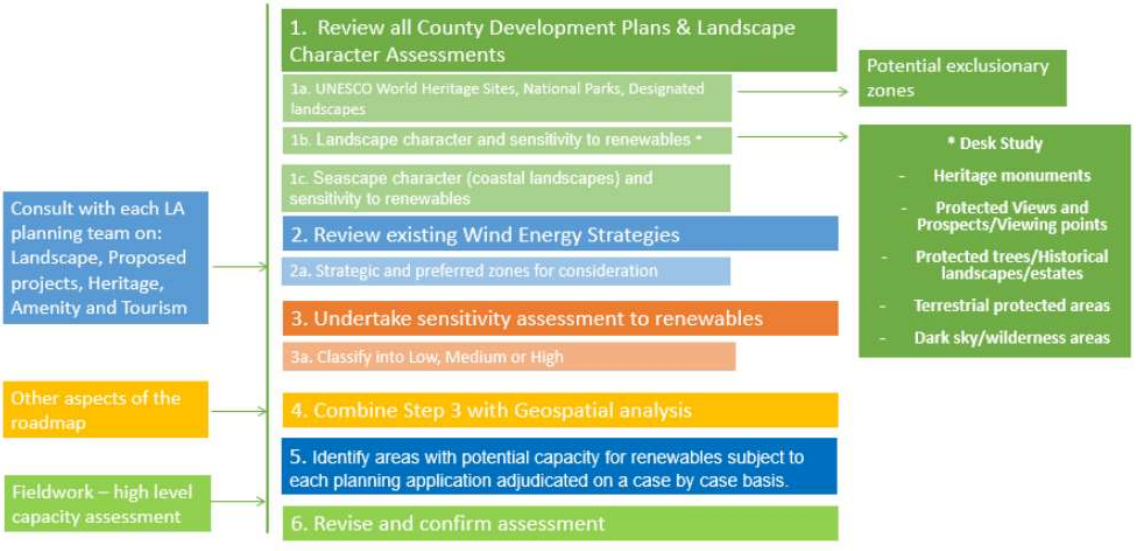

Figure 3-3: Proposed approach

The working paper also provided examples of mapping for the desktop stage of research, whereby all existing regional and county level landscape character assessments and strategies would be reviewed. It was concluded that categorising the sensitive areas in the region could allow Local Authorities to identify the regions where renewable energy would have less of a visual landscape effect. This, combined with a study of available wind energy strategies for the area could allow the

Local Authority to identify the emerging strategic areas for renewable energy in the region. See Appendix C for further information.

3.2 Phase B – Stakeholder consultation - Review of the proposed RRES Methodology

On the 1st February 2024, RPS Group, with the support of the SEAI, the DECC, the DHLGH and an independent facilitator, Terry Prendergast, set up and ran an in-person workshop to present the proposed RRES Methodology[25] to representatives of all three Regional Assemblies in order to gain their feedback on the proposed steps (see **Figure 3-5** below) and to identify potential challenges in developing RRESs on the basis of this Methodology. At the time of the workshop, the Step 4 methodology was being developed.

The agenda and attendee list for this workshop are set out in Appendix D[25].

Overall, the Regional Assemblies expressed their support for the aims and objectives of the RRES Methodology and agreed with the overarching proposed steps.

In terms of implementation, the Regional Assemblies identified that more funding, resources and training would be required to support the development of RRESs following the proposed steps. In terms of the specific steps, in relation to Step 1, the Regional Assemblies raised the challenge of continually evolving policies and the need for national policy alignment. In relation to Step 2, they highlighted the potential for strategic alignment between RSESs and procedural requirements; the need for a coordinated, centralised approach between the Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities; and the need for early stakeholder engagement. In relation to Steps 3, 4 and 5, they highlighted the lack of access to relevant data and the need for a national landscape classification system, as well as the need for top-down communication in order to engage key stakeholders (i.e. elected members). In specific relation to Step 4, whilst mindful that this methodology is in the process of being developed, they highlighted the need for a more prescriptive high-level defensible methodology and clarification on scope. In relation to Step 6, they highlighted the need for clarity on key performance indicators and the supporting data requirements; and agreed that the Regional Development Monitor (RDM) could be used to monitor RRES progress and there would be benefit to publishing the SEAI energy output webpage to support stakeholder engagement.

Additional overarching implementation concerns included the need for continued consultation with EirGrid and ESBN to ensure that grid infrastructure planning is not a limiting factor to renewable energy development and that there was a need to synergise with grid development. For example, identifying areas of 'quick wins' as well as the need to align with medium-term development of the grid (as highlighted by the electricity system operators in the scoping phase of the consultation). Finally, the need for comprehensive stakeholder engagement and management was highlighted in order to ensure key stakeholders had clarity and understanding on the different scopes of the Regional Renewable Energy Strategies; were aware of the benefits of following clear, defensible approach as set out in the RRES Methodology; and had a good understanding of the inherent benefits from renewable electricity and energy development (including reduced impacts on local air quality, climate mitigation measure, stability in electricity, as well as enhanced energy security).

A detailed summary of stakeholder feedback in relation to each step, as well as additional implementation concerns, and potential mitigation measures is set out in Appendix E.

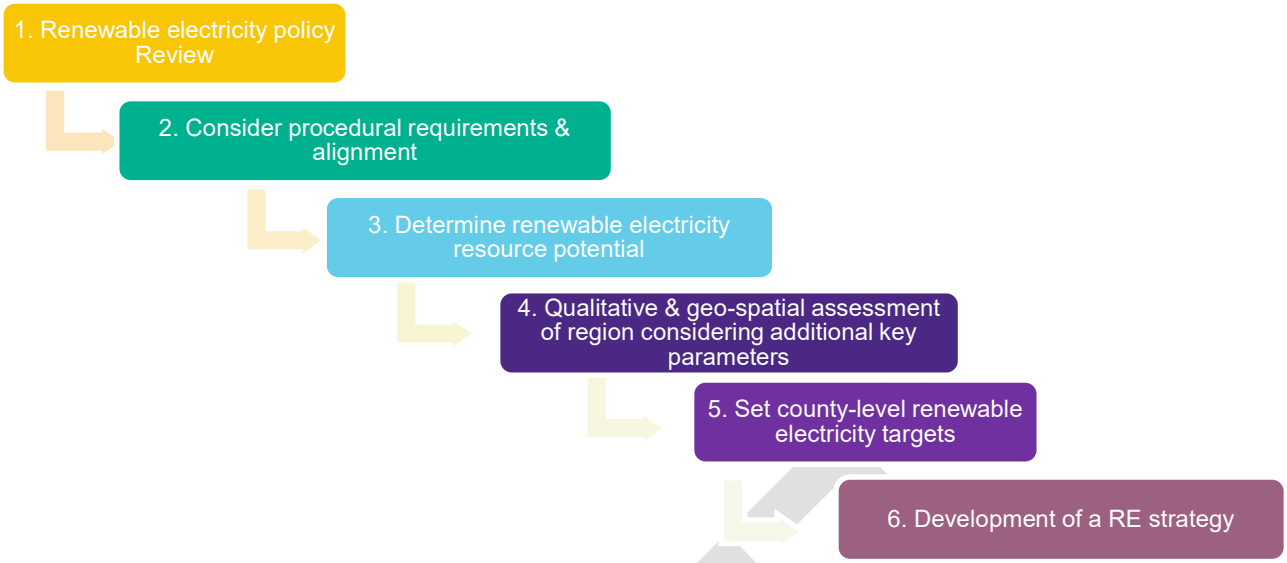

Figure 3.5: Proposed six steps to meeting national targets when developing a RRES.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Proposed RRES Methodology

Following further consultation and revision to the proposed steps and supporting guidance, the RRES Methodology was finalised in March 2026.

4.2 Additional implementation requirements

Additional measures (and action owners) to mitigate additional implementation concerns raised during the consultations and during the revision process of the RRES Methodology are set out in Appendix E.

Appendix A – Phase A: Initial Scoping Consultation- Example Agenda[25]

Reference:	
Meeting Name:	RRES Kick off meeting
Meeting date:	19/10/23
Meeting location:	Online

Ref no.	Item	Presenter(s)	Time
1.	***Introductions*** ***Methodology and Process for Developing a Draft Methodology*** 1. *RPS Recap on context and High Level Targets* 2. *Programme for work, a review of RPS proposed approach + chance for feedback* 3. *Implementations choices (e.g. Legislation, statutory footing, local level - LARES/Dev. Plans)* 4. *Key stakeholder engagement (Involving Elected Representatives and Regional Level Stakeholders)* ***Housekeeping*** 1. *Point of Contact for Reporting to Regional Assemblies* 2. *Templates/format for Regional Reports* 3. *Key dates/sticking points going forward*		

Appendix B – Phase A: Initial Scoping Consultation- Detailed Summary of Responses

Table B.1: Summary of consultation with research bodies involved in national landscape character assessment development

Date	Theme	Summary of discussion
24/11/22	Landscape character assessment	REFRAME representative noted that a national landscape baseline is missing and there are inconsistencies and uneven character areas.
		The expected output/aim of the work is to develop a toolkit for landscape character assessment and develop a harmonisation across national character typologies
		This is challenging as landscape is quite qualitative and therefore doesn't lend itself well to a risk-based approach

Table B.2: Summary of consultation with electricity system operators

Date	Theme	Summary of discussion
02/11/2022	Generation capacity assumptions	A key element of this discussion was sense-checking the generation assumptions and figures which EirGrid had included in their 2021 Shaping Our Electricity Future document. EirGrid noted that the pipeline of projects were based off real project - RESS and ECP data, and that in general the State is not struggling for projects – "there are plenty of projects out there".
	Information sharing	It was acknowledged that information sharing between EirGrid and the project team was favourable as what that any large variances between the data both parties produced would cause issues.
	Support for Action 102	EirGrid outlined that supportive planning policies for wind and solar would be very helpful in helping them transition to a more plan-led model of development.
	Repowering	EirGrid outlined that repowering, they felt, was more of a challenge for the developer and in general they are fairly agnostic on repowering provided there is no increase in output capacity. It was noted that not all sites may be suitable for repowering, that there was a lot of value in things that are standing there already, but in general the grid is not a barrier to it. However, if output capacity is being increased that is something which needs to be addressed.
23/11/2022	Support for Action 102	It was noted that the business planning objectives within EirGrid is to look at 'this type of thing' – they are favourable towards the proposed Action 102 framework and approach. EirGrid want to marry the generation with the appropriate grid connection, and they see that as being enabled through regional planning and upgrading existing infrastructure.
	Plan-led grid development	It was noted that historically, the grid network has always been somewhat reactive and grid development has not typically been plan-led. A policy-led approach will allow EirGrid to pursue a more plan-led approach (informed by policy) and the uprates/upgrades of the grid/nodes on the grid can get people to travel/develop by those nodes. They see the proposed approach as alleviating spatial constraints and creating opportunity to develop a strong grid off the back of it. They also see REPowerEU as helping move the development approach from project-led to plan-led.

Date	Theme	Summary of discussion
	Grid upgrades	They noted that spatially, EirGrid are still looking at upgrading the grid instead of focusing on new development – they want to maximise the existing infrastructure before going through the timely and costly process of developing new infrastructure.
	Line ownership and repowering	It was also recognised that regulations could and maybe should deal with single and shared ownership models – this might encourage hybrid generation sites and repowering. On repowering it was noted that older wind farms are doing quite well from their agreed prices and this is a disincentive to for upgrading them.
	Maximising efficiency	In relation to the grid, they are seeing more larger RE going directly onto the distribution network (ESBN) which then asks the question of how we can get nodes tied in together better
	Infrastructure corridors	EirGrid were broadly supportive of the infrastructure corridors development as it makes sense to them to develop alongside and beside these nodes. However, this still won't change the current wind farm development model and it will need a strong policy context for developing the grid in a holistic way along infrastructure corridors
	Zoning	EirGrid, still feels that the SDZ-for-renewables is still the best approach.
10/01/2023	Support for Action 102	Acknowledging the increase in RE targets in CAP23, EirGrid noted that the regions and local authorities need to move together and with the statutory targets.
	Maximise current grid	In relation to the grid, they noted that onshore wind drives lots of grid reinforcements, a lot more than solar, and to reach our 2030 targets, we need to minimise the need for new grid where possible and maximise the existing grid because 6/7 years is very short in terms of electricity planning.
	Access to the grid	Grid accessibility should be ranked alongside environmental and human factors when determining locations and should be aware that not all areas/ counties will be equal when developing grid infrastructure – it is strongest in midlands, south and east. We need to consider the grid through multiple lenses if we want to get the scale of development we need, and deliverability needs to be central in decision-making (i.e., do we go with underground or overground cables etc.).
	Energy Parks	EirGrid felt that post-2030 is when you would start looking for 'energy parks (e.g., hydrogen plants from ORE), and these clusters need to be in the right area of the grid to be successful.
	Electricity demand and flow	In terms of demand, they noted that Dublin has a concentration of demand beyond its population (think of it as a city 2x its size) and therefore everything flows, and needs to flow, towards Dublin.
	Maximise current grid	In relation to wind farm development, they outlined that typically you want to build projects where you can maximise the power you can get from them and how much demand you can satisfy, particularly from where the grid is available and strongest.
	Grid development and consent	They noted that everything in relation to grid infrastructure is difficult, and it's going to be problematic, particularly at county level. They outlined that planning needs to move quickest and there was uncertainty over the new PDA as it raises the question of timings. They also outlined that EirGrid are often competing with other non-grid related infrastructure and other state bodies in relation to RE (particularly, they noted Fáilte Ireland (tourism sector)). To that end they noted that the political element needs to be considered when putting "lines on a map".
17/02/2023	Electricity system split	A key question for ESB is understanding how much of the 80% renewable target by 2030 will be on the transmission vs distribution system.
	Network characteristics	Load flow and power flow has changed directions from how the network was originally designed, making it more complex. ESB noted that networks are

Date	Theme	Summary of discussion
		getting loaded as there is not sufficient local demand at or close to generation sites. ESB noted that they are working on doing a capacity map, including looking at transformers and lines capacity, and they noted that they were seeing signs that the South-East and North-West are becoming constrained, and thus regional re-balancing would help
	Grid development and consent	ESB outlined that the go-to areas (i.e., priority areas) need to align with the system in order to bring RE on stream quicker and cheaper – connecting a wind farm can take between 3 and 10 years. They noted that most connections and overhead lines, particularly as substation sites and routes in/out of these take a long time to get through planning.
	Support for the Action 102	The forward planning aspect that the proposed approach provides is important – it provides ESB with some degree of certainty about where future development will take place (similar to a motorway becoming earmarked for a region).
	Grid development and consent	Another obstacle noted by ESB was that in some instances they have to put multiple planning permissions into local authorities which can be complex – this is something they think can be streamlined. They also noted that repowering could be quicker from a planning perspective, but also not that it would still be challenging as there are operational constraints and challenges to maintain supply.
	Hybrid Sites	ESB outlined the advanced infrastructure they will be introducing in the coming years, including hybrid sites and renewable hubs. Hybrid sites would see wind and storage together behind one single connection point. They noted the potential for multiple legal entities behind a single connection point also. In effect, they have an over install policy whereby they encourage more MW at a single site to ensure that the MEC of that node can be met. This includes co-location of technologies.
	Renewables Hubs	In terms of renewable hubs, ESB look to identify areas/project where ESBN can build out infrastructure to bring more projects into an area and create capacity. They think it may be more tailored towards solar and storage facilities and generators will only pay for the grid they are using – there will be no need to pay for a full uprate of a connection.

Table B.3: Summary of consultation with Regional Assembly spatial planners

Date	Theme	Summary of discussion
19/10/2022	Purpose of the Methodology	SRA advised that the Methodology, by definition, can't provide all the answers to all the issues. The Regional Assemblies will need to understand how they allocate targets down to the local level and an understanding of the legislative side of the house. Also, clarity around the timescales required to implement the Methodology is required.
	Roles and responsibilities/ Governance	The NWRA queried what the roles of the regional assembly members are in the process and whether they are required to sign-off on anything. They further outlined that their support will be very important to the success of any methodology or initiative. The governance and legislative aspect of the RRES and methodology was queried by EMRA. Getting all of government behind it will be important to its success. It was also wondered whether the P&D bill and its renewal had been considered. Ultimately, it was noted by EMRA that it is important to be mindful of the changing legislative environment in order to give the methodology flexibility.
	Financial benefits of RE	Members outlined that quantifying the potential economic activity and financial benefits from RE can bring to communities will help in any marketing and communications requirements. Shetland Island and Oil Levy was used as an example.
	Capacity constraints	The RA's generally expressed concern of their resource capacity both in terms of contributing to the development of the methodology, but also in the context of the RRES.
10/11/2022	Governance	There was a discussion over RRES and governance, wondering where it sits within the RA's cycles. The Planning and Development Bill and how it impacts the programme of works is an unknown for the SRA and NWRA.
	Transboundary	The transboundary question was also raised, and it was wondered if anyone from Northern Ireland should be consulted with.
	Just Transition	It was also noted that the Just Transition areas extend into the NWRA (in parts of Roscommon) and it's important to keep the JT as part of the discussion as there can be positives for community here.
18/04/2023	National Landscape Strategy	The need for a national landscape strategy was noted by EMRA. Of particular concern for one member of EMRA was a strategy which accounts for both terrestrial and maritime environments, in a mechanism which is easy to understand – it is important to understand the relationship in areas where there is interaction with offshore wind turbines. It was appreciated that a level of fieldwork would be required in any such national landscape strategy by the Southern Assembly, which is a significant element of work.

Appendix C – Draft Working Papers

Appendix D – Phase B Stakeholder Consultation – Review of the proposed RRES Methodology - Attendee List & Agenda[Error! Bookmark not defined.]

Reference:	IE000528_WP1_0001
Meeting Name:	Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) Methodology – Regional Assembly Workshop
Meeting date:	1st February 2024
Meeting location:	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), 3 Park Place, Hatch Street, Dublin 2, D02 FX65

Invitees

Name	Initials	Organisation	Role
Terry Prendergast	TP	Independent	Facilitator
Anne-Marie Wood Wolfe	AMWW	Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	Assistant Director/Senior Planner
Padraig O'Shea	POS	Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	Regional Planning Officer
Conall McGettigan	CM	Northern & Western Regional Assembly	Regional Planning Officer
Denis Kelly	DK	Northern & Western Regional Assembly	Assistant Director/Senior Planner
Kevin Lynch	KL	Southern Regional Assembly	Assistant Director/Senior Planner
Dominic Walsh	DW	Southern Regional Assembly	Regional Planning Officer
Mary Molloy	MM	Southern Regional Assembly	Executive Planner
Paul O'Neill	PON	DECC	Principal Officer
Philip Newsome	PN	DECC	Principal Officer of the Renewable Electricity Division
Alana Johnston	AJ	DECC	Assistant Principal Officer
Tina Dolan	TD	DECC	Higher Executive Officer
Alma Walsh	AW	DHLGH	Senior Advisor
Claragh Mulhern	CM	DHLGH	Acting Principal Advisor
John McCann	JM	SEAI	Electricity & Wind Programme Officer
Connor Malloy	CM	SEAI	Programme Executive
Alexandra Revez	AR	MaREI, UCC	Researcher

Name	Initials	Organisation	Role
Maeve McLoughlin	MM	RPS	Consultants
Valerie Brennan	VB	RPS	Consultants
Paul Chadwick	PC	RPS	Consultants
Oisin Gill	OG	RPS	Consultants
Ian Packham	IP	RPS	Consultants
Eve Moore	EM	RPS	Consultants
Polen Koyuncu	PK	RPS	Consultants

Ref no.	Item	Presenter(s)	Time
2.	Welcome & Introductions	TP	10.30 – 10.45am
3.	**Session 1 – Background & Context (See briefing notes in Appendix A)**	DECC/DHLGH/RPS	10.45 – 11.15am
4.	**Session 2 – Developing the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) Methodology** - Background - Overview of proposed Steps 1 – 6 (see briefing note in Appendix B) - Detailed review of Steps 1 – 2 - Breakout Discussion #1 - Detailed Review of Steps 3 – 5 - Breakout Discussion #2 - Detailed Review of Step 6 - Group Discussion #3	ALL	11.30am-1.30pm
5.	Break for lunch		1.30-2.30pm
6.	**Session 3 – Next Steps** - Summary of Feedback - Review of Feedback - MaREI/UCC (AR) to present strategy on facilitating public engagement and acceptance for onshore and offshore renewable energy development	RPS/ALL	2.30-4pm

APPENDIX A – Background & Context

Session 1 – Briefing Notes

- **Recap on Aims & Objectives of each Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES)**

    - **Background:**
        - It is proposed that the draft first revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) will allocate the national renewable electricity targets for onshore wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) to the three Regional Assemblies. This will be subject to SEA, Government & Oireachtas approval.
        - Subject to the commencement of the Planning and Development Act 2024, within six months of the adoption of the revised NPF, each Regional Assembly will be required to commence a revision of their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES).
        - Under the Act, as part of this RSES revision, each Regional Assembly is required to make provision for a Renewable Energy Strategy. Pending further discussions, it is currently envisioned that the RRES will be incorporated into this strategy.
        - In developing their RRES, the Regional Assemblies will consider how the generation capacity targets can be spatially distributed among the Local Authorities in the most equitable and strategic manner, that integrates with wider planning policies for the region.
        - The Regional Target Allocation within the NPF will inform the development of each RRES.
        - Each RRES will consider - accounting for social, economic, and environmental factors- where and how the allocated targets to each region will be achieved.

- **Review of Regional Planning Implementation Steps to be included within each RRES:**

    - **Specific Regional Planning Implementation Steps:**
        - Development of a RRES
            - *A regional resource assessment, including identifying current installed, planned and future pipeline of potential capacity.*
            - *A geospatial assessment of the region (using GIS mapping) to identify the environmental sensitivities and capacity potential.*
            - *A review of landscape assessments and policies available at county level, to enable a regional perspective on landscape sensitivity for renewable energy.*
            - *Assessing the regional social, economic and employment opportunities that could arise from renewable development, and support wider regional planning goals.*
            - *Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.*
            - *A likely strategic environmental assessment (SEA) process as part of the RSES revision that will help address competing objectives and priorities.*

    - **Supplementary Regional Planning Implementation Steps:**
        - Application of a consistent spatial classification methodology.
        - Co-ordinated approach between the spatial planning for renewables (at a regional and local level) and the planning of electricity grid development.
        - A requirement for all new wind and solar projects to consider how they contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including maintaining and strengthening existing natural habitats and improving degraded habitats where relevant.
        - Establishment of a monitoring and reporting system to support the assessment of progress on the delivery of the regional renewable electricity targets on an annual basis by the Regional Assemblies.

- **Recap on Aims of RRES Methodology and progress to date in order to determine scope of Methodology in line with the Regional Planning Implementation Steps:**

    - In developing their RRES, the Regional Assemblies **will consider how the regional generation capacity targets proposed to be included in the revised NPF can be spatially distributed among the Local Authorities in the most equitable and strategic manner, that integrates with wider planning policies for the region**.

    - **Aims of RRES Methodology:**
        - To assist this process**, the Regional Assemblies are jointly developing a Methodology** which will help to **streamline the process**, **enabling a consistent approach to be applied in an efficient time frame.**
        - By developing a clear methodology at regional level**, the regions will be taking a direct role in guiding actions at LA level**, including how wind and solar strategies at LA level need to evolve and the necessary timeframe in order to meet national targets for 2030.
        - ***Others TBC***

    - **Potential scope of Methodology**
        - Review of the policy (international/European/national, regional (i.e. RSES) and local (i.e. CDPs)) context & drivers (including environmental & socioeconomic);
        - Overview of applicable technology and supporting infrastructure;
        - Procedural & consultation considerations (i.e. SEA/AA).
        - Vision for each region in terms of renewable electricity;
        - RE targets allocated to each country within region;
            - Each region should follow a standard approach to allocating county level targets, which incorporates an assessment of net land-take (km^2) required to meet 2030 national/regional energy output targets.
        - Landscape character considerations (**TBC**);
        - Consistent spatial classification of net land-take (km^2):
            - Each region should follow a standard unified approach to spatially classifying net land-take (km^2).
        - Key stakeholder communication and engagement plan;
        - Implementation and monitoring plan.
        - ***Others TBC***

- **Key Milestones:**
    - Draft NPF published for consultation;
    - Revised NPF adopted;
    - RRES Methodology published;
    - Revised LARES Methodology published; and
    - Revised Wind Energy Guidelines (WEGs) published.

        - Subject to the commencement of the Planning and Development Act 2024, within the first six months following adoption of the revised NPF (May - Oct 2024), each Regional Assembly will be required to commence a review of their RSES.
        - Under the Act, each Regional Assembly is required to make provision for a strategy relating to onshore renewable energy. It is proposed to make provision for this renewable energy strategy as part of the RSES review.

- **Summary of Working Papers completed to date:**

    - ***Draft Working Paper 1 – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) Policy Review – January 2023***

- This comprised a review of the policies outlined in the RSESs for each RA.

- ***Draft Working Paper 2 – Stakeholder Engagement – January 2023***
  - This comprised a summary of the background research carried out in order to present a draft methodology for consultation.
- ***Draft Working Paper 3 – Landscape Considerations – March 2023***
  - This comprised a review of the policy background for landscape considerations at national and regional level, alongside an examination of current practice for landscape consideration in renewable energy planning, with a view to developing a methodology that can be applied to the RRES Methodology development process.

APPENDIX B – Overview of Proposed Steps

RPS proposes that six steps (see **Figure 1** below) are followed in order to meet national targets when developing a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES). These steps incorporate regional planning implementation steps, as well as international best practice.

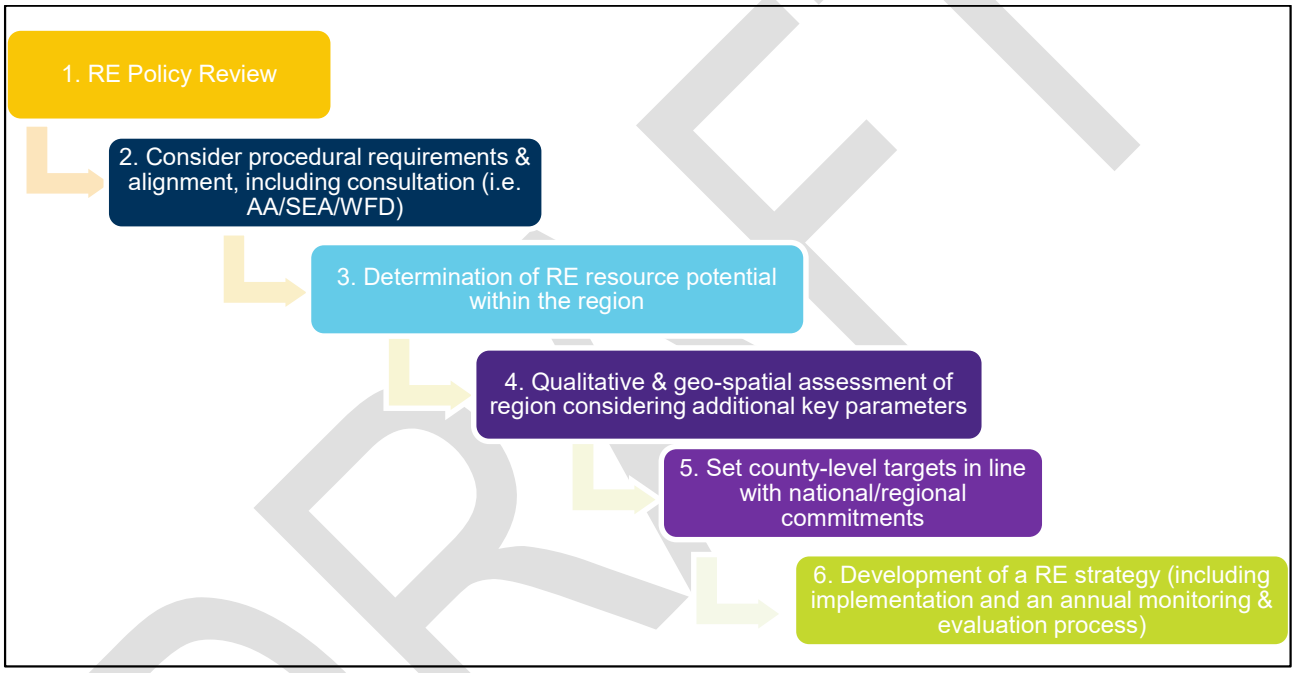

Figure 1: Proposed Six Steps to developing a RRES

An outline of each step is described below; these will be further explained in the workshop on the 1st February 2024.

Step 1 – RE Policy Review
This comprises a review and summary of key regional and local-level policies in order to provide context to key stakeholders.

Step 2 – Consider procedural requirements & alignment, including consultation (i.e. AA/SEA/WFD).
Note: A SEA will likely be required to be carried out as part of RSES revision as standard.

Step 3 – Determination of RE resource potential within the region
Step 4 – Qualitative and geo-spatial assessment of region considering additional key parameters.

These steps flow together and comprise the assessment of the baseline and the gap to target, followed by a further qualitative and geo-spatial assessment of each region considering additional key parameters

(including key stakeholder views; technology-specific resource quality; grid/infrastructural constraints and facilitators; socio-economic considerations; landscape sensitivities; and land quality).

Step 5 – Set county-level minimum renewable electricity capacity allocation in line with national commitments

Following Steps 3 and 4, county-level minimum renewable electricity capacity allocation for minimum amount of installed capacity (MW) should be set through the application of capacity intensity factors (MW per km2) and project delivery rates (%) that align with the national targets and are consistent with other relevant national and regional commitments.

Step 6 – Development of a RE strategy (including implementation and establishment of an annual monitoring and evaluation process)

This final step outlines the need to develop a RRES that includes consideration of the implementation of the strategy, as well as the establishment of an annual monitoring and evaluation process in order monitor progress against targets.

Appendix E – Phase B stakeholder consultation – Review of proposed RRES Methodology - Detailed Summary of Responses

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
RRES Methodology Step	Step 1 – Renewable electricity policy review	Evolving policies	It is a challenge to keep track of the timing of continually evolving policies, and the resulting differences between national policies and local level policies.	EMRA DECC SEAI	1. Noted by DECC/DHLGH	DECC/DHLGH
					2. RPS is developing a detailed renewable energy policy appendix as part of the revised LARES Methodology, which can be updated regularly which could support this step.	RPS
		Need for national policy alignment	, Aligned national policy is essential – if policy at the national level is not robust, this will trickle down and cause issues for Local Authorities. The Regional Assemblies are relying on the National Planning Framework (NPF) for robust targets to implement at a regional level. It is imperative that the NPF puts these pillars in place and the Regional Assemblies welcome the opportunity to build this into the RSESs.	ALL	3. Noted by DECC – the regional tier now fits into the bigger picture, and into the national planning hierarchy. In addition, the Wind Energy Guidelines (WEGs) are at an advanced state, but they need to be sequenced with the NPF.	DECC/DHLGH
		More funding, resources & training required	More funding, resources & particularly training is needed to build expertise in the regional tier.	All Regional Assemblies	Noted by DECC/DHLGH	DECC DHLGH
	Step 2 – Consider Procedural requirements & alignment, including consultation (i.e.	Need for a national landscape classification system	The absence of a national landscape classification system will be a significant challenge to developing harmonised evidence- based RRESs. It was suggested that a regional landscape characterisation	All Regional Assemblies	4. DECC noted and advised that a lot of work has been done to date in terms of developing a landscape character assessment; it is on the agenda and is being progressed.	DECC DHLGH

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
	AA, SEA, WFD, etc)		assessment could be done as part of the RSES review.		5. Regional Assemblies to explore consideration of a regional landscape assessment as part of RSESs. It should be noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024 tasks RAs to make provision for a *strategy relating to landscape and landscape character that coordinates the categorisation of landscapes, in terms of their capacity to absorb particular types of development, across the region so as to ensure a consistent approach to the protection of the landscape,* Section 29(1)(m) b81bx23d-p-c-sent.pdf (oireachtas.ie)	Regional Assemblies
					6. RPS has developed a working paper on landscape considerations to support this aspect (see Appendix C)	RPS
		Strategic alignment opportunity	There is an alignment opportunity for the Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) that are developed under the RSESs – there is a need to include an additional brief/statutory requirement as part of the SEA tenders.	SRA	7. There is a need to include an additional brief/statutory requirement as part of the SEA tenders.	Regional Assemblies

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
		Need for a coordinated, centralised approach	There is a need for a coordinated centralised approach between Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities.	All Regional Assemblies	8. Need to develop a coordinated, centralised approach	Regional Assemblies Local Authorities
		Early stakeholder engagement & management	It is important to address issues arising from stakeholders early on in the process, in order to help with public engagement.	EMRA	9. Need to develop a consultation/engagement strategy to support the process and mitigate risk.	Regional Assemblies
					10. RPS has developed a working paper on stakeholder engagement to support this aspect (see Appendix C)	RPS
		More funding, resources & training required	Again, resources, funding and training are the key supported needed.	All Regional Assemblies	See 4 above	TBC
	Step 3 – Determination of renewable electricity resource potential within the region	Lack of data & access to relevant data	It was agreed that this step is a good approach, as opposed to a case-by-case approach. However, the lack of reliable data is a challenge (i.e. planning data, industry data, inconsistencies in landscape value, etc) – there is a need to agree a consistent approach in what is taken into account across the board.	All Regional Assemblies	11. SEAI is undertaking measures to provide a GIS platform that would support consistency and provide datasets that would support in undertaking this step.	SEAI
					12. DECC advised that further support may be available as part of RED III requirements.	DECC
					13. RPS are developing a detailed technical appendix with links to resources as part of the revised LARES Methodology, which will support a consistent	RPS

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
					approach to what data is utilised in this step.	
			It will be important to explicitly highlight the data that should be incorporated into this step at regional and local levels (subsidiarity).	SRA DECC	14. RPS to prepare detailed technical instructions for the RRES Methodology and the revised LARES Methodology and clearly stipulate the data that needs to be incorporated.	RPS
		Specific training will be required	Training will be important to bring everyone along, particularly for newly elected members.	All Regional Assemblies	See 4 above	DECC DHLGH
		Need for a national landscape classification system	The need for a national landscape classification system was raised again, in order to improve consistency between landscape character assessments nationally and between Local Authorities.	All Regional Assemblies	See 5, 6 & 7 above	DECC DHLGH
	Step 4 – Qualitative & geo-spatial Assessment of the region considering additional key parameters	Need for more prescriptive high-level methodology	The methodology for this step is currently in development, but at this stage in development does need to be more prescriptive.	All Regional Assemblies	15. Noted by DECC	DECC
		Need for clarification on scope	It will be important to clarify that this step is not zoning.	All Regional Assemblies	16. RPS to ensure this is clarified in the RRS Methodology instructions	RPS
		Lack of data & access to relevant data	Gathering data to inform this step will be a challenge. Improved access to GIS data is required.	All Regional Assemblies	17. SEAI is undertaking measures to provide a GIS platform that would support consistency and provide datasets that would support in undertaking this step.	SEAI

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
					18. DECC advised that further support may be available as part of RED III requirements.	DECC
		Need for clear top-down communications to elected members	The supporting communications on this process to the elected members will be very important and must come top-down (i.e. national level)	All Regional Assemblies	19. Noted by DECC	DECC DHLGH
		Need for a robust and defensible methodology	In developing the methodology, it should be recognised that the rationale and methodology for this step will need to be robust and defensible.	All Regional Assemblies	20. DECC noted	DECC
	Step 5 – Set county-level targets in line with national/regional commitments	National guidelines need to be aligned, robust and justify all targets	All national guidelines should align and they need to be completely robust and defensible, in order to justify the targets set.	All Regional Assemblies	21. DECC & DHLGH noted	DECC DHLGH
		Need for top-down support from DHLGH	To date, there are disparities between the regions in terms of what has been done to support meeting the national targets and going forward, more counties need to do more 'heavy lifting'. One issue is the lack of buy-in from elected members in relation to national targets; therefore, the DHLGH need to provide continuous and visible support of the targets, through communication of the positive benefits of renewable electricity/energy development (i.e. through positive/good news stories,	All Regional Assemblies	22. Noted by DECC & DHLGH	DECC DHLGH

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
			etc); support when the Regional Assemblies speak to elected members; and provision of external expert input.			
		Need for a national landscape classification system	The need for a national landscape classification system was raised again, in order to improve consistency between landscape character assessments nationally and between Local Authorities.	All Regional Assemblies	See 5, 6 & 7 above	DECC DHLGH
	Step 6 – Development of a RES strategy (including implementation & an annual monitoring & evaluation process)	Regional Development Monitor (RDM) to be used to monitor RRES progress	All agreed that the Regional Development Monitor (RDM) should be used as the national platform to tie the RRES into the overall monitoring process.	All Regional Assemblies	23. Regional Assemblies to implement.	Regional Assemblies
		Benefit to have the SEAI renewable energy output webpage	During the workshop, SEAI presented a webpage that could illustrate renewable energy output on a monthly and annual basis. It was agreed that this would be a valuable communication tool.	All Regional Assemblies	24. SEAI to finalise the development of this webpage for public consumption	SEAI
		Clarity on KPIs and supporting data requirements.	It needs to be clear what data the Regional Assemblies (and Local Authorities) are required to provide in order to monitor specific key performance indicators (KPIs).	All	25. Regional Assemblies to review recommend KPIs and identify which ones are feasible and what data requirements are necessary	Regional Assemblies
Other Key Feedback	Electricity grid	Planning	The grid should not be a limiting factor in terms of resource (although it is recognised that it may be in terms of time and delivery). There is a need to synergise with grid development: there are areas where	SEAI DECC	26. Need for continued consultation with Eirgrid/ESBN	RPS DECC DHLGH SEAI

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
			there are 'quick wins' and then there is an alignment piece to be developed in terms of the medium-term development of the grid.			
		Other renewable energy technology and supporting infrastructure	Need for holistic consideration of renewable energy technology and supporting infrastructure, in addition to renewable electricity technology and infrastructure. For example, battery storage could play a role where the expansion of the grid is unpopular – there needs to be a mechanism on supporting the battery storage owners.	SEAI	See 27 above.	RPS DECC DHLGH SEAI
					27. Any guidance/supporting documentation to support roll-out of the Regional Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (RARES) should include this holistic consideration	TBC
					28. Revised LARES Methodology should recommend this holistic consideration.	RPS
		Additional consultation on RRES Methodology	Additional stakeholders should be consulted on the draft RRES Roadmap to ensure support, buy-in and a balanced approach (i.e. the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), the County and City Management Association CCMA)).	All Regional Assemblies	29. RPS/DECC/DHLGH/SEAI to ensure the draft RRES Methodology goes through a wide consultation before finalisation (including Action 102 Group).	RPS DECC DHLGH SEAI
	Stakeholder Engagement & Communication	Communication	There is a need for clarity on what the RRES and the Regional Renewable Energy Strategies are trying to achieve. There is a need to emphasis the differences between renewable electricity and energy.	NWRA, SRA	30. Noted by DECC & DHLGH	DECC DHLGH

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
			There is a need to have top-down communication in relation to this new spatial plan-led process for renewable electricity/energy development in Ireland and this messaging should incorporate the benefits of this development (i.e. reduced impacts on air quality, climate mitigation measure, provides stability in electricity/energy supply as well as energy security).	All Regional Assemblies	31. TBC	Regional Assemblies
			The Methodology should be issued as a formal guidance, similar to the LARES Methodology.	All Regional Assemblies	32. TBC	Regional Assemblies
			There is an overall need to promote the positive benefits of following a clear, defensible methodology as set out in the RRES Methodology.	All Regional Assemblies	33. Noted by DECC	Regional Assemblies
		Stakeholder engagement & management	Because this is a new element of RSES, it is likely that it may attract scrutiny, so there is a need to engage constituents, particularly in relation to the benefits from renewable electricity development.	All Regional Assemblies	34. Regional Assemblies to develop a stakeholder engagement and communication strategy.	Regional Assemblies
			There is a need to raise awareness with the Local Authorities as to what the RRES Methodology process is, how it sits procedurally and within the planning hierarchy. Overall, there is a need for a cohesive stakeholder management plan across the regions, and this needs to be undertaken sooner rather than later, in order to outline		35. RPS has developed a working paper on stakeholder engagement to support this aspect (see Appendix C)	RPS

Topic	Sub-Topic	Theme of Feedback	Stakeholder Feedback	Referenced Stakeholders	Potential Mitigation Measure(s)	Action Owner(s)
			everything in this space. It would be helpful to have a webinar with the Local Authorities in each region before consultation and in advance of local elections, to help alleviate any concerns.			