ABOUT SSE IRELAND

SSE Ireland, part of the SSE Group, is the largest generator of wind power in the all-island Single Electricity Market (SEM). As at 31 March 2016, SSE Ireland operated over 1,800MW of generation capacity, of which almost 550MW is generated at SSE’s 25 wind farms across the island of Ireland. SSE Ireland’s retail brand, SSE Airtricity, is the second largest provider of energy and related services, and is the largest provider of renewable energy across the island. SSE Airtricity is the only energy supply brand to operate in all of the competitive gas and electricity markets across the island. SSE Airtricity is the largest provider of renewable energy across the island. SSE Airtricity Utility Solutions is Ireland’s leading public lighting contractor, responsible for the maintenance of around 250,000 street lights on behalf of local authorities across the Republic of Ireland. SSE has invested over €2bn since 2008 in growing its energy business across the island of Ireland – creating jobs, sustaining employment, driving competition and greening the economy.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Reporting on the SSE Group’s most material sustainability impacts (financial and non-financial) for financial year 2015/16 is integrated into its Group Annual Report 2016 and found in the Group Sustainability Report 2016. This Ireland-specific report focuses on SSE’s key sustainability performance indicators for its business in financial year 2015/16 in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It aims to provide accessible and transparent information to SSE’s key stakeholders on its social, economic and environmental impacts. Some data for activities in Northern Ireland are not specifically identified within this report, but contribute to the UK results which are found within the Group reports.

MORE INFORMATION


Other reports with further information for SSE Ireland can be found by clicking the links below:

- SSE Group 2016 Sustainability Report
- SSE Group 2016/17 Half-year Sustainability Statement
- SSE Group CDP Submission 2016
- SSE Economic Contribution to the UK, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland 2015/16
- Talking Tax 2016: Improving SSE’s tax transparency
- Doing the right thing: SSE’s guide to ethical business conduct
- SSE Group Biodiversity Report 2015
- Valuable people: Understanding SSE’s Human Capital
- Galway Wind Park Sustainability Impact Report
- SSE Ireland Be the Difference Annual Review 2015/16

Policies and statements can be found online at www.sse.com/beingresponsible/reporting-and-policy/policies.

A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY

Sustainability is core to SSE’s overall business strategy. To meet its business objectives and manage risk over the long-term, SSE must operate responsibly. SSE’s environmental, social and economic impacts are significant and SSE believes it should actively manage those impacts to minimise risk, secure long-term commercial success and deliver value to stakeholders. This approach of integrating sustainability throughout its business strategy is therefore viewed as more effective than outlining an independent sustainability strategy.

SSE’s Chief Executive, Alistair Phillips-Davies, has overall lead responsibility for Group sustainability, including at Board-level. The Executive Committee monitors the operational and financial performance of sustainability activities across the organisation and reviews progress quarterly. This committee is supported by The Governance and Disclosure Committee, which governs sustainability management and reporting. SSE’s Ireland Risk Committee, chaired by Stephen Wheeler, Managing Director of SSE Ireland, is responsible for developing SSE Ireland’s business strategy in line with SSE’s values, which includes ‘Sustainability’. Sustainability performance is reviewed by the Ireland Advisory Board which is chaired by Mark Ennis, SSE Ireland’s Chairman, and attended by Gregor Alexander, SSE’s Chief Financial Officer, and individual business leads from across SSE Ireland.

MATERIAL CHALLENGES

SSE’s response to the most material sustainability and business challenges for the energy industry are integrated into its strategy and business operating model. These challenges are defined as:
- Ensuring energy costs remain affordable for customers;
- Maintaining and developing a sustainable energy system that keeps the lights on for everybody; and
- Decarbonising electricity generation to help mitigate the impact of climate change and ensure the environmental impact of producing energy is minimised.

LISTENING TO STAKEHOLDERS

SSE is committed to ongoing two-way, multi-channel engagement and welcomes comment from its stakeholders on its approach to sustainability. Please send feedback to sustainability.ireland@sse.com.
EARNING OUR SUCCESS

SSE Ireland has a proud heritage of delivering clean, green energy. Our core purpose is to provide energy in a sustainable and reliable way for people and businesses across the island of Ireland.

A pivotal focus area for SSE in Ireland is understanding how our business meets the needs of the economy, society and environment we operate in as we evolve and grow. Getting the balance right between financial and non-financial factors is essential for driving our future actions and achievements.

This broader view of value is evident across our business in Ireland. Within our Renewables business for instance, 2016 saw us publish our Galway Wind Park Sustainability Impact Report. A first for our business in Ireland, the report assesses some of the most material economic, social, environmental and local impacts of constructing the country’s largest onshore wind farm; helping to establish Galway as best-in-class for large scale infrastructure project development.

In April last year, our Business Energy team enabled SSE Airtricity to emerge as the key provider of 100% green electricity and natural gas to the Health & Social Care Trusts (HSC) and HSC organisations in Northern Ireland. The deal is the largest energy supply contract ever to come to market in Northern Ireland and sustainability was assessed alongside price in the contract evaluation. With a commitment to roll out a four-year Sustainability Engagement Programme, our sustainability proposals ensured we could offer market leading and differentiated products for our business customers.

And our Community Fund team, which awards around €650,000 and £300,000 annually to communities near our wind farms in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively, has been advancing methods of capturing information and reporting our impacts. We will soon be publishing Community Fund reports for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and last year we published our first annual review of our employee volunteering programme too. Making a positive impact in local communities near our offices and developments is core to the type of business we are.

These are just some of the ways we’ve been working hard to establish SSE Ireland as a leading responsible business. Being commercially successful, and the longevity of this success, must be earned. The profitability and sustainability of a company is determined by its ability to understand and respect the full economic, social, environmental and local impact of the decisions it makes. Of course, there’s more work to do, but this KPI report is a crucial next step in this journey.

It is my commitment that over the months and years to come, SSE Ireland will continue to advance our sustainability reporting and transparency so we can help maximise the benefits of our company to the people and businesses across the communities we serve.

Stephen Wheeler
SSE Ireland Managing Director
THE LIVING WAGE
On 1 January 2016, SSE became the first large corporate business in Ireland to become a Living Wage employer – guaranteeing all employees a Living Wage of at least €11.50 an hour to cover the basic cost of living including housing, bills, food and work travel. Around 8% of SSE’s workforce in Ireland (61 people) received a wage increase as a result. The average wage increase was €560 per annum, with individual increases ranging from €15 to almost €5,000. SSE will continue to play its part in creating an Irish Living Wage movement.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
In 2015/16, for the first time SSE Ireland employees had the opportunity to complete the annual Trust Index Survey administered by the Great Place to Work Institute. The anonymous survey provides employees with an opportunity to give their honest opinions about their workplace, and make suggestions for improvements. A total of 75% of employees filled out the survey, with an average score of 67% across all categories. Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility were the highest scoring areas. SSE Ireland has set a target of increasing its Trust Index score to 80% by 2020.

VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY GIVING
SSE Ireland was listed as the third largest financial contributor to charities and community groups in ROI through the 2016 Business Impact Map by Business in the Community Ireland. It showed that in 2015, SSE donated more than €1m to local projects and good causes across the island, and employees volunteered 3,675 hours of working time to support local charities and community groups. Details and case studies for SSE Ireland’s volunteering programme can be found in the ‘Doing the right thing’ booklet provided to employees.

MODERN SLAVERY IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN
SSE has zero tolerance of modern slavery in all its different forms, both in its business and in its supply chain. In May 2015, SSE produced its first Modern Slavery Statement in line with the UK Government’s Modern Slavery Act. The Statement covers all aspects of SSE’s supply chain, including expenditure through Irish parts of the business and with Irish suppliers. SSE has taken initial measures to ensure modern slavery is not present in its supply chain, including undertaking a risk assessment of SSE’s Tier One supplier spend for 2015/16 (excluding energy trading activities), based on the industries, products and geographical areas that SSE buys from.

Investing in energy efficiency measures is viewed as one of the most sustainable ways of maximising value for local groups: reducing energy bills over the long-term and enabling communities to spend their money on what really matters, with the additional benefit of reducing carbon emissions. In 2015/16, approximately 70% of funds were allocated to energy efficiency projects in rural Ireland.

WIND FARM REGIONAL FUNDS
The SSE Atricity Scholarship Fund is currently funded through the Steve Kirk Wind Park Regional Fund. Around €80,000 is granted each year to provide students with 50% of their tuition fees for the duration of their course at either Ulster University or South West College. In 2016, 29 students received scholarships to enrol in a wide range of Foundation, Bachelor and Master Degree level courses focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

ETHICAL BUSINESS CONDUCT
SSE became a subscriber to the Institute of Business Ethics (IBE) in 2015, and worked closely with IBE to create its new and improved guide to ethical business conduct. The ‘Doing the right thing’ booklet provides the basis from which SSE employees are guided in terms of ethical business behaviour. The main principles of the guide are – speaking up, doing no harm, trading fairly, respecting each other, and being open and accountable.

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ENVIROMENTAL

DECARBONISING IRELAND’S ENERGY SYSTEM
SSE is committed to playing a leading role in moving towards low carbon energy generation across the island. The SSE Group has a target of reducing the carbon intensity of its electricity generation to 50% of 2006 levels by 2020, with SSE Ireland making an important contribution in the following ways:
- Continued investment in renewable generation and an expanding renewables portfolio
- Switch from heavy fuel oil generation to a portfolio focused on renewables and gas

GENERATING GREEN ENERGY
As at 31 March 2016, SSE owned and operated 25 wind farms across the island of Ireland and is the largest generator of renewable energy in the all-island Single Electricity Market. At the end of financial year 2015/16, SSE Ireland had 155MW of onshore wind capacity in construction and a further 152MW of capacity in its project pipeline – increasing SSE’s total potential renewable capacity by 56% from 544MW to 851MW.

In 2015/16, SSE’s renewable generation sites across the island increased from 1,267GWh in 2014/15 to 1,543GWh in 2015/16. This means that the carbon saved from SSE’s renewable output across the island also increased in this period, from 541,099tCO₂e to 646,903tCO₂e.

100% GREEN SUPPLIER
SSE Airtricity was independently verified and certified by the Commission for Energy Regulation as a supplier of 100% renewable energy for 2015 to all of its home and business customers in the Republic of Ireland1. The company supplied 3.7TWh2 of renewably-sourced energy to our customers in the same period, making SSE Airtricity the largest provider of 100% green energy in Ireland, and abating over 2 million tCO₂ emissions3 on the island.

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY
The SSE Group publishes its Biodiversity Report on an annual basis. The Biodiversity Report 2015 features case studies on biodiversity measures that have been taken across the business, and sets out SSE’s Biodiversity Strategy with the progress that has been made against it during the 2015 calendar year. The Galway Wind Park Sustainability Impact Report also details measures undertaken by the project team to protect and enhance local biodiversity, and SSE Airtricity’s Community Fund criteria outlines “environmental sustainability” as a key funding area.

REPLACING HEAVY FUEL OIL WITH GAS
SSE invested around €350m to replace the 50-year-old heavy fuel oil power plant at Great Island, Co. Wexford, with a new, cleaner 464MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) plant. The plant opened in June 2015 and produced 1.8TWh of energy up to 31 March 2016. The significant increase in SSE Ireland’s carbon emissions from operations between 2014/15 and 2015/16 was a result of the opening of the Great Island CCGT plant. Prior to commissioning, Great Island was operating minimally using heavy fuel oil. The plant can now run at a much larger capacity using natural gas. This is reflected in SSE’s thermal generation output increasing from 251GWh in 2014/15 to 1,780GWh in 2015/16.

INVESTING IN RENEWABLES
In 2015/16, SSE’s renewable generation investment and capital expenditure totaled €56.4 and £22.4m in ROI and NI respectively, an increase in both jurisdictions from 2014/15. This includes expenditure on what will become Ireland’s largest wind farm, Galway Wind Park (172MW) in Co. Galway, which SSE is currently co-developing with Coillte, as well as SSE’s Slieve Divena II Wind Farm (18.8MW) in Co. Tyrone, and Leanamore Wind Farm (18MW) in Co. Kerry, which are either in construction or consented.

2 Total 2014/15 is not available due to major changes in building locations.
3 Tier 2 emissions include generation emissions only.
4 Figures based on calendar year 2015 and calendar year 2014.
5 Totals contain some estimated figures.

Carbon emissions (climate change)
Scope 1 emissions (all island)
SSE’s Biodiversity Report 2015 features case studies on biodiversity measures that have been taken across the business, and sets out SSE’s Biodiversity Strategy with the progress that has been made against it during the 2015 calendar year. The Galway Wind Park Sustainability Impact Report also details measures undertaken by the project team to protect and enhance local biodiversity, and SSE Airtricity’s Community Fund criteria outlines “environmental sustainability” as a key funding area.

Environmental management
Number of major environmental incidents (all island)
Number of serious environmental incidents (all island)
Number of minor environmental incidents (all island)
Environmental prosecutions (all island)

Carbon emissions (climate change)
Scope 1 emissions (all island)
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TRANSPARENT ABOUT TAX

SSE plc is the only FTSE 100 company with the Fair Tax Mark, an independent stamp of approval for businesses that do not use artificial tax avoidance schemes or so-called tax havens, and meet a defined criteria which demonstrates transparency and advanced tax reporting. In October 2016, SSE published its Talking Tax 2016 booklet which provides increased transparency and a detailed breakdown of SSE’s tax disclosure for financial year 2015/16, designed to provide a transparent explanation to non-tax specialists. In 2015/16, SSE made a total tax contribution in the Republic of Ireland of €53.8m, split into €15.2m taxes paid to the Irish Government and €38.6m taxes collected on behalf of the Irish Government. The low level of corporation tax paid in 2015/16 is due to the impact of capital allowances available for 2015 and 2016 on the Great Island CCGT plant constructed in Co. Wexford. More information can be found in the Talking Tax 2016 booklet.

ADDRESSING FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY

SSE Airtricity helped form and launch the voluntary Energy Engage Code. The Code sets out a range of commitments and principles for suppliers when engaging with customers in arrears and facing disconnection. SSE Airtricity seeks to support its customers sensitively and works on the principles of early intervention and flexible response to different circumstances. Through the Energy Engage Code, SSE Airtricity is committed to:

- Never disconnecting an engaging customer.
- Providing every opportunity to customers to avoid disconnection.
- Treating customers as individuals and recognising that no two customers face the same circumstances.
- Offering a range of payment and repayment options and working to find the most suitable solution for customers’ needs.
- Always offering a PAYG meter as an alternative to disconnection, where a network solution is available.
- Working with customer representatives and support agencies working on behalf of our customers such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

POWERING GREEN BUSINESS

The SSE Airtricity Business Energy team is responsible for developing and maintaining SSE’s portfolio of business customers across the island. The team was established in April 2015 and within its first year established a number of commercial agreements to provide green energy for some of the island’s largest businesses that do not use artificial tax avoidance schemes or so-called tax havens, and meet a defined criteria which demonstrates transparency and advanced tax reporting. In October 2016, SSE published its Talking Tax 2016 booklet which provides increased transparency and a detailed breakdown of SSE’s tax disclosure for financial year 2015/16, designed to provide a transparent explanation to non-tax specialists. In 2015/16, SSE made a total tax contribution in the Republic of Ireland of €53.8m, split into €15.2m taxes paid to the Irish Government and €38.6m taxes collected on behalf of the Irish Government. The low level of corporation tax paid in 2015/16 is due to the impact of capital allowances available for 2015 and 2016 on the Great Island CCGT plant constructed in Co. Wexford. More information can be found in the Talking Tax 2016 booklet.

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