



Trade associations climate review

Scope and methodology 2022/23



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Scope and Methodology

Scope

In 2021/22, SSE built upon its initial review to provide a more in-depth assessment of its trade associations. This review provided a new baseline from which to continuously monitor the alignment between the advocacy activity undertaken by its trade associations and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Now, SSE commits to undertake subsequent full reviews on a biennial basis, with 2022/23 representing an interim year review. The content of this review will focus on the climate policy positions of those new trade association memberships that commenced during the 2022/23 financial year, as well as engaging with trade associations that were found to be partially aligned within the 2021/22 base year. SSE will again undertake a full review of its trade association memberships in 2023/24.

Representatives from SSE Group (Sustainability, Corporate Affairs and Regulation) and relevant Business Units were asked to provide details of all the trade associations that SSE became members of during 2022/23. The core project team screened the list of new memberships and used the following criteria to determine whether to include or exclude each trade association from the review.

The criteria for inclusion were:

1. SSE was a member of the trade association between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.
2. The annual membership fee exceeded £5,000.

All trade associations that SSE has joined after 31 March 2023 will be screened for review as part of SSE's trade associations climate review 2023/24.

The rationale for excluding trade associations with membership fees below £5,000 is that such trade associations would hold less influence when lobbying for more ambitious national climate change policy in line with SSE's net zero ambitions and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Exceptions were in place only for SSE's principal trade associations where the annual membership fee was below the £5,000 threshold. This exception applied to RenewableNI in 2022/23.

Previously, trade associations that were believed to have a material role in advocating for issue-specific or geography-specific climate-related policy had been included within scope. This update was made to reduce bias and further align this review to SSE's Group Political and Regulatory Engagement Policy and Political Engagement Statement. Further details on SSE's principal trade associations can be found in SSE's [Political Engagement Statement](#) which can be accessed through the SSE Group Political and Regulatory Engagement Policy at sse.com/sustainability/policies-and-assurances.

SSE has also excluded trade associations for which it has no direct membership but holds membership through national associations. An example of this is Eurelectric where SSE is a member via Energy UK, Energy Networks Association and Electricity Association of Ireland.

This review assessed 28 trade associations of which SSE is a member. The associations that were considered in scope are listed in Appendix A, alongside whether they were included or excluded from the review and, if included, the status of their alignment.

Methodology

For the trade associations considered within scope for this review, SSE applied a bespoke methodology to assess its associations' positions on climate change. The detail of this methodology is provided below.

Determining key principles on climate change

To assess the alignment of trade associations with the goals of the Paris Agreement and SSE's net zero strategy, SSE established five key principles to reach net zero. These principles were drawn from SSE's Climate Change Policy, which aligns with the goals of the Paris Agreement, and further public statements of principle. All trade associations included in the scope of the review were assessed against these five key principles.

Data Collection

As 2022/23 was an interim year of reporting, all data collection was conducted by the core project team. This differs from the full year reviews that will take place on a biannual basis, which involves circulating a data collection survey amongst the SSE Group (Sustainability, Corporate Affairs and Regulation) and relevant Business Units teams. The core team stored all the data collected on a centrally stored databased that was used to conduct the data analysis aspect of the review.

Data Analysis

The core project team conducted desk-based research, using open-source information found on publicly accessible websites, publications, policies and quotes by organisation spokespeople in the media. Where possible, the team attempted to find data sources which were published within the 2022/23 financial year. However, sources produced prior to 1st April 2022 were also considered for this assessment.

When researching, the core team used primary data and used their subjective judgement in order to assess the trade associations' alignment with each of SSE's five key principles to reach net zero (see page 8 of the *Trade associations climate review 2022/23* available at [sse.com/sustainability/reporting](https://www.sse.com/sustainability/reporting)). To substantiate their judgement, each researcher was asked to provide direct evidence and a link to the source text where alignment was deemed to be achieved. Different members of the core project team used the links provided to validate the judgement on alignment.

Scoring methodology

Once the data was collected and validated, SSE applied a weighted scoring framework to the information gathered. A higher weighting was placed on trade associations' support for the goals of the Paris Agreement. Each trade association needed to show implicit support for the goals of the Paris Agreement and meet at least two of SSE's key principles on the acknowledgement of the threat of climate change, support of a carbon price, embrace innovation and seek a just transition to be considered as aligned to SSE's climate strategy and ambitions.

Trade associations were categorised into one of the following classifications based on their weighted scoring:

Aligned

Trade associations were deemed to be aligned overall to SSE's key principles on climate change if they:

- Support the goals of the Paris Agreement; and met two of the following criteria
- Acknowledge the serious threat of climate change;
- Support a strong carbon price;
- Seek a just transition to net zero; or
- Promote innovation.

Partially aligned

Trade associations were deemed to be partially aligned to SSE's key principles on climate change if they:

- Did not explicitly support the goals of the Paris Agreement; and/or
- Did not meet the threshold to be considered aligned to SSE's principles on climate change but did not hold opposing positions.

Opposing

Trade associations were deemed to be opposing if they were found to be advocating in contradiction to any of SSE's five key principles on climate change.

Areas for development

The analysis and findings of this review are reflective of the subjective opinion of SSE. Throughout data collection and analysis, SSE sought to maintain consistency and fairness when reviewing the trade associations that were considered within scope, utilising a validation process intended to reduce discrepancy between trade association alignment. However, SSE does acknowledge that requesting different individuals to conduct research independently of each other on a similar topic relies on a certain degree of interpretation and individual opinion. This can present individual bias in the results, however the validation process was designed to reduce this risk, as mentioned in the *Data Analysis* section.

As stated in the *Methodology* section, SSE used only open-source information found on publicly accessible websites. Where sufficient information was not readily available online, SSE assessed whether its newly joined trade associations were implicitly aligned to the five key principles on climate change and did not engage directly with the trade associations. For trade associations found to be implicitly aligned with SSE's key principles to reach net zero in the previous review period of 2021/22, SSE engaged with the trade associations during 2022/23 and were asked to provide assurance that they were aligned to these principles and were asked to share evidence in the form of internal papers and presentations validate their claim. However, SSE recognises that this approach could lead to divergence in methodology, where some trade associations will be assessed on publicly available information only, whilst other can provide internal evidence to demonstrate alignment with SSE's key principles to reach net zero. To maintain consistency in the methodology used for assessing its trade association's climate alignment, SSE requested that these associations work towards providing their position on the Paris Agreement in the public domain.

Finally, whilst SSE assessed its trade associations against five high-level principles to reach net zero, it recognises that these principles do not cover all of SSE's views on climate change. To ensure that most if not all of SSE's opinions on climate change are covered, a review of the five key principles to reach net zero will be performed during the 2024 assessment to ensure the methodology remains appropriate.

Appendix A: SSE's trade association memberships

Trade association	Overall alignment to SSE's key principles to reach net zero	Included in scope?
Association for Decentralised Energy	Aligned	Included
Asociación Empresarial Eólica	Partially aligned	Included
Association of University Directors of Estates	Aligned	Included
Associazione Nazionale Energia del Vento	Partially aligned	Included
Carbon Capture and Storage Association	Aligned	Included
Charge UK	Partially aligned	Included
Confederation of British Industry	Aligned	Included
Electricity Association of Ireland	Aligned	Included
Energy Networks Association	Aligned	Included
Energy UK	Aligned	Included
France Energie Eolienne	Partially aligned	Included
Global Wind Energy Council	Aligned	Included
Hydrogen Ireland	Aligned	Included
Hydrogen UK	Aligned	Included
International Hydropower Association	Aligned	Included
Irish Business and Employers Confederation	Aligned	Included
Irish Solar Energy Association	Aligned	Included
Japanese Wind Power Association	Aligned	Included
Marine Renewables Industry Association Ireland	Aligned	Included
Netherlands Wind Energy Association	Aligned	Included
Renewable NI	Aligned	Included

RenewableUK	Aligned	Included
Scottish Renewables	Aligned	Included
Solar Energy UK	Aligned	Included
Syndicat de l'Energie Solaire Renouvelable	Partially aligned	Included
Unión Española Fotovoltaica	Partially aligned	Included
Wind Energy Ireland	Aligned	Included
WindEurope	Aligned	Included
American Clean Power Association	n/a	Excluded
Asociación Canaria de Energías Renovables	n/a	Excluded
Asociación de energías renovables	n/a	Excluded
Asociación de Energías Renovables de Andalucía	n/a	Excluded
Asociación de Promotores de Energía Eólica de Castilla y León	n/a	Excluded
Asociación Eólica de Cataluña	n/a	Excluded
Asociacion Eolica de Galicia	n/a	Excluded
Bruton Group	n/a	Excluded
Business in the Community Ireland	n/a	Excluded
Cluster de la Energía de Aragón	n/a	Excluded
Energy Storage Ireland	n/a	Excluded
Energy Transitions Commission	n/a	Excluded
Greek Association of RES Electricity Producers	n/a	Excluded
Hellenic Wind Energy Association	n/a	Excluded
Hydrogen Ireland	n/a	Excluded
Irish District Energy Association	n/a	Excluded
Marine Renewables Canada	n/a	Excluded
Marine Renewables Industry Association	n/a	Excluded
National Offshore Wind Association Ireland	n/a	Excluded

Offshore Wind California	n/a	Excluded
Pacific Ocean Energy Trust	n/a	Excluded
Syndicat des Energies Renouvelables	n/a	Excluded
The D Group	n/a	Excluded
UK District Energy Association	n/a	Excluded
Women In Transport	n/a	Excluded
