



Title	Carbon Capture and Storage Potential in Ireland — Returning Carbon Whence It Came
Authors(s)	English, Joseph M., English, Kara L.
Publication date	2022-05-01
Publication information	English, Joseph M., and Kara L. English. “Carbon Capture and Storage Potential in Ireland — Returning Carbon Whence It Came.” European Association of Geoscientists & Engineers, May 1, 2022. https://doi.org/10.3997/1365-2397.fb2022035 .
Publisher	European Association of Geoscientists & Engineers
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/25185
Publisher's version (DOI)	10.3997/1365-2397.fb2022035

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Carbon capture and storage potential in Ireland — returning carbon whence it came

Joseph M. English^{1,2*} and Kara L. English^{1,2}.

Summary

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) involves the capture of CO₂ emissions produced from industrial and electricity generation sources, followed by transport to permanent underground geological storage. Hence, CCS is one mitigation option available to achieve the targets set out in the Paris Agreement. Here we discuss CCS potential with particular reference to Ireland's emission targets, policy positions and geological storage options. In Ireland, CCS could be utilised (1) with gas-powered electricity to provide secure and reliable low-emissions electricity, (2) to reduce emissions in hard-to-abate industries such as cement manufacturing, and (3) to facilitate the future deployment of negative emissions technologies. Ireland has significant potential to store CO₂ in geological formations in depleted gas fields and deep saline aquifers in its offshore sedimentary basins. Two high-graded options are the offshore Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields. Provisional estimates for the CO₂ storage capacity of these two fields are 321 Mt and 44 Mt respectively. The depleted Kinsale Head gas field alone could have sufficient storage capacity to take the equivalent of up to 40 years of CO₂ emissions from the top 10 point-source emitters in Ireland. Further work is needed to fully characterise and mature the potential for CCS in Ireland.

Introduction

CCS is one of a number of mitigation options that can be considered to stabilize atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations in order to meet the targets set out in the Paris Agreement (e.g. Pacala & Socolow, 2004; IPCC, 2005, 2014; Haszeldine, 2009; Ringrose, 2017, 2020). CCS involves the separation and

capture of 90-98% of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions produced from industrial and electricity generation sources, followed by transport to underground geological storage and hence permanent isolation from the atmospheric system. An introductory overview of CCS and its potential role in the energy transition is provided by English & English (2022). This article provides

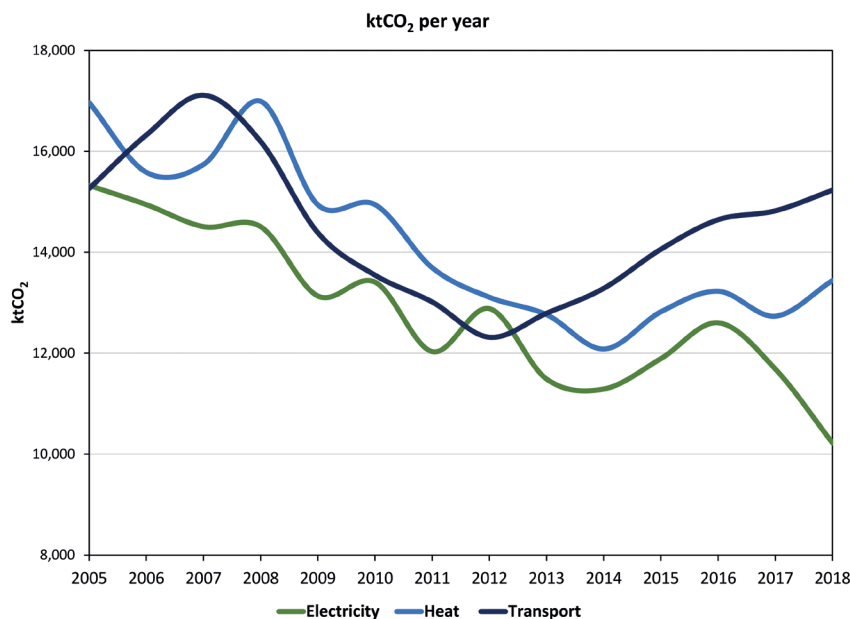


Figure 1 Energy-related CO₂ emissions (ktCO₂) by mode in Ireland over 2005-2018 (SEAI, 2020).

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DOI: 10.3997/1365-2397.fb2022035

(1) a review of Ireland’s current greenhouse gas emissions and the climate action targets that have been adopted by the Irish government, and (2) an introduction to two potential geological sites, the offshore Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields, that could be utilised for CCS in Ireland. Preliminary CO₂ storage capacity estimates are provided for both candidate CCS sites.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland

The two most important greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). In Ireland, CH₄ emissions come mostly from agriculture livestock, while CO₂ emissions come predominantly from the combustion of fossil fuels for energy, industrial processes such as cement manufacturing, fertilizer spreading in agriculture and refrigeration gases. Fossil fuel combustion for energy comprised 59% of all Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 with 34% from agriculture, 6% from industrial processes

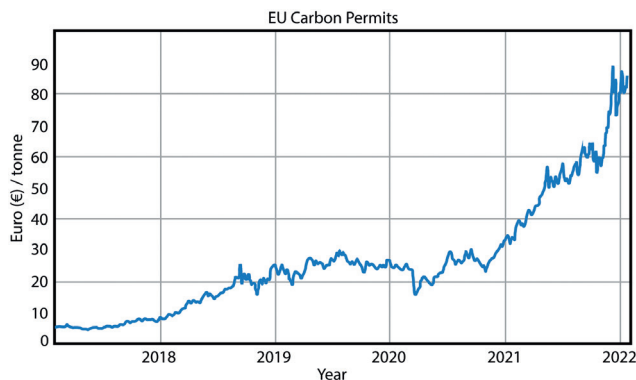


Figure 2 EU carbon permit price (€/tonne) over past 5 years (data from Trading Economics, 2022).

and 1% from waste (SEAI, 2020). Energy-related CO₂ emissions and their associated mitigation plans can be split into three separate categories:

- Transport:** Transport remains almost entirely dependent on oil and was the largest source of energy-related CO₂ emissions (40%) in Ireland in 2018 (SEAI, 2020). Private vehicles are responsible for the greatest share of transport emissions (40%), followed by aviation (22%) and then heavy goods vehicles (14%). CO₂ emissions from transport have increased 24% since 2012 (Figure 1). Under the 2019 Climate Action Plan, the Irish Government has set a target of 950,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in use by 2030, and that by this time, all new cars and vans will be electric vehicles (EVs) (DCCA, 2019).
- Heat:** Heat amounted to 33% of energy-related CO₂ emissions in Ireland in 2018 (SEAI, 2020). Between 2005 and 2018, the amount of oil used for heating was reduced by 35% with most of this reduction happening in industry (55%). Despite a small increase in the amount of heat generated from renewable energy, Ireland still has the second lowest proportion of renewable heat within the EU. Overall, emissions from heat have been increasing since 2014 (Figure 1). Under the 2019 Climate Action Plan, the Irish Government has set a target to upgrade circa 500,000 existing homes to B2 Building Energy Rating (BER), deliver two new district heating systems and install heat pumps in 400,000 existing homes (DCCA, 2019).
- Electricity generation:** Electricity generation was responsible for 27% of energy-related CO₂ emissions in Ireland in 2018 (SEAI, 2020), but the overall emissions have dropped 33% between 2005 and 2018 (Figure 1). This is, in a large

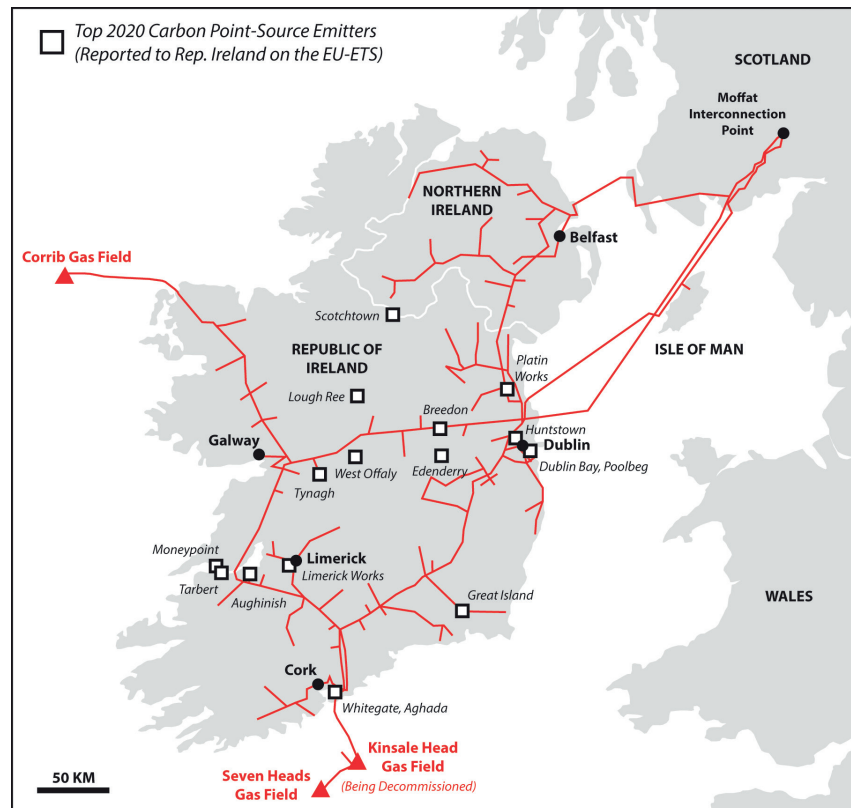


Figure 3 Map of the major gas transmission lines in Ireland including the locations of the Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields. The locations of the major carbon point source emitters in the Republic of Ireland, as reported under the EU-ETS in 2020 are also shown; see Table 1 for further details.

Entity	Activity	Verified 2020 Emissions (tCO ₂)	Share of Total
Ryanair DAC	Aircraft operator	4,165,343	23%
Aughinish Alumina	Alumina refinery	1,224,809	7%
Irish Cement Limited (Platin Works)	Cement manufacturer	1,012,063	6%
ESB Moneypoint Generating Station	Coal-fired power station	862,922	5%
Great Island Generating Station	CCGT power plant	798,519	4%
Whitegate Power Station	CCGT power plant	765,553	4%
Dublin Bay Power Plant	CCGT power plant	742,726	4%
Scotchtown Cement Works	Cement manufacturer	742,599	4%
Tynagh 400MW CCGP	CCGT power plant	675,450	4%
Aghada CCGT	CCGT power plant	675,188	4%
Huntstown Power Station	CCGT power plant	657,649	4%
Irish Cement Limited (Limerick Works)	Cement manufacturer	576,681	3%
ESB Poolbeg Generating Station (CCGT)	CCGT power plant	543,271	3%
CCGT HPC2 (Huntstown Power Phase II)	CCGT power plant	537,790	3%
ESB West Offaly	Peat-fired power station	412,725	2%
Breedon Cement Ireland Limited	Cement manufacturer	352,627	2%
ESB Lough Ree Power	Peat-fired power station	309,095	2%
Irving Oil Whitegate Refinery Limited	Oil refinery	300,762	2%
Edenderry Power Plant	Peat/biomass-fired power	292,674	2%
Aer Lingus Limited AOHA	Aircraft operator	213,783	1%
Tarbert Generating Station	Oil-fired power station	194,511	1%

Table 1 Top 2020 carbon emitters reported to Ireland under the EU-ETS.

part, due to a major increase in the contribution of zero-carbon renewable energy (mainly wind) to Ireland's electricity supply, up from 7% in 2005 to 33% of all electricity in 2018. However, while coal and peat generated only 14% of electricity in 2018, they were responsible for 40% of the CO₂ associated emissions. Natural gas generated 52% of the electricity in 2018 and was responsible for 57% of CO₂ emissions. Under the 2021 Climate Action Plan, the Irish Government has set a target to increase the electricity supply from renewable sources to 80% by 2030 and to phase out peat and coal-fired plants (DECC, 2021a).

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) sets an absolute limit on the total annual emissions of certain greenhouse gases by any significant company or body within the EU, and this annual allowable emissions limit is reduced over time. It is noteworthy that the price of tradable EU carbon permits under this scheme has almost trebled over the course of 2021 (Figure 2). Entities covered by the system include large industries, electricity generators and the aviation industry. Greenhouse gas emissions outside these emitters are referred to as non-ETS emissions and are managed at member state level under the Effort Sharing Regulation. Non-ETS emissions include those associated with road

transport, residential heating and cooling, small businesses, agriculture, waste etc. Characterized in this way, the biggest source of emissions in Ireland is from the combustion of fossil fuels in the non-ETS sector (i.e., homes and cars) which amounted to 38% of total greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 (SEAI, 2020). In comparison, agriculture was responsible for 34% and companies in the ETS were responsible for 25% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 (SEAI, 2020). Ireland is relatively unusual in that CO₂ emissions from households is higher than from industry because (1) Ireland does not have as much heavy industry such as steel or fertilizer manufacture compared to other countries, and (2) there is a greater use of carbon intensive fuels such as coal, peat and oil in Irish homes compared to other EU countries (SEAI, 2020).

Table 1 shows the most significant entities in terms of 2020 carbon emissions reported to Ireland under the EU-ETS. The major point source emitters in Ireland include power generation plants, cement and lime production plants and oil refineries (Figure 3), but the list also includes other sectors such as food and drink, pharmaceuticals and semi-conductors. Note that some mobile sources such as large aircraft are now included in the ETS; aviation emissions assigned to Ireland relate mainly to incoming and outgoing flights but also to flights anywhere within

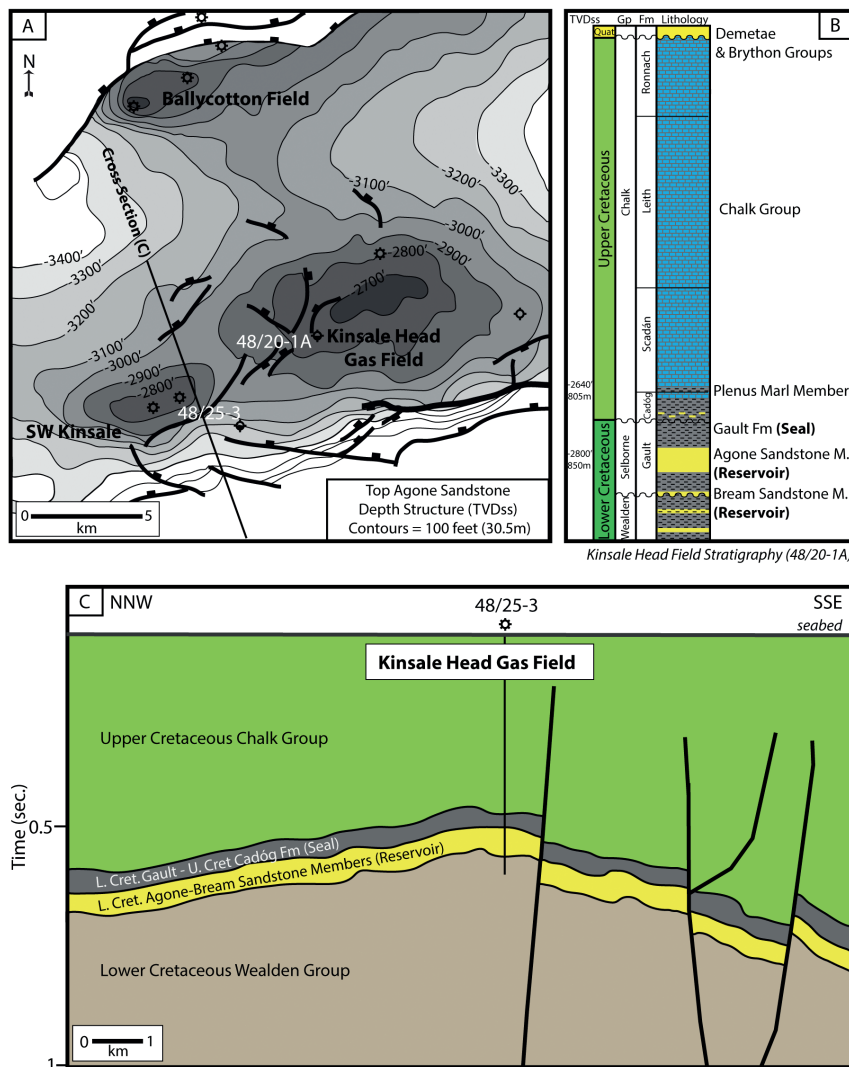
the European Economic Area (EEA) where the Irish Aviation Authority has issued the operating licence to the aircraft carrier.

Under the 2021 Climate Action Plan, the Irish Government has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and it has also set a target of reaching 80% of annual electricity production from mainly wind and solar by 2030 (DECC, 2021a). However, in spite of having a large percentage of its electricity needs met by intermittent renewable generation, Ireland is still expected to require low-carbon dispatchable power generation as back-up when there is not any renewable generation available (GNI, 2018, 2019; DECC, 2021b). Emerging energy storage solutions may reduce this dependence in future (Olabi, 2017; Olabi & Abdelkareem, 2021).

The Irish Academy of Engineering (IAE) has stated that significant gas-fired generation capability and a secure gas supply will be critical for the next two decades in order for Ireland to maintain power system reliability standards while phasing out power generation from high-carbon sources such as coal, oil and peat generation (IAE, 2021a). Gas supply in Ireland currently comes from domestic production at the Corrib field, located offshore the west coast of Ireland, and also from pipeline imports via Great Britain. Gas production in Corrib has reduced by circa 50% over the past four years due to natural decline; Corrib is

anticipated to supply only 15% of Ireland’s annual demand by 2025. In the absence of (1) a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility, (2) any gas storage facilities or (3) new commercial gas discoveries in the Irish offshore, Ireland will become totally dependent on imports from Great Britain by 2030 (IAE, 2021a). In the near-term, there are also concerns about a potential shortfall of electricity supply in Ireland over the next five winters (EirGrid, 2021; Department of the Taoiseach, 2021). Discussions are now ongoing about delaying the planned closures of some older, more carbon-intensive generators (e.g., the Tarbert oil-fired power station was scheduled to shut in 2023 and the Moneypoint coal-fired power station was scheduled to close in 2025) until replacement capacity is operational (CRU, 2021). These concerns about electricity supply raise a question mark about Ireland’s ability to meet the additional demand to power the 950,000 electric vehicles and 400,000 electrical heat pumps by 2030, as proposed in the 2019 Climate Action Plan, while simultaneously closing over 1550MW of coal, oil and peat/biomass-fired power stations (IAE, 2021b).

The European Commission issued the CCS Directive in 2009 (Directive 2009/31/EC) that lays out a legal framework for the environmentally safe geological storage of CO₂. Ireland opted out of implementing the Directive in 2011, stating it



would await development and progress of the technology within the other EU Member States, and keep the topic under active review (Statutory Instrument No. 575/2011). The Irish government published a National Mitigation Plan in 2017 and recognised that ‘CCS could facilitate decarbonisation of our electricity sector while allowing an appropriate level of gas-fired generation to balance intermittent renewable generation’ (DCCAE, 2017). The government set up a CCS Steering Group as one of the actions following the 2019 Climate Action Plan with the objective to assess the potential future application of CCS in Ireland (DCCAE, 2019). The updated 2021 Climate Action Plan has strengthened this view, stating that the deployment of CCS in the industrial sector is one of the measures that may be required to achieve the 2030 target of a 51% reduction in emissions, and a policy framework and roadmap for CCS deployment are under development (DECC, 2021a).

EirGrid, the operator of the Irish electricity transmission system, modelled three different scenarios for Ireland’s clean energy transition over the next 20 years; two of the three modelled scenarios assumed the utilisation of CCS as a decarbonising technology on new CCGT (combined cycle gas turbine) power plants, becoming operational in 2031 and 2040, while the third ‘Delayed Transition’ scenario did not meet any of the government’s targets and did not assume the deployment of CCS (EirGrid, 2019). A combination of wind, solar and gas-powered electricity with CCS could provide Ireland with secure and reliable electricity with very low emissions. It is noted, however, that carbon capture at power plants may become less economically attractive over time due to the projected decline of the generating station capacity factors, as the penetration of renewable electricity is further increased. CCS could also potentially be utilised to decarbonise other industries in Ireland such as cement manufacturing, oil refining and incineration (GNI, 2018, 2019, 2020). The 2022 National Heat Study presented four different scenarios that align with a future pathway to net zero by 2050 and estimated that carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) could abate between 2.7 MtCO₂ and 16.9 MtCO₂ per year by 2050, depending on the scale and focus of deployment (SEAI, 2022). The 2021 Climate Action Plan states that the retrofit of carbon capture on two out of four Irish cement/lime plants by 2030 could deliver further abatement of emissions by 1.5 MtCO₂eq per year (DECC, 2021a). The government plans to undertake a programme of work to identify two potential sites in the country that represent the best CCS opportunities for future deployment. It is noted that cement manufacturing is currently responsible for four of the most significant point source emitters in Ireland (Table 1). Finally, viable geological storage options are also needed if negative emissions technologies (NETs) such as BECCS or direct air capture with carbon storage (DACCS) are to be deployed in Ireland in future as a means to compensate for residual emissions in hard-to-abate sectors, or to correct an overshoot of the national CO₂ quota under the Paris Agreement (McMullin et al., 2020).

CCS opportunities in Ireland

A number of scoping assessments have been carried out regarding the potential for geological storage of CO₂ in

Ireland (Bentham et al., 2008; SEAI, 2008; Lewis et al., 2009; Farrelly et al., 2010; Bentham et al., 2014; Vincent et al., 2014; Bentham, 2015). Lewis et al. (2009) presented an initial assessment of potential geological storage sites for all of Ireland, in areas where sufficient data were available at that time. Lewis et al. (2009) concluded that the greatest potential exists offshore in saline aquifers (i.e., a total theoretical CO₂ storage capacity of 88.8 Gt in saline aquifers that were assessed) but that the most accessible geological storage is in depleted gas fields such as the Kinsale Head gas field. Herein, we provide a short summary of the storage potential in the depleted Kinsale Head gas field and in the currently producing Corrib gas field. Note that the true volumetric potential for geological storage in offshore Ireland will be much higher when additional areas beyond the immediate fields are included (i.e., other geological structures or widespread saline aquifers in general).

The methodology used here to calculate a preliminary estimate of the carbon storage potential follows that of Bachu and Shaw (2003), Lewis et al. (2009) and Ringrose (2020) for depleted gas fields. The mass of CO₂ that could utilise pore space previously occupied by the recoverable reserves of natural gas is given by:

$$m_{CO_2} = \left(\frac{V_{GAS}(sc)}{FVF} \right) \rho_{CO_2} \quad (1)$$

where m_{CO_2} = CO₂ storage capacity (Mt = 10⁶ tonnes), sc = standard conditions for temperature and pressure, $V_{GAS}(sc)$ = volume of ultimately recoverable gas at sc (Bcm = 10⁹ m³), FVF = gas formation volume factor (from reservoir conditions to sc), ρ_{CO_2} = density of CO₂ at reservoir conditions (kg/m³). The value calculated in equation (1) should be discounted to allow for factors that could reduce the amount of pore space available for CO₂ such as water invasion during and after gas production. In the absence of detailed reservoir simulations, a value of 0.9 is assumed for gas fields with depletion drive and a value of 0.65 is assumed for gas fields with water drive (Lewis et al., 2009).

Kinsale Head gas field

The Kinsale Head gas field is a depleted natural gas field located 50 km off the coast of County Cork in the North Celtic Sea Basin, a NE-SW-trending basin situated off the south coast of Ireland. The field was discovered in 1971 and commenced production in 1978. The primary reservoirs in the Kinsale Head field are Early Cretaceous in age. The shallow-marine Agone Sandstone Member reservoir (‘A’ Sand in older literature) within the Selbourne Group is sealed by the overlying Gault Formation claystone, while the underlying Bream Sandstone Member and fluvio-deltaic upper Wealden Group (‘B’ Sand in older literature) reservoirs are separated from the Agone Sandstone Member by a ~15m claystone section (Taber et al., 1995; Lewis et al., 2009; Shannon et al., 2021). The trapping mechanism for the Kinsale Head field is a relatively simple structural trap formed during Tertiary inversion (Figure 4). Some key parameters for the field

are presented in Table 2. A cumulative volume of 1.77 Tcf (50.1 Bcm) of natural gas was produced from the Kinsale Head gas field (Kinsale Energy, 2018) and production ceased in 2020 after a period of 42 years. The field is currently in the process of being decommissioned.

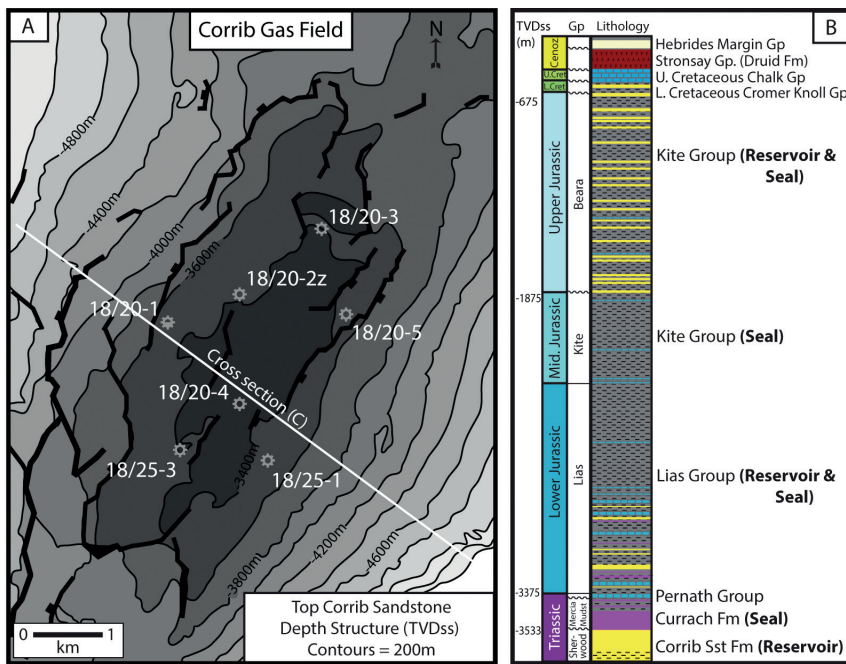
The Kinsale Head gas field may represent an attractive target for CCS because the overall capacity and injectivity appears to be satisfactory based on historical gas production performance (Lewis et al., 2009). Lewis et al. (2009) also flagged that the field is relatively shallow and, hence, containment risks, such as those related to existing wells, crestal faulting on the field and the possibility of modification of the caprock during pressure

depletion, need to be evaluated. Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) and Ervia are currently working on a feasibility study to assess the potential for a large-scale CCS development at the Kinsale Head gas field which could capture CO₂ from an industrial cluster in Cork including heavy industry (oil refinery) and two gas-fired CCGT power plants (GNI, 2019, 2020). It is noted that one small compartment of the Kinsale Head complex, the SW Kinsale gas field (O’Sullivan, 2001), was utilised for natural gas storage between 2001 and 2017; in effect proving the concept that gas can be reinjected into this reservoir which acts as a sealed container. We provisionally estimate a CO₂ storage capacity of 321 Mt for the Kinsale Head gas field (see Table 2 for details),

	Kinsale Head		Corrib
	Agone Sandstone	Bream Sst / Wealden Grp	
Water depth (m)	90 ¹	90 ¹	350 ⁶
Depth to top reservoir (m TVDss)	838 ^{1,2}	905 ^{1,2}	3300 ⁶
Depth to top reservoir (m bml)	748	815	2950
Gas-water contact (m TVDss)	902 ^{1,2}	966 ^{1,2}	3601 ⁶
Area (km ²)	109 ³	109 ³	15 ⁷ (gas field)
Vertical structural closure (m)	91 ³	91 ³	560 ⁸ (310m gas)
Caprock lithology	Mudstone	Mudstone	Halite
Caprock thickness (m)	45 ³	15 ³	78-777 ⁶
Gross sand thickness (m)	38 ^{1,2}	-	381+ ⁶
Net-to-gross (%)	82 ^{1,2}	7m sand ^{1,2}	72 ⁶
Average porosity (%)	20 ^{1,2}	22 ^{1,2}	8.5 ⁶
Average permeability (mD)	420 ^{1,2}	280 ^{1,2}	15.2 ⁶
Sw (%)	24.6 ^{1,2}	29.9 ^{1,2}	-
Formation water salinity (g/l)	-	92 ⁴	326 ⁹
Formation water density (g/cm ³)	-	1.06	1.24
Reservoir temperature (°C)	29.4 ^{1,2}	32.2 ^{1,2}	~112 ¹⁰
Initial reservoir pressure (MPa)	9.2 ¹ (1336.8 psia)	-	~40.7 ¹¹ (~5900 psia)
Pressure gradient (kPa/m)	~10 (hydrostatic)	-	~11 (slight overpressure)
Gas composition	C ₁ > 99% ²		C ₁ 94%, C ₂ 3%, N ₂ 3% ⁶
Formation volume factor - Gas	101		272
Original gas-in-place (Bcm)	52.1 ⁵ (1.84 Tcf)		34.0 ⁶ (1.2 Tcf)
Recoverable gas (Bcm)	50.1 ⁵ (1.77 Tcf)		24.6 ⁶ (870 Bcf)
Carbon Storage Potential			
CO ₂ density at reservoir condition (kg/m ³)	720		740
Assumed discount factor	0.90		0.65
CO ₂ storage capacity (Mt = 10 ⁶ tonnes)	321		44

Table 2 Representative Properties for Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields.

Sources: ¹ CSA Group (2008), ² Colley et al. (1981), ³ Taber et al. (1995), ⁴ Core Laboratories (1978), ⁵ Kinsale Energy (2018), ⁶ Dancer et al. (2005), ⁷ Enterprise Energy Ireland Ltd (2001), ⁸ Corcoran and Mecklenburgh (2005), ⁹ Expro (2001), ¹⁰ Schmid et al. (2004), ¹¹ Corcoran and Doré (2002).



Corrib Field Stratigraphy (18/20-1)

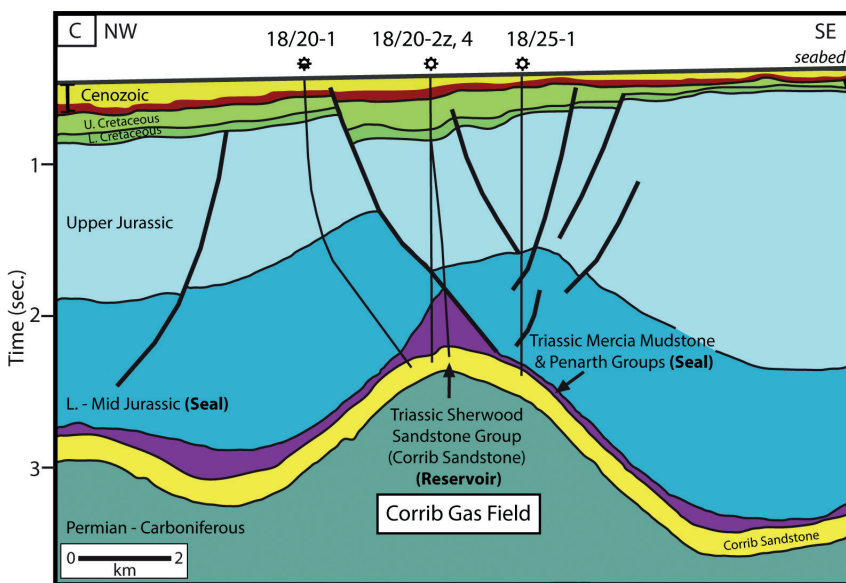


Figure 5 (A) Corrib gas field depth structure map of top reservoir (Corrib Sandstone Formation) illustrating the NE-SW trending anticline. Well symbols indicate bottom hole locations. Cross section location indicated. Modified from Dancer et al. (1995). (B) General stratigraphy of the Corrib structure, based on well 18/20-1. The main reservoir is the Corrib Sandstone, sealed by the Currach Formation, containing the Uilleann Halite Member. The thickness of the sealing Uilleann Halite Member thickens towards the crest of the anticline. Adapted from Merlin Energy Resources Consortium (2020). (C) Schematic cross section of the Corrib gas field. Triassic Corrib sandstone formation (Sherwood Sandstone Group) is sealed by the Mercia Mudstone Group, containing the Currach Formation and Uilleann Halite Member. Modified from Dancer et al. (1995) and from O’Sullivan and Childs (2021). TVDss = True Vertical Depth subsea; Gp. = Group; Fm. = Formation; U. = Upper; L. = Lower; sec. = seconds.

which is within a few percent of the previous estimate of 330.9 Mt by Lewis et al. (2009). Lewis et al. (2009) estimated a CO₂ storage capacity of 5 Mt for the SW Kinsale gas field. In 2020, the top 10 point-source emitters in Ireland were responsible for ~ 8 Mt of CO₂ emissions (Table 1); to provide a sense of scale, the depleted Kinsale Head gas field could have sufficient storage to take the equivalent of up to 40 years of emissions from these 10 point-source emitters.

Corrib gas field

The currently producing Corrib natural gas field is located around 80 km off the coast of County Mayo in the Slyne Basin, a narrow Triassic/Jurassic half-graben that forms part of a series of structurally linked basins along the west coast of Ireland and Great Britain. The field was discovered in 1996, more than 3 km beneath the seafloor, and production commenced in 2015. The

reservoir is contained within the Triassic fluvial Corrib Sandstone Formation (Sherwood Sandstone Group) and is sealed by the Triassic Uilleann Halite Member of the Currach Formation (Mercia Mudstone Group) (Dancer et al., 2005; Shannon et al., 2021). The trapping mechanism for the Corrib field is an anticlinal structure but with complex faulting in the overburden that is sealed from the reservoir by the Uilleann Halite Member (Figure 5). It is noteworthy that the Corrib structure is underfilled with natural gas – i.e., the gas Free-Water-Level (FWL) is at -3600m TVDss (True Vertical Depth subsea) and the structural spill-point is deeper at -3850m TVDss (Corcoran and Meckleburgh, 2005). It is not clear if the underfilling is due to an unidentified leak-point in the trap or due to limited charge volumes. Some key parameters for the field are presented in Table 2. The estimated recoverable gas reserves for the field is 0.87 Tcf or 24.6 Bcm (Dancer et al., 2005).

The gas from Corrib is produced via a subsea facility and an 83 km pipeline, and ultimately brought to shore at the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal. As noted above, the production of the field has passed peak production and is currently in decline. The field life has been estimated to last 15-20 years (Enterprise Energy Ireland Ltd, 2001), which could mean the cessation of production as early as 2031 (IOOA, 2019). Unless additional gas discoveries are made in this area in the coming years that can tie-in to these facilities, the depleted Corrib field may also become a potential candidate for CCS or hydrogen storage in circa 10 years' time. Utilising the same methodology as Lewis et al. (2009), we estimate a CO₂ storage capacity of 44 Mt for the Corrib gas field (see Table 2 for details). It must be noted, however, that (1) if the observed underfilling of the Corrib structure with natural gas was due to source-rock charge limitations, the size of the overall sealed structural trap and hence the potential storage volume will be significantly larger than the estimate based on recoverable gas volumes alone, and (2) if the Uilleann Halite Member extends well beyond the limits of the Corrib structure, the Triassic Sherwood Sandstone of the Slyne Basin could become a valid deep saline aquifer target for CO₂ storage. These factors require further detailed assessment.

Conclusion

In Ireland, CCS with gas-powered electricity could be used to back up and support intermittent generation from wind and solar to provide secure and reliable low-emissions electricity. Additionally, CCS could be utilised in Ireland to reduce emissions associated with cement manufacturing and could also facilitate future deployment of negative emissions technologies such as BECCS and DACCS. Ireland has significant potential to store CO₂ in geological formations in its offshore sedimentary basins. Two front-running candidates are the Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields; both structures are already covered by a wealth of geological and engineering data to provide a firm basis for assessing the CCS potential. Provisional estimates for the CO₂ storage capacity of the Kinsale Head gas field and the Corrib gas field are 321 Mt and 44 Mt respectively. Production ceased at the Kinsale Head gas field in 2020 and the field is currently being decommissioned. Natural gas production at the Corrib field is expected to continue for another 10-15 years. Based on our preliminary estimates, the depleted Kinsale Head gas field could have sufficient storage capacity to take the equivalent of up to 40 years of CO₂ emissions from the top 10 point-source emitters in Ireland as of 2020. Additional potential exists in the Corrib structure and in the saline aquifers surrounding these fields and beyond, due to favourable geology. It is noted that no detailed characterisation and assessment of the storage potential of the Kinsale Head and Corrib gas fields, as per Annex 1 of Directive 2009/31/EC, has been carried out to date. Further work is needed to fully characterise and mature this potential, and in the case of the Slyne Basin, well in advance of the Corrib gas field reaching the end of its production life when all the infrastructure could be removed, and the economic advantage is lost.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge Ireland's Department of Environment, Climate and Communications for provision of

data, and John Walsh (UCD) and iCRAG (SFI Research Centre in Applied Geosciences) for their support. They would also like to thank Frank McGovern (EPA Ireland), John Conroy (Vermilion Energy), Gearóid FitzGerald (Ervia) and Gerry Duggan (Irish Academy of Engineering) for feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript, and the reviewers for their constructive comments.

Nomenclature

Bcm = billion cubic metres (standard)

FVF = gas formation volume factor (from reservoir conditions to sc)

ktCO₂ = thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide

m_{CO₂} = CO₂ storage capacity (Mt)

Mt = million tonnes

MtCO₂ = million tonnes of carbon dioxide

MtCO₂eq = million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent

MW = megawatt

ρ_{CO₂} = density of CO₂ at reservoir conditions (kg/m³)

sc = standard conditions for temperature and pressure

Tcf = trillion cubic feet

tCO₂ = tonnes of carbon dioxide

TVD_{ss} = True Vertical Depth subsea

V_{GAS} (sc) = volume of ultimately recoverable gas at sc (Bcm)

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