



# ENERGY TRANSITION SKILLS INTERACTIVE PATHWAY FINAL REPORT

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### INTRODUCTION

Established in June 2021, the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) is a collaborative initiative between the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College (referred to collectively in this report as the NESA institutions), supported by partners Skills Development Scotland and Energy Transition Zone Ltd. NESA works with businesses and training organisations with the aim to create a more flexible and resilient workforce for the energy sector.

As low-carbon energy industries gather pace, the energy transition has potential to make huge positive impacts to the North East and Moray economy and communities. RGU's [Making the Switch](#) report predicts the North East's offshore energy sector could support up to 54,000 jobs by 2030 – an increase on the 45,000 employed today. The report identifies skills and capabilities development as a key factor in establishing the region as a Global Energy Hub and maximising the associated workforce opportunities. The UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review found that over 90% of the UK's oil and gas workforce have medium to high skills transferability, highlighting the importance of re- and up-skilling in providing sustainable, high-quality careers for existing energy industry workers.

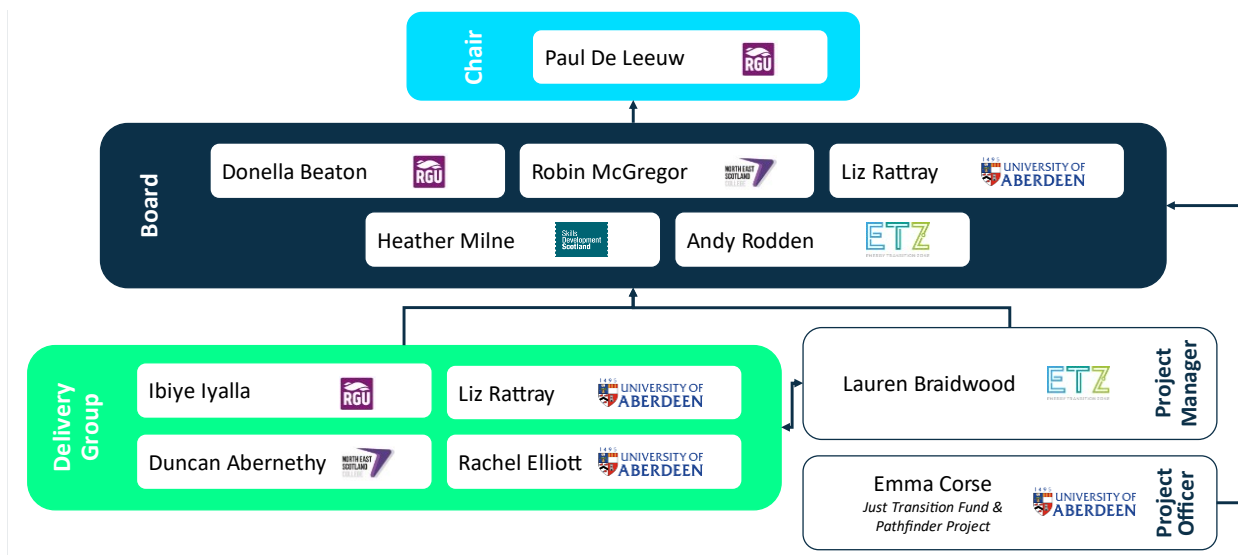
The NESA partners recognised that there were skills demands which would develop as a result of the energy transition. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Pathfinder project aimed to develop an interactive pathway tool for individuals to identify the qualifications that they would require for specific jobs in the energy sector and where they can undertake these qualifications in the North East of Scotland, thereby accelerating the pace of workforce development. Developing the pathway tool would also help to identify current skills development provision in the region and any current gaps. The project would demonstrate the advantages of collaboration by bringing together the region's leading academic institutions to develop a unique energy transition skills pathway. The pathway project aimed to clearly communicate to learners the routes available to enter into low carbon sectors and put in place clear routes through the education provision of the NESA institutions, which would demystify the often-confusing options, and offer a tailored route to qualification. The tool would also seek to help address some of the issues surrounding the communication of energy industry jobs and help address the negative connotations and perceived lack of attractiveness of entering an energy related career.

### NESA OVERVIEW

NESA had been formed prior to the submission bid to the SFC's Regional Pathfinder projects, and therefore the collaborative partnership across the three institutions was already in place, in addition to current collaboration already under way. There were clear governance structures established and operational that provided the solid base for NESA to commence its work on the Pathfinder project. Fig 1 demonstrates NESA's organisational and governance structure throughout the project.

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Figure 1: NESAs Organisation



The governance structure in place ensured that there was effective decision making, and no delays in progress, enabling the “permissions” for work to be undertaken. The Board oversaw and gave final approval, but the Delivery Group was delegated day to day responsibility, working closely with the dedicated Project Manager (PM), to progress each stage of the project. The PM ensured that there was a single point of contact for all aspects of the project – from industry liaison, MoU management, tendering and contracting, and working with the developer of the toolkit. This support ensured that the project was able to delivered effectively and efficiently without additional resource required from the institutions. The PM was the point of contact with the SFC Pathfinders team, maintaining communication and engagement with the SFC throughout the project. The PM ensured contact was maintained with the other Regional Pathfinder Project co-ordinators throughout the project period, enabling a regional oversight of the progress, challenges, and successes.

It should be noted that significant input was required from the Delivery Group members. The addition of dedicated Project Officer, seconded from one of the partner institutions, enabled additional support for the SFC project, and was a significant contribution to the efficiency of the project.

## PROJECT PROCESS AND OUTCOME

### TOOL DEVELOPMENT

To build the tool and provide additional video material to support the project, a tender process was followed using Public Contracts Scotland. The contract was awarded to Signal Film. Work commenced in earnest in September 2023, and the final pilot tool was completed in March 2024, titled “Energy Career Pathways”.

In the original project bid, NESAs committed to detailing pathways for four low carbon energy jobs. To ensure the tool was as impactful as possible, NESAs wanted to ensure that the job roles selected aligned with the sector and employer needs. Utilising work being carried out by NESAs through a separate project award from the Just Transition Fund (JTF), NESAs was able to identify six high demand low carbon energy roles for inclusion in the



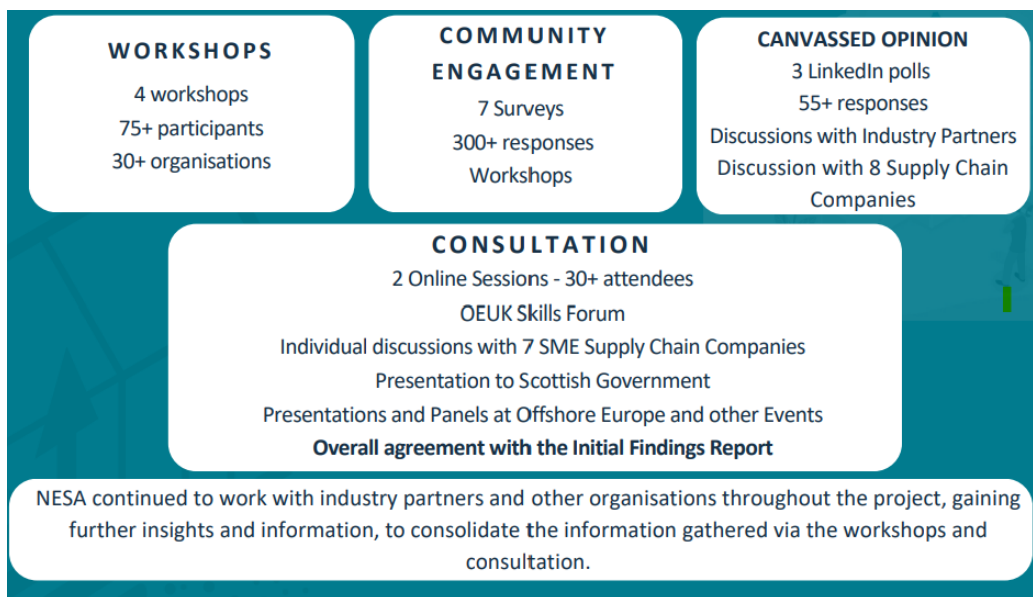
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interactive toolkit. Careful management of the budget enabled the addition of the two extra roles. These roles were selected using a scoring matrix. A long list of roles had been identified as outputs from the JTF workshops held with industry and formed the basis for the role inclusion.

### INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Prior to the Pathfinder project award, NESAs had already established a number of industry partnerships in the form of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). NESAs was able to capitalise on those industry links and leverage the knowledge and expertise of each of the partners to ensure appropriate employer engagement with this, and NESAs’s JTF project which ran simultaneously. The success of this work was seen with the JTF project workshops which are summarised below.

**Figure 2: Industry Engagement**



The workshops were held in person, with information on the objectives sent in advance to participants. Participants were asked to come prepared to contribute to small group work. A series of breakout groups were hosted following introductory sessions, each on set topics with set outcomes. Full group feedback was then facilitated by the host. The interactive nature of the sessions proved popular and there were stimulating and engaging conversations at each workshop. All workshop outputs were captured and are held by NESAs, available on request. To accommodate some smaller supply chain companies’ availability individual discussions were also held via Teams or in person, with a consistent set of questions used for each organisation. Surveys and polls were utilised to further support the work.

It should be noted that it took considerable time and effort to establish the industry engagement. However, this work has been beneficial and provided the basis for fruitful on-going industry relationships for NESAs. These relationships are leveraged on a daily basis to expand NESAs’s reach and impact.



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### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NESA carried out extensive community engagement throughout the autumn of 2023, which highlighted how vital it was to provide clear pathways for people at all stages of their educational and career journey. As a result, the scoring matrix for job selection took into consideration the pathway routes available, and ensured the roles selected provided a range of different access points and pathways across the NESA institutions. Beyond the obvious categories of school pupils considering their next steps, and the initial target demographic of supporting those seeking to upskill/re-skill to support the energy transition, NESAs work established that there were many other demographics requiring support around communication on educational pathways. This included those unemployed, disengaged with education, economically inactive and refugees/asylum seekers. It was vital to ensure the tool considered pathways into education for those distanced from the traditional routes, seeking to re-enter, or commence, further and higher education training for the first time, in an accessible way. The pathway tool had to ensure that appropriate information was included on modes of study, access, funding, third sector providers, and different types of provision (i.e. short course, full time programmes etc).

The data for the community engagement was gathered through surveys, interviews with third sector providers, youth group workshops and community group meeting. Again, this work was resource intensive, but the benefits were incredibly impactful and created lasting relationships for NESA.

### MEETING THE OUTCOMES OF THE PATHFINDERS

It was believed that the pilot tool met the Pathfinder aims, by providing simpler pathways for learners, in a visual and digestible manner. As a scaled-up version with additional jobs added, the reach could be far wider and help contribute to sustainable improved learner outcomes across Scotland, across the energy industry, and across all levels of learning from school, tertiary education, and up/reskilling. Equipped with knowledge and understanding of the learner routes available to them, learners could be enabled and more encouraged to engage with their options, which may give them the confidence to continue with education opportunities that can contribute to employment. By demonstrating a coherent approach to pathways, which is not specific to a single institution, the tool demonstrates collaboration and openness, which focuses on sustainability of provision to meet individuals and employer needs, rather than the sole purposes of an individual institution.

Whilst the tool is focused on the NESA institutions, and is place based to the North East of Scotland, its benefits have the possibility to impact a far wider audience. Learners from across Scotland can learn from the tool, which also includes information for learners from the Rest of UK and abroad, in mapping their qualifications to those cited in the tool. The general course information is transferable, and whilst the focus remains on the NESA institutions, individuals can apply the knowledge gained from the tool to other Scottish and UK institutions if they so wished.

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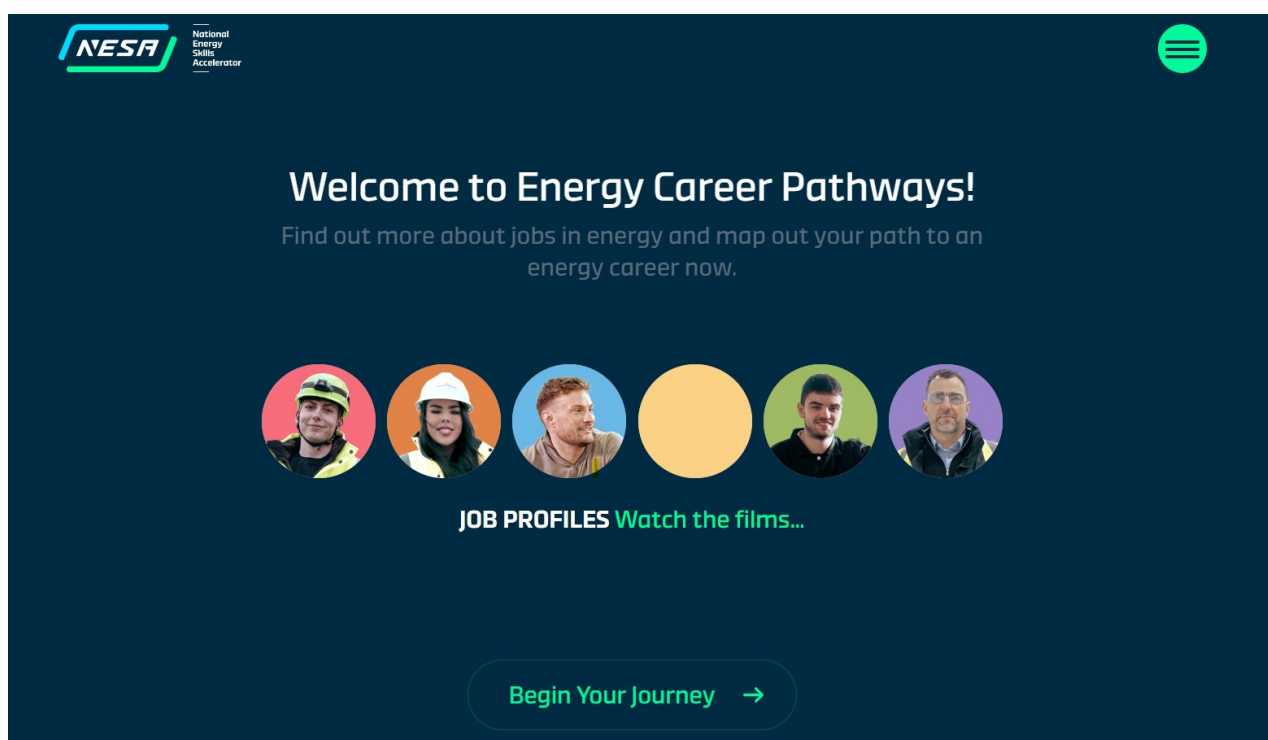
### PROJECT OUTCOMES

#### ENERGY CAREER PATHWAYS

In March 2024 the Energy Career Pathways website was launched. The website had three main areas:

- Career pathway tool for six low carbon energy roles
- Job profiles, with short overviews and videos about each of the six energy roles
- Additional information, covering FAQ’s, partner information, and upskilling information with relevant links to external sites.

Figure 3. Energy Career Pathways Homepage



*\*NOTE: at time of writing, one final video was still in development, hence the empty yellow circle.*

The pathways tool itself was a question-based process, taking users through a variety of steps and options, with results varying depending on their choices. At the end of the process a results page summarises the chosen pathway. There are also links to Skills Development Scotland’s My World of Work, to enable users to search for job vacancies and gain additional job information, including salaries.

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Figure 4. Energy Career Pathways Results Page

Here is your journey to becoming a Project Engineer





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There are options for users to “go back” or “restart” to view different pathways throughout the process, and also to print their results at the end. No user data is captured by utilising the print option.

At various points throughout the process users are directed either to the FAQ’s or external sites, to ensure they are able to access all the information required to help inform them to choose their pathway. This includes information regarding apprenticeships, articulation, widening access, funding and more.

### FEEDBACK

NESA undertook a series of feedback engagement sessions across the partner institutions, MoU partners, and formal and informal partnerships. These included engagement through DYW with local secondary schools, meeting with SSERC, OPITO and ECITB. Sessions were held in person, via Teams, and as drop-in sessions. These sessions were held using an intermediate version of the toolkit, enabling feedback and comments to be incorporated into the final version.

Overall, the feedback received was incredibly positive. Comments included:

- Visually appealing and easy to navigate – it was simple, but not overly simplified
- It was new and unlike other information sources available
- The videos were relatable
- The contextual information included was important and useful

The negative feedback received was regarding the fact that the tool only held six jobs. Despite only being a pilot, this was a clear barrier to users. The main concern was that those engaging with the site would be reluctant to revisit and re-use the site in the future if a job they were not interested in was not there. This may affect future use. With this in mind, to protect the future success of the tool, there will be a soft launch to celebrate the completion of the project amongst the partners. A wider launch will be planned if further funding is secured, and additional jobs added to give a more complete picture of energy industry roles.

Younger users also commented that the tool is not available as a dedicated smart phone application, however it is accessible on phones and table devices. Future enhancements could include app development, but priority will be given to increasing the number of job roles.

Further feedback can also be gathered via the website itself. There is a link to the NESA website and feedback form, which is available on every screen of the website.

### PROJECT SUCCESS

The completion of a working tool on a visually appealing and easy to use website, is the success of the project. Significant work was required to map various pathways into different jobs, and the complexity of mapping to a digital interface was substantial. The work to enable this required significant communication and work between the NESA Delivery Group, PM, Project Officer, and the team at Signal. This process and ultimate output, with a tool that could be transferred across other subject matters is one of the most significant success stories of the project and is cause for celebration.

With regards measuring the success of the toolkit, Google analytics have been embedded within the site, and are linked to the “users” of the site. This data will be captured to provide insight into the number of people engaging with the site, and who these people are – for example, school pupils, teachers, those in employment etc. These categories are shown at the start of the tool and in Fig 5 below.



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Fig.5 NESFA Energy Careers Pathways Users

**01 Who are you?**  
*Please select one option from the below*

School Pupil	College Student	University Student
Currently In Work	Looking for a Job	Teacher / Educator
	Parent / Advisor	

The analysis of the users will contribute to any future development of the tool.

Qualitatively, the positive feedback and interest in supporting the project moving forward, from industry and education partners, is indicative of the success of the tool.

## FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

In order to ensure the successful pilot continues into a sustainable tool that can be utilised across the education sector and in industry, additional funding will need to be secured to enable the additional development to the site. This development could include:

- Additional job roles
- Categories of job families
- Highlighting transferability and links between jobs with similar qualification requirements within and across “Energy”
- Additional videos

In order to facilitate this NESFA will activity seek suitable funding bids and partner support through sponsorship to develop the tool further.

These developments would further facilitate the communication to learners of the routes available to enter the energy industry, put in place clear routes through the education provision of the partners, demystify the often-confusing options, and offer a tailored route to qualification.



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### CONCLUSIONS

#### LEARNING POINTS

##### DATA

As highlighted in the October Regional Delivery Board report, in terms of enhancing data sharing, and access to data, it was identified that it may be beneficial to consider “Cross-Pathfinder Data Sharing” Agreements, to include a standardised set of reporting, access to data, and use of data. When considering this, it would be beneficial to consider where responsibility would lie for collating, aggregating, and preparing the data for dissemination. Given restrictions on the access to data, and limits on publicly available data, this may need to come from the SFC.

It would be important to ensure that the use of the data is discussed and agreed, across institutions to ensure data is not inadvertently used for comparison purposes. Aggregation of data to a regional level may be most appropriate, especially for publication purposes.

##### SFC ENGAGEMENT

The engagement and support received by SFC, and in particular Linda McLeod and Mairi Mitchell, throughout the project has been excellent, and the contributions added to the success and positive overall outcomes of the project. The SFC team regularly joined Delivery Group and project catch-up meetings, as well as attending workshops run by NESAs in relation to this project and the Just Transition Fund. SFC have been available and easily contactable for advice and information throughout the process, and provided data support when requested.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

NESAs existing governance was one enabler to the success of the project, alongside the dedicated Project Management support which provided the single point of contact across institutions. Formal structures that put these processes in place are valuable to ensuring projects success and facilitating collaboration. It is felt the NESAs structure could be replicated in other industry/academic areas, and indeed in other regions.

Sustainable funding is required to ensure future success of related projects and to continue the work that can be achieved through regional collaborations.

#### FINAL REMARKS

In conclusion, NESAs is confident that the Energy Careers Pathways project has been a success. NESAs is proud to be able to demonstrate in a tangible and demonstrable manner, the success of its regional collaboration of tertiary education providers. As a result, NESAs has demonstrated its ability to deliver skills programmes that support the regional economic requirements of the North East of Scotland, whilst responding to critical barriers to growth in the energy sector – around communication and education of pathways and careers.