



A level playing field for the ramp up of EU offshore wind energy

The Offshore Wind Foundations Alliance (OWFA) supports the European Commission's goal of ramping up offshore wind energy to meet the European Green Deal's climate objectives. To ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the European offshore wind supply chain, OWFA calls for a level playing field leveraging the first-class sustainability, durability and health & safety delivered by European producers of offshore wind foundations.

OWFA calls on EU policymakers to invest in the future of offshore wind energy and to ensure fair competition in the offshore wind foundations market by:

- Setting minimum environmental and health & safety criteria for offshore wind foundations;
- Ensuring that EU and public funds and contracts are awarded to foundation manufacturers who apply certifications following the highest environmental and health & safety criteria;
- Ensuring that the European offshore wind foundations industry has a decisive say in standard-setting and certification processes.

Harnessing the potential of offshore wind to achieve climate neutrality and create jobs

A shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy is at the core of the European Green Deal's objective to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Undoubtedly, offshore wind will play a significant role in this transition but only if it is rapidly scaled up. OWFA shares the EU's goal of reaching at least 60 GW of installed capacity of offshore wind by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050ⁱ, which means multiplying the EU's current offshore wind capacity by nearly 30 times by 2050.

The expansion of offshore wind energy will also contribute to the EU's economy by creating more qualified jobs. The number of jobs in the European offshore wind sector is currently 77.000 (38.000 direct and 39.000 indirect jobs)ⁱⁱ, and it is expected to increase to 200.000 by 2030ⁱⁱⁱ.

Encouraging the sustainable competitiveness of offshore wind foundations

For the EU's goals to become a reality, there is a need for a strong European supply chain underpinning increasingly high offshore wind installation rates. An EU level playing field for the EU offshore wind energy market is required to incentivise European manufacturers to scale up the production of foundations following strict sustainability criteria as opposed to third-country competitors.

The EU should ensure that only the most sustainable offshore wind foundations are placed on the EU market, or at least that projects benefiting from public support schemes meet minimum sustainability criteria. The current approach, based on price criteria, does not incentivise companies to invest in sustainability and apply the highest environmental and health & safety criteria as these efforts would come at a higher cost.



In addition, we advocate for EU tenders that include environmental and health & safety aspects in their selection and/or award criteria. In particular, **public tenders in the EU should include a CO₂ footprint criterion and a safety criterion based on companies' health & safety standards, so that the most sustainable foundations are also the most competitive on the EU market. The upcoming Sustainable Products Initiative (SPI) could meet these objectives by establishing minimum sustainability principles for steel products and mandatory requirements on their public procurement.**

Next to this, OWFA believes that the EU's greenhouse gas emissions reduction objective should avoid carbon leakage, which could harm EU companies and global climate ambitions. To this end, OWFA fully supports the carbon price for imports from third countries introduced by the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**. This price should apply to downstream products such as offshore wind foundations to avoid that carbon leakage shifts from raw materials to components. For a full level playing field, the carbon price should also cover indirect emissions and transportation emissions.

Fast-tracking the adoption of a fabrication standard specific for offshore wind foundations

For the European offshore wind foundations industry to sustain high installation rates, fabrication standards need to be fit for purpose. Currently, there is no harmonised European standard specific to offshore wind foundations. Designers and manufacturers must use the EN1090 (standard for steel structures), which is not valid for structures installed offshore. This leads to obstacles (differences in the interpretation of the fabrication rules, slower inspection, design, and fabrication processes, higher costs, etc.) which are harming the speed at which foundations are installed. **OWFA advocates for the fast adoption of a chapter specific to offshore wind foundations as part of the EN1090 by CEN-CENELEC. In this regard, the Commission's Standardisation Strategy represents an opportunity to improve and speed up the standard-setting process.**

About the [Offshore Wind Foundations Alliance](#) (OWFA)

OWFA is a coalition of five European companies producing offshore wind foundations: [CS WIND Offshore](#), [EEW Special Pipe Constructions GmbH](#), [SIF Netherlands BV](#), [Smulders Projects Belgium](#), and [Steelwind Nordenham GmbH](#). OWFA members manufacture different types of foundations such as monopiles and jackets, as well as transition pieces linking them to the wind tower. OWFA members have already produced more than 9,000 monopiles, jackets and transition pieces and are part of the European offshore wind sector that represents today 77,000 employees in Europe (and this number is expected to increase to 200.000 by 2030).

ⁱ European Commission, 2020, [Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy](#)

ⁱⁱ European Commission, 2021, [EU Blue Economy Report 2021](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ WindEurope, 2020, [Wind Energy and Economic Recovery in Europe](#)