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# 'New government must fully back UK offshore'

Senior UK offshore wind executives will tell the country's main political parties this week they must double down on backing for renewables to increase the pace of project delivery.

Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho and her Labour counterpart Ed Miliband are due to face the industry at Global Offshore Wind 2024 in Manchester just a fortnight out from a critical general election for the sector.

Both will hear demands from developers and the supply chain for policy stability but also a more ambitious and expansive approach to offshore wind.

The key ask will be that the next government increases the £800m AR6 Pot 3 budget in its first days in office ahead of the auction window, which is now likely to take place in August.

"Above all, our ask for a new government is to listen to industry and take our feedback on board," said RWE UK and Ireland development director Danielle Lane.

"According to Energy UK, unless we see an increase in the budget, AR6 is likely to procure less than half of the eligible projects in the pipeline." RenewableUK chief



**SCRUTINY: Ed Miliband and Claire Coutinho**



Photos: Keir Starmer/Flickr and Lauren Hurley/DESNZ

executive Dan McGrail will interview both Coutinho and Miliband at GOW, and said AR6 has the potential to attract up to £21bn in investment.

SSE Renewables Managing Director Stephen Wheeler, who will speak during the first industry panel on Tuesday, told reNEWS the AR6 reference prices must also be increased to give more bidding headroom.

Wheeler is to also call for a "mega-auction" in AR7 next year to procure over 10GW as well as a roadmap of future rounds and budgets, which will give developers, the supply chain and stakeholders a clear line of sight on how to prepare for a huge build out.

"This is key to the UK retaining that position as a leader otherwise it will be another false dawn," said the SSE man.

Meanwhile, developers

such as Orsted are to call for "the urgent need to address delays caused by grid and planning", according to the Danish developer's Ireland and UK head Duncan Clark.

He added: "We have seen a strong focus from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in recent years on how to support the UK supply chain. New policies that will both mandate and reward developers for using UK suppliers – especially in disadvantaged areas – can help to achieve this goal.

"But we will also need a greater level of coordination across government, particularly from the Department of Business and Trade and the Treasury, as well as from regional (authorities) if we are to fully grasp this opportunity."

**TRENDING ON**  
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**Offshore wind soars with 10.8GW 2023 tally**

Offshore wind recorded its second-best year for annual installed capacity in 2023 as key policy developments set the foundations for accelerated expansion over the next decade, according to a new GWEC report. [Click here](#)

**Xodus creates renewables engineering unit**

Global energy consultancy Xodus has created a dedicated renewables engineering arm to strengthen its capabilities in offshore markets. Evolv Energies has been formed to deliver a broader engineering service as developments ramp up. [Click here](#)

**Labour dismisses Energy Secretary's policy attack**

Labour has hit back at Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho's claims its energy policy would be "a spectacular act of economic self-harm". [Click here](#)

**Macquarie, Spring funds sell Race Bank stake**

Funds managed by Macquarie Asset Management and Spring Infrastructure Capital have reached an agreement to divest a 37.5% stake in the 573MW Race Bank offshore wind farm to Norges Bank Investment Management for approximately £330m. [Click here](#)

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## Our sponsor opens the GOW doors

As we navigate the constant challenges of developing world leading offshore wind projects, our sector must remain focused on powering up our offshore commitment, writes SSE Renewables managing director **Stephen Wheeler**.

Here in the UK, we're at an inflection point. While the UK currently accounts for over 40% of Europe's installed capacity, we're now facing growing competition from emerging global markets.

Offshore wind should be coming of age here – we're already operating the world's deepest sites and building the biggest projects. But the UK's ambition to deploy at scale and pace is at risk of stalling.

Action is needed to power change.

We must ensure the incoming UK government knows what it needs to do to make deployment meet ambitious 2030 targets.

First, we must urgently reform planning processes, cutting the time it takes to get consent for offshore renewables and electricity networks in half, at least. As the UK's clean energy champion, SSE is ready to power up our plans to deliver

our 4.1GW Berwick Bank project. However, we're now 18 months in the consenting process and we're still waiting on a decision.

Next, we must support all efforts to accelerate grid connections and investment in grid infrastructure.

And we should ensure future network planning continues to be undertaken on a whole system basis.

And then there's CfD reform. We need to look at all auction parameters, not just budget but reference prices, capacity factors, and delivery years.

I'm looking forward to this year's conference and discussing with colleagues how we can meet our one common goal – delivering world class projects to deploy the homegrown clean energy we need to drive down bills, accelerate domestic supply chain investment to create good jobs, and strengthen our energy security.



# Spatial plan 'crucial to future of offshore wind'

A strategic UK energy plan is urgently required to unlock the reforms required to fully unleash offshore wind, GOW 2024 will hear.

National Grid electricity transmission president Alice Delahunty will say a spatial blueprint that sets out where and how generation will be built and connected is critical.

Last year's seminal Winsor report called for the establishment of a Future System Operator, which would draw up a Strategic Spatial Energy Plan. The FSO will be called National Energy System Operator and is due to launch this summer.

Delahunty, who will speak during the first industry panel discussion on Day 1 in Manchester, told reNEWS ahead of the event a strategic vision will release the consenting reforms required for large-scale infrastructure.

She said a greater balance is required between local



**PLAN: Alice Delahunty** Photo: RUK

queue of projects looking to connect. There are different dynamics for each industry and for offshore wind grid access requires new overhead lines, which take time to get through the planning process.

However, Delahunty pointed out the great grid upgrade is underway with 17 projects in the works, driven in part by the Hollistic Network Design process that has mapped connection pathways for projects around the country.

The strategic plan will also send a signal to the supply chain and help address the skills gap, she said.

"There are simply not enough people coming through," she said, with demand likely there for hundreds of thousands of jobs. Delahunty added it is vital the pace and focus remains on the strategic plan during any period of change in government.

voices and the need for decarbonisation, which could be partly unlocked by a presumption in favour of net zero infrastructure in planning policy.

The strategic plan will also allow National Grid to undertake connections reform that goes "further and faster" as it will give guidance on generation types and locations.

Delahunty said the company has made "enormous" progress on connections reform but accepted there is "more to do" as it grapples with a "huge"

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# Calls to put Tier 2 contractors on map for dedicated support

Venterra Group chief executive Philippe Kavafyan will call for a higher focus and more dedicated support for Tier 2 contractors at tomorrow's opening day of GOW 2024 in Manchester.

He will tell a conference session on advancing the UK's supply chain how the enormous growth potential of lower turnover regional firms and subcontractors risks being overshadowed by high-level strategies and flagship funding schemes targeted at large manufacturers.

Kavafyan will argue in support of the recently launched sector-led Industrial Growth Plan and its aims to boost domestic manufacturing and plug supply chain gaps.

However, he will also provide examples from his own group of Venterra-owned subsidiaries that he warns could fall beneath the radar. They include equipment



**FOCUS CALL: Venterra boss Philippe Kavafyan** Photo: Venterra

specialist Cape Holland which has deployed its offshore vibro-piling technology as a new method to install XXL monopiles on Ocean Winds' 882MW Moray West wind farm off Scotland.

"I really like the IGP initiative and the continuous interaction there is around a structured approach, but it is a mistake to say helping build big factories will always benefit the Tier 2s," Kavafyan told reNEWS ahead of the two-day event.

"Seven out of nine companies in our group have

worked on Moray West, for example. We are not the big guys with the vessels but have the tools to make installation faster, safer and more efficient.

"We don't have a nacelle factory, but the activity is doubling in size, we are hiring people and are optimistic it will grow further. This is just as important to keep leadership and capability in the UK."

Kavafyan said Tier 2s need more access to funding that is currently "very Tier 1 focused" including the UK government's £1bn-plus GIGA fund that was due to launch later this month but is likely to be delayed until after the general election on 4 July.

He thinks there could also be more "strategic engagement" with foreign governments and trade missions to emerging markets to showcase UK expertise and "export our know-how and world-leading technology".

## UK 'must back research'

The UK must invest in late-stage research programmes to ensure the country can secure a "slice of the economic pie" from offshore wind, GOW 2024 will hear.

Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult technology director Tony Quinn believes "design for manufacture" initiatives, such as studies that ensure complete technology systems and sub-systems have undergone robust test regimes prior to deployment, are critical.

"The delivery of the higher volumes we are all hoping

to see can only be achieved by investment in 'design for manufacture' initiatives," said the ORE Catapult man who is due to speak during the first industry panel on Day 2.

"If we move quickly to resolve these challenges we provide the UK with the opportunity to secure a slice of the economic pie that offshore wind offers," he told reNEWS ahead of the event.

Such measures will help secure technology confidence, which to date has been solely expected from OEMs.

## 'Life extensions boost returns'

Developers are increasingly looking to extend the expected life of offshore wind farms to improve the overall rate of return on assets, according to experts.

DNV UK offshore wind energy systems director Stefanie Bourne said pressure is now coming on to ensure projects are in service for up to 45 years, instead of the more common 30.

The end-of-life issue will come under the microscope

at GOW 2024 with several speakers due to address the topic. DNV is RenewableUK's knowledge partner this week in Manchester.

"The motivation to extend the life of the assets is driven by revenue. If the assets can continue to generate returns in their extended lifetime period, considering the OPEX involved and the revenues accrued, then the overall rate of return increases for developers and investors," she said.

## SENSEWind demo 'game-changer' for floating offshore

SENSEWind chairman Julian Brown believes the company's plans to build a 6MW turbine in Scotland using its modular self-installing tower and self-erecting rotor nacelle assembly system as "a game-changer" for the offshore and floating wind sectors.

He told reNEWS the onshore prototype, slated for construction in 2027 at Muirhall Energy's Tormywheel wind farm, will "fundamentally change the rules" by demonstrating SENSEWind's new, modular tripod tower on a larger scale.

Brown said the demo will help move the SENSE installation and service system, which uses a remote-controlled machine 'carriage' working in combination with cranes during construction, from development into commercial service for onshore wind by 2027 and offshore by 2030.

Several sessions at GOW 2024 will address the topic of floating offshore wind O&M as the sector tries to establish a strategy for carrying out major component changes in-situ.



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# CfDs can cut cost of floating

Contract for Difference (CfD) revenue mechanisms or similar will be paramount for pushing competition and cost reductions within the floating offshore wind sector, but only if consistent and transparent, GOW 2024 will hear.

“We’ve seen this so clearly with fixed-bottom – CfD auctions really help drive down costs because it makes developers compete against one another for the lowest levelised cost of energy,” said Ioannis Papadopoulos, business manager for wind at classification society DNV.

He will be speaking at the ‘Going big and doing it right in floating offshore wind’ session in Manchester this week.

Papadopoulos added the process must be transparent and consistent going forward to provide developers and the supply chain with predictability.

“Clear policy direction will also be paramount to give the industry the confidence required. Fixed wind really took off once it was clear from the government what the plan was and how that could be achieved,” he added.

A CfD mechanism or equivalent provides low-carbon energy producers with revenue protection

Consistent and transparent process is crucial to driving competition in nascent sector, writes **Heidi Vella**

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from volatile wholesale prices. Developers that bid and win a CfD long-term contract with London for their scheme are guaranteed a pre-agreed payment level (the Strike Price) for the power generation.

For fixed-bottom wind, since the first CfD UK allocation round in 2015 the price for offshore wind has decreased by 69% (to £37.35 MW/h in 2022), while the average size of projects has increased by about 140%. This highlights the success and effectiveness of the CfD mechanism in reducing the cost of renewable energy, RenewableUK said.

However, to date few floating wind schemes have secured CfD contracts. In France, BayWa r.e. and Elicio recently won a deal for the up to 270MW Pennavel array off the coast of Brittany. The companies say it’s the first commercial floating wind farm in the

world to be awarded a long-term CfD. In 2022, Hexicon secured a 15-year contract from the UK government for the 32MW stepping stone project, TwinHub. The bids were won with strike prices of €86.45/MWh and €87.30/MWh, respectively.

Up to 2030 it is expected more floating wind projects will be awarded in CfD auctions, but the budget for the upcoming AR6 UK tender is “underwhelming”, according to innovation body ORE Catapult. As such only one of four eligible schemes is expected to win a deal.

The uncertainty and risk associated with floating wind greatly affects project business cases. Having a more generous CfD for earlier-stage sites could reduce some of this risk and promote collaboration between developers and supply chains, said Jonathan Bull, managing director

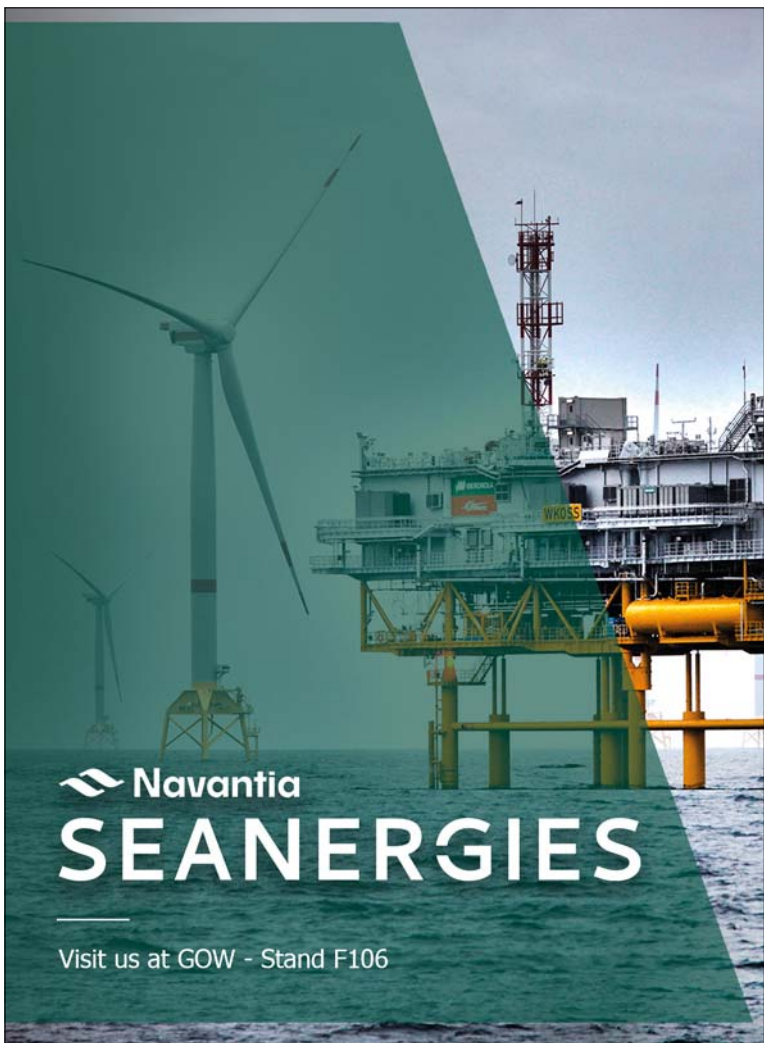
of offshore wind services group Venterra’s advisory and design service lines. Bull is delivering a presentation on ‘Floating offshore wind challenges and opportunities’ at GOW 2024

“To some extent it will help reduce the commercial pressures and share risk to help projects actually get in the water,” he said. Getting more and bigger projects operational is considered pivotal for driving learnings and cost reductions within the industry, but many have suffered delays in recent years.

To deliver the necessary innovation alongside these schemes, Bull added the government must also provide a parallel track of funding to support public and private collaborations for technology developments.

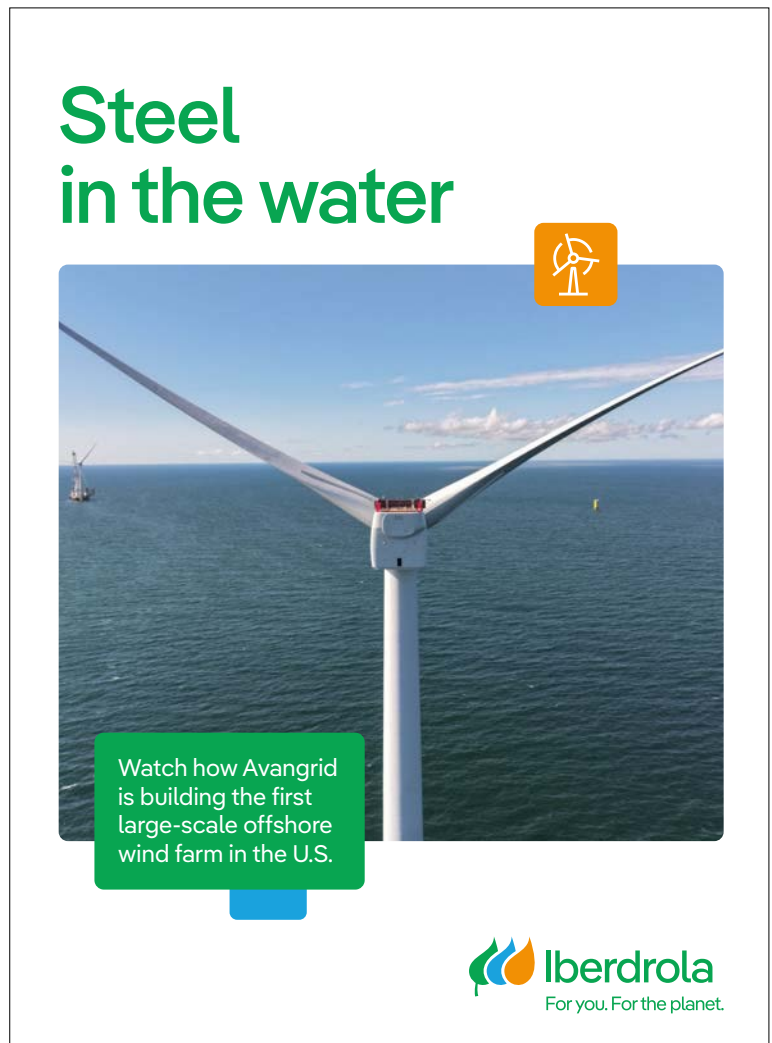
Collaboration and sharing must not be overlooked as a way to achieve cost reductions, agreed Papadopoulos.

Other levers for driving down the LCOE for floaters are design standardisation, including converging around a handful of foundation models and the capability to manufacture at scale, including building out ports. Using larger turbines is also expected to lower costs, said Papadopoulos. ■



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Lower energy bills, greater energy security and green economic growth are touchstone topics. We will know the result of the general election in just over a fortnight's time. In the meantime, we are reaching out across the political spectrum to highlight the actions outlined in our 2024 Manifesto which the next government can take forward to enable us to deliver the economic benefits of the energy transition to the full.

One of the key decisions which the new government will have to make within its first few weeks in office will be the final budget for this year's CfD auction (AR6). This has the potential to be one of the largest auction rounds ever, and could attract up to £21bn in investment in the UK, so we will be urging Ministers to maximise the amount of offshore wind capacity we

# London must put offshore at heart of energy system



Incoming government can boost the UK's economic growth by putting the country's wind sector front and centre, says RenewableUK chief executive **Dan McGrail**

can secure by increasing the budget to take account of new projects which have become eligible to bid in since it was originally set.

This should include an uplift for floating wind as well as fixed-foundation, as we now have four shovel-ready floaters which could secure support this year, helping us to maintain the UK's position as a global leader in this innovative technology.

A bumper auction would also stimulate much-needed investment in the UK's offshore wind supply chain. The Industrial Growth Plan which RenewableUK published in April sets out a blueprint showing how we can triple our offshore wind

manufacturing capacity over the next 10 years.

This would support an extra 10,000 jobs a year and boost the UK's economy by a further £25bn between now and 2035. The plan identifies the high-value areas of the supply chain which the UK should focus on, including the design and manufacture of offshore wind blades and turbine towers, foundations, electrical systems and cables, enabling us to supply projects here and abroad.

Other key actions for the next government include setting ambitious deployment targets beyond 2030 and better cross-government coordination between departments to achieve

them. The CfD scheme needs to be modernised to enable consistent volumes of renewables to be deployed year on year. By creating an attractive business environment we can mobilise the maximum amount of private investment in the face of strong international competition.

To achieve this, our electricity market should be reformed in a careful, evolutionary way to avoid increasingly the cost of capital significantly. We are also calling for a more efficient planning framework to enable us to build projects and grid infrastructure more swiftly.

There is a high level of public support for the

measures outlined in our manifesto among voters who are concerned about tackling the cost of living crisis and securing the UK's future economic prosperity.

Polling by Opinium which we commissioned shows 79% support for a cross-party consensus on maximising investment in renewables to drive down consumer bills and increase Britain's energy security. A further 75% of people say the development of renewable energy is a significant factor for the next government to consider in decisions about driving economic growth outside London and the south east.

Voters want the next government to prioritise green jobs over other key sectors to drive economic growth – more than advanced manufacturing, digital technology or life sciences. If we work closely together with politicians at every level and local communities to get this right, the next five years will see a massive transformation in the UK's energy system, with offshore wind at the heart of it. ■



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# THE INTERVIEW reNEWS



RWE Renewables UK and Ireland development director **Danielle Lane** reveals what challenges lay ahead for the industry and her expectations for the incoming UK government

**Q** What is the UK offshore wind industry's key 'asks' of the main political parties ahead of the 4 July general election?

**A** The UK offshore wind industry has become a cornerstone of the country's renewable energy sector, and we need to ensure whichever political party comes into power continues to champion and realise its potential.

Our top policy priorities include creating a stable and transparent support framework; developing skills and providing the workforce for the transition; and ensuring timely and proportionate investment in the grid.

However, above all, our ask for a new government is to listen to industry and take our feedback on board. The recent Allocation Round 5, where no offshore wind projects bid into the auction, shows what can happen when industry concerns are not heeded. For AR6, the industry welcomed the return of a separate pot for offshore wind, and an increase in Administrative Strike Prices, rightly reflecting increased supply chain cost pressures. However, according to Energy UK, unless we see an increase in the budget, AR6 is likely to procure less than half of the eligible projects in the pipeline.

**Q** What is RWE's main message for the industry at GOW 2024?

**A** I have the pleasure of speaking at Global Offshore Wind 2024 this year on a panel about delivering

our offshore ambitions and I will be raising concerns about the mixed expectations of industry.

We used to have a very clear ask from government – deliver renewable energy projects at the lowest cost to the consumer – but increasingly government is intervening to impose extra costs. For example, new measures for supply chain support, marine net gain, radar defence mitigation and mandatory noise abatement systems – as well as some conditions of lease agreements – are creating extra risk, cost and complexity for developers.

**Q** What other challenges is the offshore wind sector facing?

**A** One of the biggest challenges facing the offshore wind sector is uncertainty around the future of the Contracts for Difference scheme.

More specifically on CfD auction parameters, for AR7 these must be reviewed and updated to ensure they are reflective of the realities we're facing in the market. Furthermore, we would like to see a long-term auction schedule to 2030 that sets out volume targets (with budgets set as necessary). This is absolutely critical in order to give the sector confidence of their future route to market.

Another issue we are increasingly focusing on is the first offshore wind projects reaching end-of-life by the early 2030s. Where it makes commercial sense to do so, these projects could have their commercial

life extended by a few years on a case-by-case basis, thus keeping already operational offshore wind on the system for longer.

We need suitable policy in place within the next year to enable project lifetime to be maximised, as otherwise there is a real risk that up to 4GW of operational capacity falls off the system by the early 2030s.

**Q** RWE has a strong pipeline of UK offshore projects in construction and eligible for CfD auctions. Can you provide an outlook on how you expect to see your portfolio to develop in the coming years?

**A** As the leading generator in the UK, we intend to maintain the pace of investment with the ambition to invest around €8bn net in the years 2024 to 2030 – creating clean energy projects and creating high quality jobs.

Our Sofia offshore project, which is currently in construction, represents an investment of £3bn, while our Dogger Bank and Norfolk schemes collectively would total more than £9bn.

The Awel y Môr project, which has anticipated project investment costs of around £2bn, will cement RWE as one of the largest investors in Wales.

Overall, we have ambitious plans to expand our UK footprint, with over 17GW of renewables at various stages of development, including nine new offshore wind farms totalling around 11GW.

  
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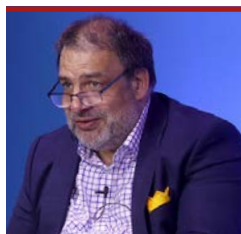
    
 

# Now is moment industry can fulfil its true potential

Eleven years ago, when we launched the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult as a driver of innovation and growth, we had high ambitions for our industry to become far more price competitive and a serious player in the UK's energy mix.

To be a contender, everything needed to scale up, not just wind farm sizes but the turbines and foundations, in ever-challenging deeper waters further from the coastline. But, had we dared to suggest that innovation would lead to turbines of over 15MW, blades well in excess of 100 metres and offshore wind being the recognised foundation of the UK's future clean energy system, all by the mid-2020s, we would not have been deemed credible.

These challenges were set out by the Cost Reduction Task Force I led in 2012. It helped unite all players on what the pathways needed to be to dramatically cut costs. But for all



Industrial Growth Plan has potential to transform the country's offshore wind sector through technology innovation, writes outgoing ORE Catapult chief **Andrew Jamieson**

of the success, and I do not mean to belittle it in any way, we have to recognise that we have simply not achieved the economic and social benefits that we aspired to. Not yet. Prices have been cut beyond all expectations, but at the cost of domestic manufacturing, the supply chain and jobs.

I believe we are now at an inflection point and, with a new approach, can realise not only the political and environmental ambitions, but the economic ones as well.

The Industrial Growth Plan (IGP), developed by RenewableUK, the Offshore Wind Industry Council, The

Crown Estate, and Crown Estate Scotland, in partnership with wider industry and published in April, has the aim of growing "the offshore wind supply chain to accelerate and de-risk delivery, as well as grow market share and technology leadership for the UK".

The IGP has the potential to be transformative, prioritising for the first time in our industry technology innovation as the catalyst for growth. Through its identification of the core technologies that the UK can and should be developing domestically, and its subsequent 'make or buy' approach, it focuses on the supply chain ahead of the development community, a model that has been hugely successful in other industries, aerospace in particular.

New leasing rounds, continued turbine growth and the development of floating wind present real opportunities to grow both UK content in our own developments and global market share. To do so is an imperative, not only for social and economic reasons, but also for energy security; competition for scarce turbines and the entire balance of plant will only intensify as countries the world over step up their own renewable energy expansion.

Further, if we now need offshore wind to be the answer not just to net zero but also to security of supply, then it is time to recognise it's no longer feasible for government, developers, and then supply chain to not be fully connected – it needs the strongest collaboration and intervention to ensure we hit targets at all levels.

Key to delivery of this potential will be ensuring that we learn the lessons from the past decade. Paramount among these are the challenges that have arisen from the pace of technology development and its associated risk. As an independent, expert and trusted authority, the Catapult has a vital role to play in this regard. It has become a proven

depository of knowledge that can facilitate the drive for greater reliability across the entire turbine system and its operations. Provision of such expertise and experience, allied to greater clarity on future pipeline, will enable the UK to attract significant inward investment in manufacturing capacity and deliver on the long-promise, sustainable and high-value jobs.

But the Catapult is only one small part of a much wider ecosystem that should be brought to bear in a collective approach to realising the opportunity. Far greater collaboration across industry and between private and public sectors aligned to a common vision will enable the UK to capitalise upon first-mover advantage and need not undermine market competition given the scale and breadth of the opportunity.

The UK can be proud of the progress made in offshore renewables, including tidal energy, but it is now at a turning point. Solid foundations have been built, based on a decade and more of supportive public policy and innovation that have established a world-leading position.

How we now build on that foundation will dictate whether, in years to come, we can reflect with equal pride on an industrial base that mirrors the success of the oil and gas industry over the past fifty years, or whether we seek to deliver net zero and energy security reliant upon imported technology and without the accompanying employment and economic activity.

It is achievable, but will require outstanding political and industrial leadership, collaboration on an unprecedented level and a willingness to innovate like never before. ■



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# Global Offshore Wind

## TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

### GOW24 charity run

Work up a sweat and raise money for charity ahead of Day 1. Hosted by RenewableUK and the RenewableUK Shadow Board.

**Steps of Manchester Central, 0700 - 0730**

### Day 1 keynote

President of COP26 and former UK Energy Secretary Alok Sharma will share his insights on global progress on climate action since COP26 and on the role of offshore wind in combating climate change.

**Stream A, Exchange Auditorium, 0930-1015**

### Coming of age

A panel of industry speakers including Orsted UK chief Duncan Clark, ScottishPower Renewables' boss Charlie Jordan and SSE Renewables' managing director Stephen Wheeler address the key issues facing the sector.

**Stream A, Exchange Auditorium, 1015-1100**

### Industrial vision

How does the Industrial Growth Plan enable the offshore wind supply chain to thrive and what are the key lessons learned from the UK and other countries? For answers to those questions and

more join this session.

**Stream A, Exchange Auditorium, 1130-1230**

### Launch event

Technology Demonstrations, one standard agreement to accelerate commercialisation - Sponsored by Offshore Wind Growth Partnership.

**Charter 4, 1315-1415**

### Flying high

Aviation, Radar & Offshore Wind; Industry and government working together - hosted by the Offshore Wind Industry Council.

**Charter 4, 1430-1600**

### Official exhibition networking drinks reception

Enjoy a drink while you catch up with new contacts after a busy Day 1. Sponsored by Hitachi Energy.

**Exhibition Hall, 1700-1900**

### Networking after party

Let your hair down at the end of Day 1 with the popular networking after party. Sponsored by OEG Renewables.

**Exchange Hall, 1900-2100**



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