JOINT OFFSHORE WIND INVESTMENT PACT FOR THE NORTH SEAS

At the North Sea Summit 2026, the governments of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, wind industry, and Transmission System Operators (TSO) of the electricity and hydrogen networks come together in a spirit of partnership and shared responsibility to advance Europe's energy security, competitiveness, and decarbonisation ambitions. Recognising the vision of the North Seas as Europe's green power plant and in view of the upcoming European Union (EU) sectoral tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids, we reaffirm our joint determination to unlock its vast offshore wind potential and to build a resilient, integrated, and sustainable energy system for the benefit of current and future generations.

In view of the unprecedented challenges posed by climate change, geopolitical tensions, rising concern over energy dependency, and the increasing pressure to ensure energy affordability, progress requires coordinated action. This Joint Offshore Wind Investment Pact for the North Seas therefore, sets forth our collective commitments: for governments to provide a clear way ahead, frameworks, and enabling conditions; the industry to deliver assets, innovation, investment, skills, and sustainability; and transmission system operators to plan, build, connect, operate the infrastructure that will make large-scale offshore wind integration a reality.

With this Pact, solemnly declared at the North Sea Summit 2026, all signing sides commit to working together towards our shared ambition: to scale offshore wind energy to the levels required for Europe's decarbonisation, to enable hydrogen as complementary energy carrier to offshore renewable electricity (where cost-efficient), to ensure affordable and secure energy for citizens and businesses, and to strengthen Europe's industrial base and technological leadership.

Governments are committed to:

- Reach the ambition of 300 GW offshore wind energy capacity by 2050 in the North Seas, participating European Union (EU) Member States being part of the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) and the United Kingdom (UK) aim at developing up to 100 GW through cooperation projects[1] that yield the most benefits for the region in terms of reducing system costs. To realise our ambition of endeavouring to work towards up to 100 GW of cooperation projects, we:
  - Work towards establishing an Offshore Financing Framework (OFF) for cooperation projects that will build on and strengthen existing instruments and processes such as the framework for trans-European networks for energy (TEN-E) and the identification of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, to support the cooperative planning and financing of projects aligned to the North Seas offshore wind cooperation ambition.
  - As a first milestone of the aforementioned ambition on cooperation projects, we welcome the existing plans of the Offshore TSO Collaboration (OTC) and project developers to implement cooperation projects of up to 20 GW in the 2030s.
  - Assess and further develop our national regulatory frameworks to increase investor certainty in cooperation projects, including cross-border liability schemes, connection and balancing schemes, where relevant, based on best practices in the North Seas Region.
  - Participating EU Member States investigate market arrangements for offshore hybrid projects to address hybrid-specific risks for generators. The UK is also committed to the development of the most suitable market arrangements for hybrid projects.
  - Work towards ensuring a more evenly distributed offshore wind tender pipeline between 2031 and 2040 across the North Seas contributing to a European installation capacity of up to 15 GW per year.

- Work together on solutions to further de-risk investments, ensure the success of competitive tenders and mobilise private capital. To achieve this, we commit to:
  - Work towards improving coordination of national deployment plans, including working with maritime spatial planning authorities.
  - Extend and regularly update the NSEC tender planning tool and increase coordination of tenders. This will be also supported by the envisaged EU sectoral tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids.

- Work towards a sound investment framework for offshore renewables, through targeted mechanisms such as cross-border and/or nationally implemented two-sided Contracts-for Difference (CfDs) as well as Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), including cross-border PPAs.

- Explore offshore wind tender designs that, where relevant, take into account the potential integration of electrolysers.

- Mandate electricity and hydrogen transmission system operators and system planners to jointly assess how to coordinate offshore planning for electricity and hydrogen networks, where relevant.

1 Cooperation projects comprise hybrid offshore wind projects including transmission infrastructure with grid connections to more than one country, as well as cross-border radially connected wind farms.

- Ensure a successful offshore wind expansion in line with our ambitions, we will:
  - Work towards establishing clear pathways and support frameworks for the decarbonisation of national economies through electrification in line with the EU Clean Industrial Deal, and in support of an ambitious approach towards the EU Electrification Action Plan and the envisaged EU tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids.
  - Jointly anticipate offshore grid and maritime spatial constraints and, promoting positive impacts on the marine environment.
  - Assess and work towards mitigating the impact of potential wake effects through forward-looking and collaborative planning, where relevant.
  - Ensure reliable and resilient supply chains by supporting strategic manufacturing capacities and investing in value made in Europe and the wider North Seas Region.
  - Work towards alignment on an appropriately harmonised and effective implementation of the Net Zero Industry Act (NZIA) which is conducive for the industry to reap economies of scale (participating EU Member States).
  - Enhance and support existing cooperation on the technincal protection of offshore energy assets regarding physical and cyber threats.

Industry is committed to:

- Driving down costs of offshore wind to reduce the levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) by 30% towards 2040 compared to 2025 levels.

- Offer capital and capacity for investments to ensure an installation capacity of the de-risked and committed 15 GW annually between 2031 and 2040 by:
  a. Mobilising 1 trillion EUR of economic activity for Europe.
  b. Hiring 91,000 people by 2031 reaching a total of 187,000 employees. 75% (140,000) of these will serve the North Seas Region.
  c. Investing 9.5 billion EUR in manufacturing capacities by 2030.

- Develop and commercialise required offshore High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission technologies (e.g. DC circuit breakers), finding pathways for harmonising manufacturing standards together with electricity TSOs.

- Increase apprenticeships and internships, support vocational education through funding and partnerships, and create attractive working conditions through training, continuous education, and fair remuneration.

- Commit to life cycle strategies that prioritise resource conservation, waste reduction, and minimising environmental impact, while actively advancing circular economy and recycling practices including beyond legal requirements.

- Support research and development for scaling up electrolyser technologies in connection with offshore wind energy.

OTC is committed to:

- Jointly identify coherent cost-effective project sets for the North Seas Region approaching the electricity part of the 100 GW cooperation project ambition in order to harness the offshore wind potential in the North Seas in the most cost-effective, affordable, and efficient way.
- Closely coordinate with responsible Ministries and relevant public and regulatory authorities on the underlying assumptions for identifying project sets.
- Present the results in an agreed-upon manner and ensure transparency of the analyses, to facilitate agreement on project sets by the North Seas States.
- By 2027 aim to identify in close collaboration with governments the first economically promising flagship project set of up to 20GW offshore cross-border generation capacity.
- Support the development of agreed cost-sharing principles. These shall be based on costs and benefits of the generation and infrastructure, and incentivise investment from participating non-hosting countries on a fair and voluntary basis.
- Apply the agreed principles on the identified flagship project sets.
- Pursue the development of digital tools to improve transparency on future TSO asset needs and supply chain demand, creating clear investment signals.
- Support coordinated regional grid planning by facilitating a recurring regional grid planning cycle to identify project sets with regional benefits.

Industry, OTC and Hydrogen Networks for the Northern Seas (HyNOS) jointly are committed to:

- Collaboration between OTC and HyNOS to lay foundation for a regional recurring, more coordinated and integrated planning cycle.
- Periodically discussing the developments and innovations in offshore hydrogen production and sharing outlooks on the potential of offshore hydrogen development for system cost reduction in the North Seas Region.
- Strengthening the protection of offshore energy assets by cooperating with relevant authorities and working to implement systems for threat detection, monitoring, and response.
- Enhancing the security-by-design of offshore energy assets, working towards standardising interoperability of offshore HVDC components for swift repairs and, in coordination with the relevant authorities, establish streamlined incident reporting chains alongside expanded operator training in security and crisis management.

- Developing and exploring a multi-terminal multi-vendor approach and work closely with manufacturers and wind farm developers to ensure aligned and interoperable technical solutions after 2040.

- Drive industrialisation, innovation and increased collaboration on making use of standard solutions, design and processes where commonalities increase value and drive down costs.

- Assess, on a case-by-case basis, for which future HVDC-converter stations H2-readiness is proportionate and cost effective. Where justified, such stations could be designed in a way that keeps open the possibility of connecting offshore electrolysis in the future, provided that a robust cost-benefit assessment demonstrates that the expected benefits outweigh the additional costs.

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Signed on the 26 January 2026 in the English language.

Katherina Reiche, Germany as organizer of North Sea Summit 2026 on behalf of the group of North Seas States

Katherina Reiche

Signature by Malgosia Bartosik, WindEurope on behalf of the European wind industry

Malgosia Bartosik

Signature by Manon van Beek, Tennet Netherlands on behalf of the OTC

Manon van Beek

Signature by Christoph von dem Bussche, Gascade on behalf of HYNOS

Christoph von dem Bussche