

RECHARGE

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'Floating wind's breakthrough': renewables industry hails ScotWind as new offshore era

The Kincardine floating wind project is already operating off Scotland.

Photo: Principle Power | Rui Braz



Sector bodies flag implications of massive leasing round for UK and Scottish energy transitions – and, with 15GW capacity awarded in deepwater zones, for the future of the floating wind

By **Andrew Lee**

The international renewables industry hailed Scotland's first independent offshore wind leasing round as a watershed for the energy transition in the country, as well as for the UK and beyond – and a breakout moment for floating technology, which saw big players make commitments to advance massive, market-accelerating projects.

Seabed landlord the Crown Estate Scotland on Monday **awarded lease options in its flagship ScotWind tender with the potential** for a bigger than expected 25GW of fixed-bottom and floating projects (see maps and table below) that are calculated to uncork a £25bn (\$34bn) supply chain bonanza for the regional economy.

Industry body RenewableUK said the Scottish announcement marks the “start of a new era for the UK's world-leading offshore wind industry”.

Deputy chief executive Melanie Onn said: “Today's announcement marks the start of a new era for the UK's world-leading offshore wind industry. ScotWind represents one of the country's biggest ever steps towards net zero.

“To put this landmark into context, the 25GW of new capacity announced today is two and a half times the UK's entire current offshore wind capacity. It's also equal to the entire current operational offshore wind capacity for the whole of Europe.”

Round moves floating out of harbour

Onn added: “It's highly significant that 60% of the new capacity announced today is for floating wind projects. This will secure the UK's lead in innovative floating wind, generating enormous amounts of power from the best wind resources in Europe, as well as creating opportunities for us to export our cutting-edge technology worldwide.”

Gunnar Herzig, managing director of sector advocacy body World Forum Offshore Wind, told Recharge: “The ScotWind tender results mark the commercial breakthrough of floating offshore wind. The successful allocation of around 15GW of floating capacity to diverse bidders from around the world leaves no doubt that the industry is ready to fully embrace the build-out of floating offshore wind.”

Scotland joins the global big league

For Scotland – which has pioneered floating wind with the **Hywind Scotland** and **Kincardine** arrays – the round was described as a ticket into the global offshore wind big-league.

Claire Mack, chief executive of Scottish Renewables, said: “Scotland now has an extensive and attractive offshore market, and the most seabed dedicated to commercial floating wind development anywhere in the world. These 11 floating wind projects give Scotland a historic opportunity to create a major new sector to drive the blue economy, drawing on our deep water expertise and making a just energy transition a reality in the North Sea.”

Mack added: “It is particularly exciting to see wind farms able to progress right around our coast, from Islay in the west, to Lewis and Orkney and right down the east coast. This means a new range of communities are set to benefit from the growing economic impact of the offshore wind sector.

"Throughout this leasing process bidders have put forward their plans to maximise their use of Scottish suppliers, and now the whole sector is able to move forward in a strategic way to invest for the long-term success of our ports and supply chain."

The oil & gas sector claimed the presence of a number of its biggest hitters in the successful bids proves its energy transition credentials.

Industry body OGUK's supply chain and operations director Katy Heidenreich said: "UK offshore energy companies are at the head of the pack, building on and adapting their oil and gas expertise to speed up greener energies like wind.

"This is a powerful example of how our industry is changing and helping deliver the cleaner and affordable energy required to help other industries and millions of consumers get to net zero."

SCOTWIND WINNING CONSORTIA

Map reference	Lead applicant	Option Fees	Technology	Total capacity (MW)
1	BP/EnBW	£85,900,000	Fixed	2,907
2	SSE/Marubeni/CIP	£85,900,000	Floating	2,610
3	Falck/BlueFloat	£28,000,000	Floating	1,200
4	Shell/Iberdrola/Eolfi	£86,000,000	Floating	2,000
5	Vattenfall/Fred Olsen	£20,000,000	Floating	798
6	DEME/Otary/Qair	£18,700,000	Fixed	1,008
7	DEME/Otary/Qair	£20,000,000	Floating	1,008
8	Falck/Orsted/BlueFloat	£25,600,000	Floating	1,000
9	Ocean Winds	£42,900,000	Fixed	1,000
10	Falck/BlueFloat	£13,400,000	Floating	500
11	Iberdrola/Shell/Eolfi	£68,400,000	Floating	3,000
12	BayWa/Elicio/BW Ideol	£33,000,000	Floating	960
13	TotalEnergies/Macquarie	£65,700,000	Fixed	2,000
14	Northland Power	£3,900,000	Floating	1,500
15	Magnora/Technip	£10,300,000	Mixed	495
16	Northland Power	£16,100,000	Fixed	840
17	Iberdrola	£75,400,000	Fixed	2,000

Source: Crown Estate Scotland



Acreage (in green) awarded in the Scotwind leasing
Photo: Crown Estate Scotland