

Press Release

Offshore Wind Energy Half-Year Figures 2015 in Germany

Expansion on schedule: 1,765 megawatts more on line

Berlin/Frankfurt, 20 July 2015 – In the first half of 2015, another 422 offshore wind turbines, with a combined capacity of 1,765.3 megawatts went on line. Up to 30 June 2015 a total of 668 offshore turbines with an overall capacity of 2,777.8 megawatts fed power into the German grid. With the current offshore wind energy output the system can supply around three million households with power. Another 90 turbines with a total capacity of 380.7 megawatts are completely installed and due start feeding in soon. The foundations for another 84 turbines have already been erected. Hence the industry expects a total of around 2,250 megawatts of new offshore wind energy capacity to be feeding into the grid for the first time in 2015. In the German North and Baltic Seas wind turbines with a total capacity of up to 3,300 megawatts should be hooked up to the grid by the end of the year, as planned.

The associations and organisations involved in gathering these figures agree that by the end of the year we will have reached half of the 6,500-megawatt target set for 2020. The second half can be gradually implemented in the next few years.

“The expansion continues with additional projects: nine projects comprising turbines with a total capacity of 704.4 megawatts are under construction. The final investment decisions are on the table for five more projects with 1,482.8 megawatts”, reports Dr Jörg Buddenberg, chair of the Working Group for Offshore Wind Energy AGOW.

Continuous expansion of the grid infrastructure is necessary for the future expansion of offshore wind generation, although in the latest draft of the Offshore Grid Development Plan (O-NEP 2015), the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) sees this differently. “Sufficient grid capacity is crucial for the period beyond 2020. This is the only way that enterprises can have planning security for further investment, because offshore wind energy projects involve long lead times and large investment sums. The smaller the number of grid connection systems with available capacity, the more limited is the competition between the projects within the scope of future calls for tender. The reduction of electricity generation costs that is meant to be achieved through competition would be made unnecessarily difficult if the grid ends up as a bottleneck again”, says Jörg Kuhbier, chair of the Offshore Wind Energy Foundation.

The design of the tendering model in the Renewable Energy Sources Act 2016 is crucial for the future of offshore wind energy. "The offshore wind industry will already need clarification of the tendering design in 2016 so that expansion can be continually moved forward. To avoid a stop and go situation in the market, it is also imperative to create clear rules for the transition from fixed rate remuneration to a competitive tendering process for every model. We will keep value creation and employment in Germany, and expand through additional exports," says Norbert Giese, chair of the VDMA steering committee for the offshore wind industry and chair of wind energy agency WAB.

"After many years of pre-investment, and now that the offshore wind industry is making an increasingly more important contribution to the shift to renewable energy, the transition to tendering is once again endangering security of investment. In particular, the question of ownership rights is unsettling project developers. Raising the undoubted existing cost reduction potential of this important technology needs dependability on the part of government", says Hermann Albers, president of the German Wind Energy Association.

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