

## OCEaN Statement on the upcoming EU Wind Power Package

*The Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) strongly supports the use of minimum requirements<sup>1</sup> and non-price criteria in the design of offshore wind farm auctions and the European Commission's efforts to promote them. These tools are crucial to incentivise innovation to meet EU Green Deal objectives, achieve Good Environmental Status in our seas, support European industry, and expedite electricity generation and transport capacity for energy security.*

Currently, the European Union (EU) has 18 GW of offshore capacity, with Member States aiming for over 100 GW of offshore wind by 2030. The European Commission (EC) foresees 300 GW of offshore wind by 2050, rising to 450 GW when including the UK and Norway. Achieving climate neutrality in the EU necessitates increasing offshore capacity nearly eighteen-fold while developing the connecting electricity grid in a timely manner.

To meet climate goals and enhance energy security, expanding offshore wind energy must be harmonised with nature protection so that nature can keep providing the ecosystem services we depend on, such as carbon sequestration. Europe must address the climate and biodiversity crises simultaneously through environmentally-sound solutions for offshore wind and electricity grids, and with a strict application of the mitigation hierarchy to ensure nature protection.

OCEaN welcomes the EC's upcoming Wind Power Package and emphasises that minimum requirements and non-price criteria in offshore wind auctions can enable Member States to maximise project value for society, nature, the electricity system, and supply chain.

In offshore wind auctions, pre-qualification criteria ensure that only bidders following certain requirements are eligible for the competitive process. These may include labour and environmental standards, cybersecurity, data residency, and grid code compliance. Wind developers are ready and willing to make these commitments. For instance, in 2022 the Dutch government, NGOs and the solar and wind industry set a positive precedent by defining a set of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) commitments. Signatories must now apply these commitments in all supply chains for economic activities in the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>. This approach can lead to more efficient and ecologically- and socially-beneficial projects and should refer to EU standards to ensure coherence.

Moreover, the proper design of competitive offshore wind bidding processes via non-price criteria is pivotal for sustaining European wind energy development, preserving the competitiveness of European industries, and implementing projects with high sustainability and ecological standards. Non-price criteria can encompass sustainability, biodiversity, system integration, innovation, EU supply chain development, and community benefits. Specifically, incorporating ecological criteria into offshore wind auctions offers the opportunity to develop solutions aligned with EU and global climate and biodiversity targets. They are key to promoting concepts such as circular resource use, nature-inclusive designs, ecosystem protection and restoration, and data and knowledge sharing.

All non-price criteria, including those related to sustainability and ecological aspects, should adhere to principles such as clarity, objectivity, comparability, ease of assessment, and accountability for non-delivery of commitments. These non-price criteria should be harmonised among Member States. The tender for Hollandse Kust West in the Netherlands is the first example of the inclusion of ecological non-price criteria in an auction.

Due to limited experience in tendering with minimum requirements and non-price criteria, public authorities should consult stakeholders, including NGOs and civil society, adopt a 'learning-by-doing' approach based on scientific data and research, and ensure transparency in the process.

OCEaN is committed to developing solutions which benefit nature, climate, economies, and energy supply security. OCEaN Members pledge to assist EU institutions and Member States in identifying ecological minimum requirements and non-price evaluation criteria, facilitating contact with stakeholders, and serving as a knowledge hub for best practices and scientific evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> Minimum requirement and pre-qualification criteria refer to the same concept.

<sup>2</sup> [International Responsible Business Conduct Agreement for the Renewable Energy Sector](#)