ACCELERATING OFFSHORE WIND & NATURE PROTECTION

Country profile

UNITED KINGDOM

CHALLENGES

Reaching our climate targets requires deploying wind turbines in European seas. Leading the way is the United Kingdom, which has the most turbines of any European country and the largest offshore wind farm project in the world (Dogger Bank).

Today, the UK has over **16 GW** of offshore wind energy. The ambitions: **43-50 GW by 2030** and 50% of electricity generation from offshore wind by 2050 – this could require **125 GW by 2050**.

To reach their nature targets and conserve the **ecosystem services** citizens and businesses depend upon, it is imperative to protect marine nature. Strong regulations for both offshore wind and nature are necessary to support these goals.

EFFECTIVE PLANNING

Across UK waters

The majority of UK's capacity, installed and planned, are bottom-fixed turbines.

The UK is also planning floating turbines and is one of the countries with the largest planned pipeline (25GW).

The digital, interactive Marine Delivery Routemap will help better identify areas for infrastructure and nature recovery.

ENGAGING WITH SOCIETY

In 2025, the UK introduced the Clean Industry Bonus, offering £27 million per gigawatt of offshore wind capacity to developers investing in cleaner supply chains or deprived regions.

The offshore wind sector currently supports 32,000+ jobs, **with an estimated 100,000 workers needed by 2030.**

Under the proposed Fair Work Charter, companies bidding for offshore wind contracts must either contribute to a skills fund or invest in local training, including apprenticeships, internships, and retraining oil and gas workers.

KEY NATURE FACTS

In the North, Irish, and Celtic Seas, and the English Channel:

Current status:
Good Environmental Status (clean, healthy & productive sea) **not achieved**

3 highly protected marine areas and marine protected areas covering **38%** of UK seas

107 endangered, critically endangered, or vulnerable species.
40 invasive marine species

Ambition: 30 % of marine and coastal ecosystems conserved & under effective restoration by **2030** to give space for nature to recover.

MINIMISING IMPACTS

The UK reduces the impacts of infrastructure by:

Using **data collection and sharing** in publicly available platforms to support environmental assessments.

The **Offshore Wind Evidence and Change programme** funds projects to accelerate offshore wind investments and delivery alongside thriving marine and coastal ecosystems.

The UK's offshore wind consenting framework requires following a **mitigation hierarchy for impacts on protected sites**. If avoidance and mitigation cannot remove those impacts, developers must provide compensation measures.

To support marine nature in the UK:

A dedicated **Marine Recovery Fund** will enable coordinated biodiversity protection measures across UK seas. Offshore-wind developers pay into the fund, which supports creating or expanding **Marine Protected Areas** to deliver targeted ecological restoration while reducing project delays.

Initiatives such as the **POSEIDON Project** in England are mapping threatened and declining marine habitats (e.g., kelp, maerl, horse-mussel and sea-pen beds) to identify the **most ecologically appropriate sites** for offshore wind development.

The unique role of the Crown Estate

The Crown Estate is a unique, independently managed property business that belongs to the British monarch. Because they own and manage the seabed out to 12 nautical miles and renewable energy rights out to 200 nautical miles, **they play a central role in leasing areas for offshore wind farms.**

The Crown Estate integrates environmental stewardship into offshore wind leasing, shares and collects marine data to reduce impacts, and uses environmental constraints to guide site selection. Through their **Offshore Wind Evidence & Change Programme**, they fund research to close ecological knowledge gaps while their **ECOWind Programme** examines the ecological effects of offshore wind on marine mammals, seabirds, benthic habitats.

Renewables Grid Initiative

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This factsheet is produced in cooperation with Members of the Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) in the North and Baltic Seas. RGI is the moderator and convener of OCEaN.

Learn more about this country in our webinar:
Lessons from the UK