



ocean

Offshore Coalition for
Energy and Nature



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
WEBINAR

SHARED SEAS, SHARED DECISIONS

Stakeholder Engagement in
Offshore Wind and Grid Planning



29 September 2026

11:00 – 12:15 CEST

Presented by



Renewables
Grid Initiative



Co-funded by
the European Union

Featuring



What to expect today?

Presentation of **OCEaN report on Stakeholder Engagement** and **10 principles to create meaningful engagement**

Deep dive on inspiring engagement practices



Short panel discussion

Q&A

Your time to ask anything you want to know

Today's speakers will share select inspiring practices



Céline Frank
Policy Officer on the Blue
Economy
**Maritime Space and
Environment at DG MARE**



**Sarah Vanden
Eede**
Senior Ocean Policy
Officer
WWF Belgium



Aude Laurens
Consenting and
Permitting Manager
RTE



Hywel Roberts
Senior Lead
Strategic Specialist
Ørsted

**Academic
and research
institutions**

**Offshore
wind
developers**

**Maritime
services
providers**

**Supply chain
companies**

Who is in room today?

**Environmenta
l & climate
NGOs**

**Nature
protection
consultancie
s**

**Transmission
system
operators**

**International,
national and
local
governmental
bodies**

Housekeeping



Edit your name on Zoom: full name & your organisation



Not speaking? Don't forget to mute yourself!



Questions during presentations? write them in the chat/on Slido



Please turn your camera on if possible



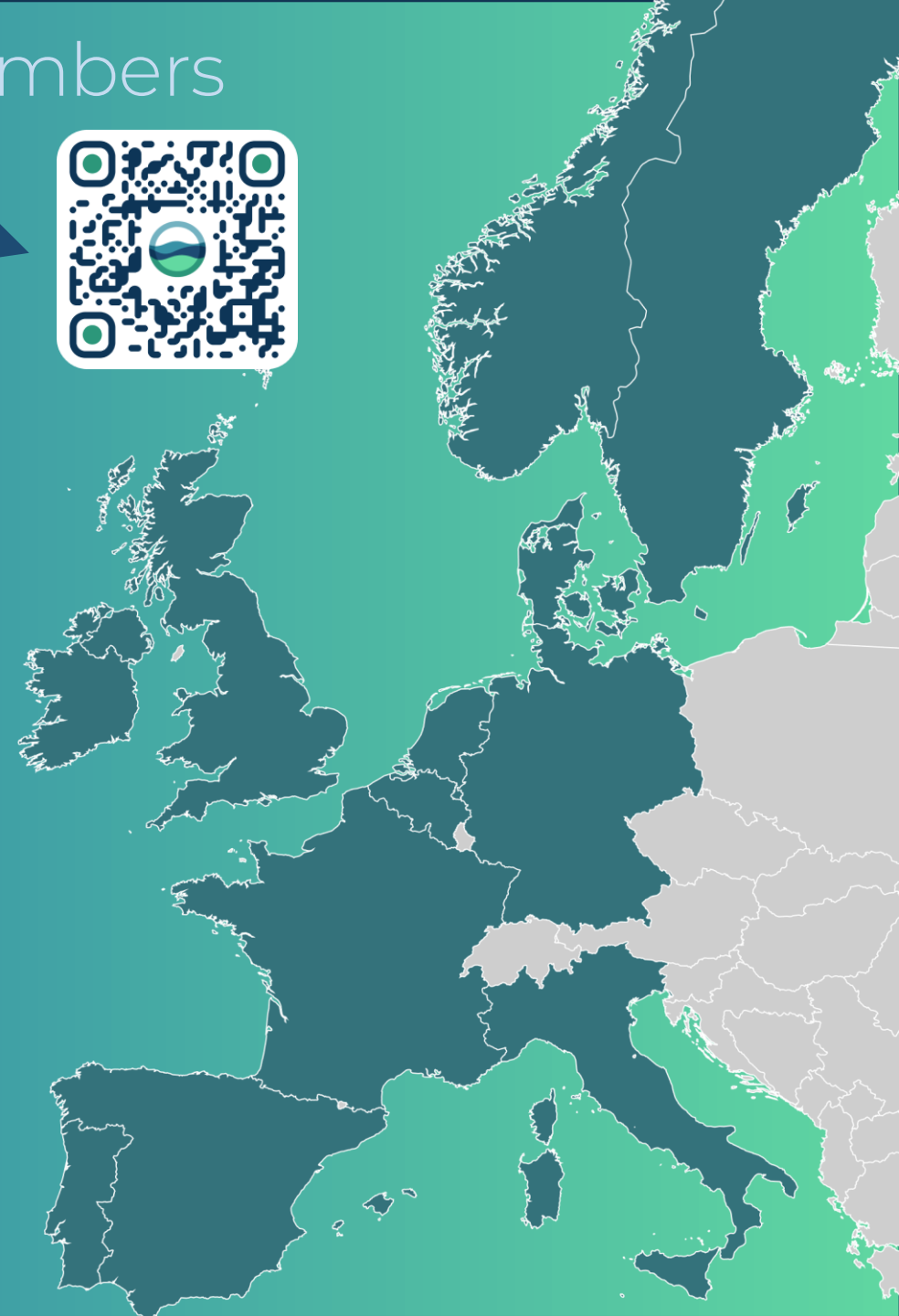
We are also streaming this webinar live on RGI's  **YouTube**

Our Members



11 Grid Operators
20 Wind Power Companies
21 Civil Society Organisations

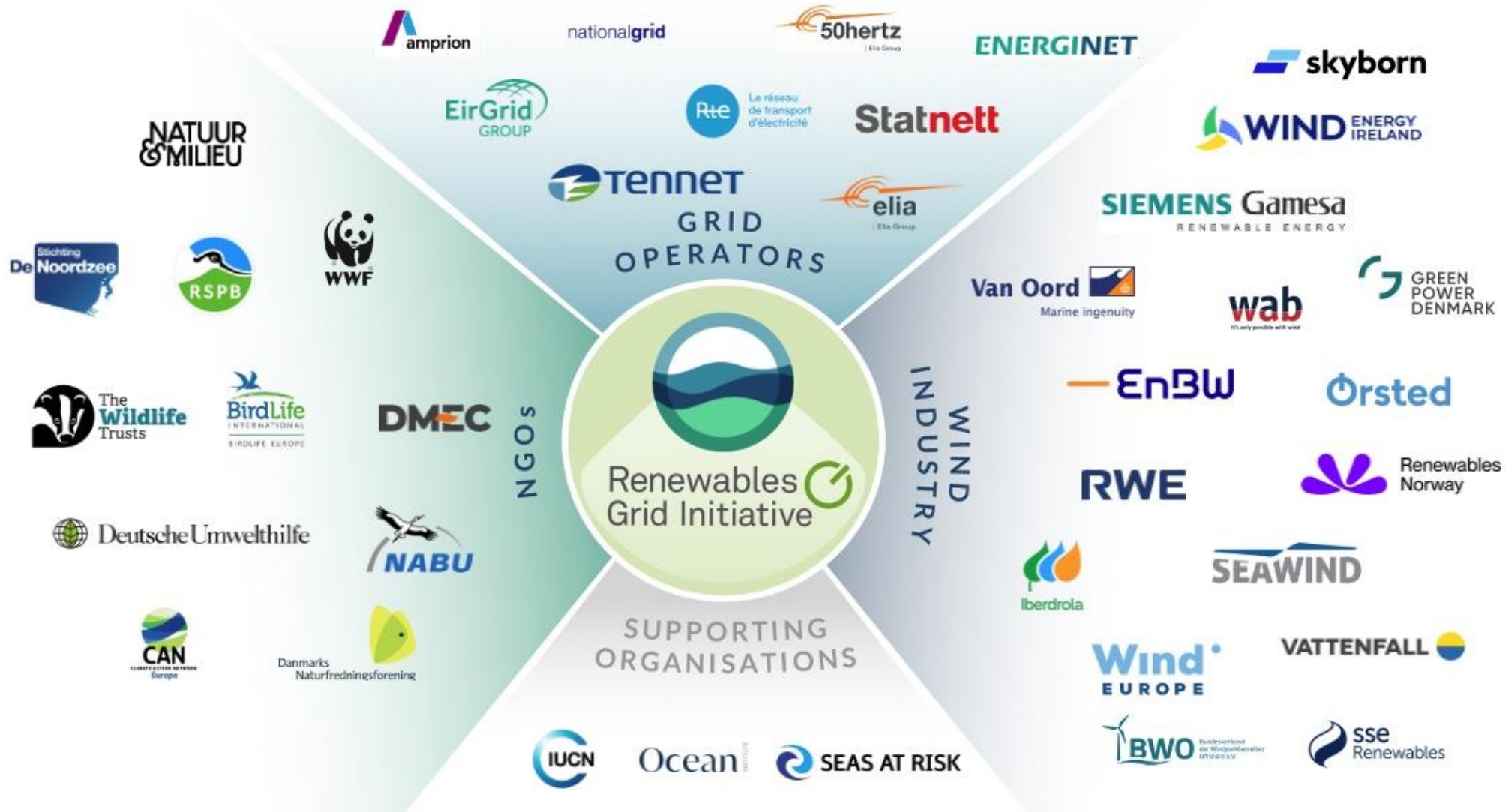
*Collaborating for a
green Europe!*



NORTH & BALTIC SEAS



MEDITERRANEAN SEA



**Maritime Spatial
Planning**

**Stakeholder
engagement**

**Community
benefits**

**Coexistence with
other activities**

**Mitigation of
environmental
impacts**

**Restoration of
marine ecosystems**

**Auctioning –
ecological criteria**

**Nature Inclusive
Design**

**Management of
environmental data**

**Facilitate open
forum for discussion**

**Advocate for OW,
grids & nature**

**Showcase
solutions**

**Create common
understanding**

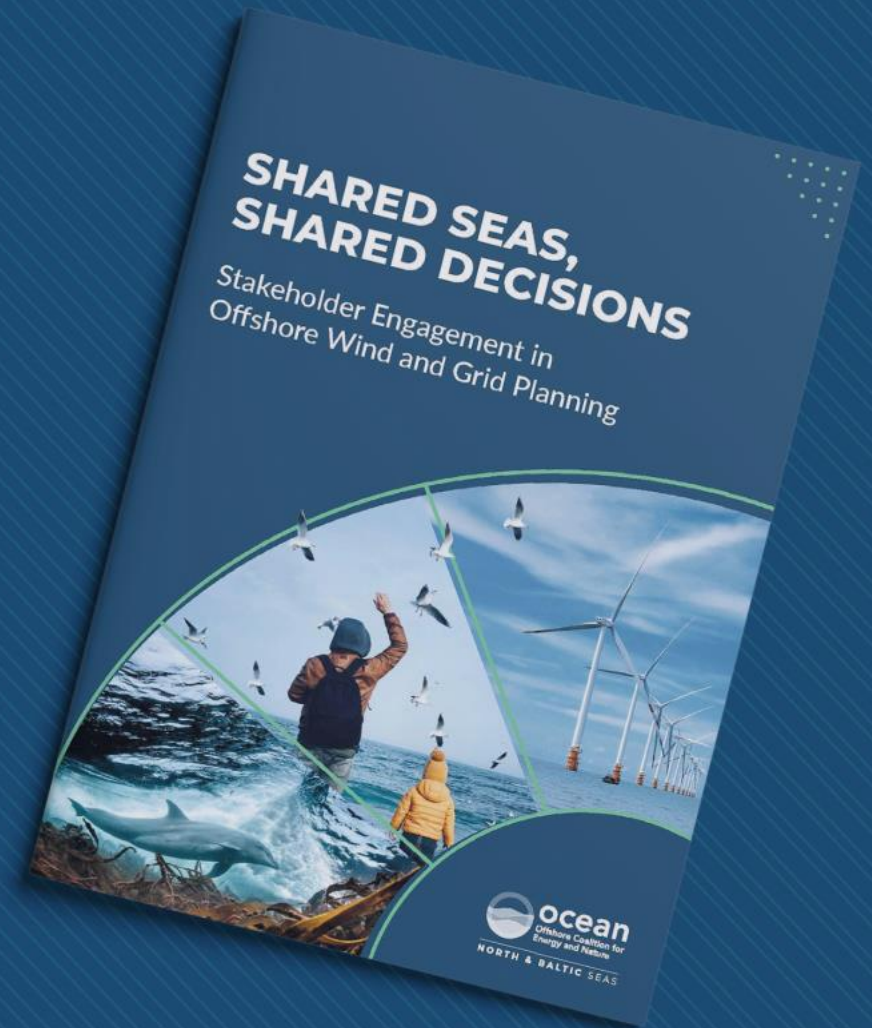
**Fill knowledge
gaps**

**Collect innovative
practices**

SHARED SEAS, SHARED DECISIONS

Stakeholder Engagement in
Offshore Wind and Grid Planning

NEW
REPORT!



What has OCEaN done?



Interviews with OCEaN Members & partners + desk research



Final Report: *Shared Seas, Shared Decisions: Stakeholder Engagement's Role in Offshore Wind and Grid Development*



60-page report, 15 inspiring practices + overviews of national frameworks, types of relevant stakeholders



WHAT DOES
THE REPORT
CONTAIN?



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 PREFACE

06 ABBREVIATIONS

08 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

10 I. INTRODUCTION

14 II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

15 Definitions

15 Policy Landscape

18 Policy Landscape in European Countries not part of the EU

20 Opportunities and Risks for Stakeholder Engagement

21 Benefits of designing inclusive stakeholder engagement

23 Methods and formats for stakeholder engagement

25 Risks of poorly organised engagement processes

26 III. INSPIRING PRACTICES

28 Belgium's Three MSP Experiences

29 The Dutch North Sea Agreement

30 France's Public MSP Consultations

31 Finland's Scenarios on their Marine Future

32 The Greater North Sea Basin Initiative

33 FLOWW Best Practice Guide in the UK

34 France's Offshore Wind and Grid Funds

35 Ireland's Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

36 One-stop-shops in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany

37 ScottishPower Renewables and Island Community Engagement

38 Ørsted and Lobster Fisheries in England

39 EirGrid's Application of Onshore Lessons in Ireland

40 RTE and La Berniéraise Festival in France

41 50Hertz's Boat Tours in the Baltic Sea

42 Elia's Offshore Grid Co-creation Process in Belgium

43 IV. PRINCIPLES TO CREATE MEANINGFUL, IMPACTFUL ENGAGEMENT

48 V. CONCLUSION

50 ANNEXES

58 REFERENCES

CASE
STUDIES IN
THE REPORT

INSPIRING PRACTICES



Planning space at sea in Europe's busy northern waters requires balancing competing uses and coordination between a large number of stakeholders. As offshore wind and grid development ramps up across Europe and discussions on revisions to the MSP Directive accelerate, it is vital to collect and learn lessons from engagement approaches related to planning space and infrastructure at sea. What makes stakeholder engagement processes at the MSP and project level holistic and impactful will differ depending on cultural, national and geographic contexts. However, practitioners can derive inspiration from success stories across northern Europe for the design of initiatives in their own countries and institutions. Success could take the form of creative formats which can combat stakeholder fatigue (such as 50Hertz's boat trips to offshore grid infrastructure, see [page 41](#)), programmes which consult large amounts of stakeholders (such as France's consultation on offshore wind and biodiversity on [page 30](#)) or consistent approaches from project implementors which create a foundation for long-term community satisfaction (such as EirGrid's replication of successful onshore strategy to coastal communities in Ireland on [page 39](#)).

Some of the examples listed in this chapter were previously only available in their country's language or had not been widely shared before. The readers of this report are invited to explore these diverse examples, which fall into the following categories:



MSP INSPIRATION
5 examples



GOVERNMENT-LED APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS
4 examples



OFFSHORE WIND AND GRID INSPIRATION
6 examples

**EXAMPLES ARE FURTHER CATEGORISED BY THE NOTABLE
ELEMENTS WITHIN THESE APPROACHES:**



Innovative Formats



Comprehensive Engagement Programmes



Community Benefits



Early Engagement Approaches



Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



MSP INSPIRATION

5 examples



GOVERNMENT-LED APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

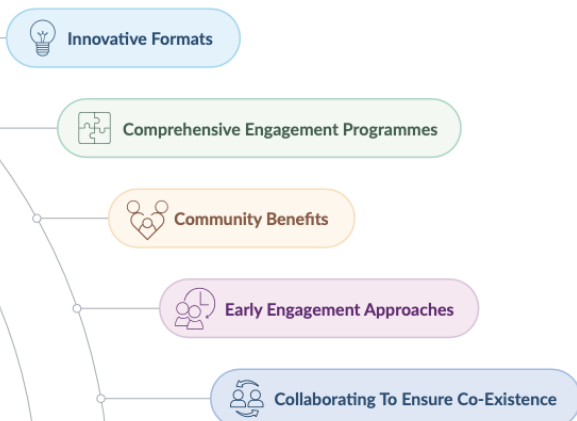
4 examples



OFFSHORE WIND AND GRID INSPIRATION

6 examples

EXAMPLES ARE FURTHER CATEGORISED BY THE NOTABLE ELEMENTS WITHIN THESE APPROACHES:



• 28



Belgium's MSP experience adjusting engagement formats and welcoming external expertise

Belgium has had three MSP consultation processes and adjusted the format and approach each time. This was done with a view to the limits of space in the relatively small Belgian North Sea and feedback from key stakeholders. In their first MSP process, conversations between the competent authorities and stakeholders were primarily bilateral and information was typically given in a one-way manner, with limited feedback on stakeholder input and how it affected the final plan. The second MSP process involved almost one year of different roundtable discussions with clear goals on co-defining a [strategic vision for the Belgian North Sea up until 2050](#). At this time, the public authorities also began to communicate that space was becoming increasingly limited and defining zones for activities, including offshore wind, without conflicting with other uses was a challenge. Belgium's third MSP (2026-2032) therefore started on this premise and aimed to find areas for compromise and multiuse, with consultations beginning with a number of roundtables and bilateral conversations.



© South Western Grid / E.ON

A noteworthy outcome of this honest communication with stakeholders about the lack of space was that it convinced stakeholders who had often expressed reservations that compromises on space for nature or fisheries were required. This inspired NGOs to come together and present their own plans and detailed asks. The [45Sea Coalition](#) of NGOs (made up of Natuurpunt, WWF Belgium, Greenpeace Belgium, and Bond Beter Leefmilieu) presented their own integrated strategic plan to ensure space for both nature and offshore wind. This NGO-led plan also involved stakeholder consultations run independently of the government-led process, including close coordination with scientists and discussions with fisheries. It was then fact checked and accepted by the government as a valuable input to the process, with the final MSP plan including the NGO-proposed marine reserves. Stakeholders had the overall impression they were listened to and the process was not only top-down, with their input and suggestions included in the final plan. This example also showcases how the knowledge of government bodies working on MSP and reconciling offshore wind and nature can be complimented by the dedicated work of external experts and local stakeholders.

CATEGORIES:

Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence

• 29



North Sea Agreement establishes seascape plan for the Netherlands

The [North Sea Agreement](#) in the Netherlands is a unique consensus between the national government and stakeholders on how the Dutch North Sea could be sustainably managed until 2030 and beyond. Initiated by the government in 2013, they decided to consult all users of the sea in an extensive, participatory exercise of marine policymaking (Hatenboer, van den Berg & Holzhaacker, 2023). Stakeholders including NGOs, fisheries, ports and harbours, and industry were brought together over an 18-month period to come to a joint understanding on management of the Dutch North Sea, from fishing gear rules in offshore wind farms to protected areas, funds to support the energy transition, and marine nature monitoring. All the details are laid out in the Dutch North Sea Accord (Noordzeepakkoord). A permanent policy body (Noordzeeoverleg) was also established where all activities in the Dutch EEZ affecting multiple users have to be discussed. This consensus-based policy body is made up of representatives from all key stakeholder groups, with 3 seats reserved per group, and has held regular monthly meetings since March 2021. The Accord and policy body paved the way for the comprehensive [2022-2027 North Sea Programme](#), which lays out the Netherlands' marine strategy and latest MSP. If its provisions are followed, the NGO WWF [states that is one of the best examples](#) for how to develop offshore renewable energy in EU seas (WWF European Policy Office, 2022).



CATEGORIES:

Comprehensive Engagement Programmes

Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence

10 OCEaN principles to guide early, meaningful & improved engagement



Final thoughts & path forward

- **Limits of engagement:** OCEaN's principles provide broad meaningful guidance to design approaches, but even 'best practice' engagement efforts cannot guarantee universal acceptance or fully eliminate potential project delays from conflicts with other sea users.
- **Redefining success:** Countries, industry, and civil society must collaborate on clear metrics, targets, and evaluation methods to measure true engagement impact and support science-based decisions.
- **Future outlook:** More exploration and quantifiable data is needed to outline the connection MSP and project-level engagement efforts, supported by OCEaN's expertise and best practice sharing in Europe.





Learn more on
our website



ocean
Offshore Coalition for
Energy and Nature



Register for our
events mailing list

