SHARED SEAS, SHARED DECISIONS

Stakeholder Engagement in Offshore Wind and Grid Planning



ocean
Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature

NORTH & BALTIC SEAS



03

PREFACE

The Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) brings together non-governmental organisations (NGOs), transmission system operators (TSOs), and wind industry organisations from across Europe. Together we work towards a sustainable deployment of offshore energy and grid infrastructure while ensuring alignment with nature protection and healthy marine ecosystems. OCEaN focuses on nature-friendly offshore wind and grid deployment in the Baltic Sea and Northern Seas, including the Greater North Sea area and Celtic Seas.

OCEaN is founded, convened, and moderated by the Renewables Grid Initiative

MEMBERS OF OCEAN

TSOs

50Hertz, Amprion, Elia, EirGrid, Energinet, National Grid Ventures, RTE, Statnett, TenneT.

NGOs

BirdLife International — Europe & Central Asia, Climate Action Network Europe — CAN Europe, Germanwatch, Danish Society for Nature Conservation, Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. — DUH, DMEC, Naturschutzbund — NABU, Natuur&Milieu, the North Sea Foundation — Stichting De Noordzee, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds — RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, the World Wide Fund for Nature – European Policy Office — WWF EPO.

Wind Industry Organisations

Energie Baden-Württemberg AG — EnBW, Green Power Denmark, Iberdrola, Ørsted, Seawind Ocean Technology, Renewables Norway, RWE, Siemens Gamesa, Skyborn Renewables, SSE Renewables, Van Oord, Vattenfall, WindEurope, Wind Energy Ireland, the German Network for Wind Energy — WAB, the German Federal Association of Offshore Wind Farm Operators — BWO.

Supporting Organisations

Ocean Institute, IUCN, Seas at Risk.

This report was prepared as part of the OCEaN workstream on stakeholder engagement, through which OCEaN Members analyse the legal frameworks governing stakeholder engagement in offshore wind and grid development, outline current practices, and develop concrete recommendations for improvement.

Stakeholder engagement is a pre-requisite for achieving a nature-friendly energy transition at sea. Equally important are the implementation of avoidance and minimisation measures, the identification of synergies with other human activities at sea, and, when relevant and feasible, the adoption of nature-inclusive design solutions and the restoration of nature on- and off-site. Addressing these aspects alongside stakeholder engagement is essential to tackling the biodiversity and climate crises in a comprehensive way. While OCEaN also works on these broader topics, they fall outside the scope of this report.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DSS	Decision Support Systems
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
GES	Good Environmental Status
GIS	Geographic Information System
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning/Maritime Spatial Plan[1]
MSPD	Maritime Spatial Planning Directive
NIMBY	Not in my backyard
OCEaN	Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature
OSPAR	Mechanism by which 15 Governments and the European Union cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (named from the original Oslo and Paris Conventions)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
TSO	Transmission System Operator

1. This report uses European Commission and European MSP Platform norms for this acronym, where they use MSP to refer to both Maritime Spatial Planning and Maritime Spatial Plans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coastal communities and stakeholders affected by or involved in offshore wind and grid projects are key enablers of infrastructure development that benefits both people and nature. As offshore wind and grids expand in increasingly crowded and ecologically sensitive seas, **meaningful engagement is becoming essential to improve planning quality, reduce conflicts, and support timely and nature-friendly delivery of this infrastructure.**

This report is particularly timely in light of the European Ocean Act process, which is expected to update the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) and strengthen cross-sectoral coordination in marine planning.

Gathering the expertise of Members and collaborators of OCEaN — North and Baltic Seas, this report presents an overview of stakeholder engagement approaches, policy and legal frameworks, and considerations for offshore wind and grid development at both Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and project levels.

A key limitation in existing literature is that stakeholder engagement in offshore wind and grid development is often analysed either at the level of MSP or at the level of individual projects, but rarely in terms of how these two levels interact. As a result, the complementarity between strategic engagement in MSP and more concrete, project-level engagement is not sufficiently explored.

This report addresses this by looking at **stakeholder engagement across planning levels**: how early engagement at MSP level can help identify sensitivities, conflicts, knowledge gaps, and coexistence opportunities, and how project-level engagement can then refine solutions, address site-specific concerns and support implementation.

The report finds that **effective engagement is most valuable when it starts early, is transparent about what can be influenced, connects strategic and project-level discussions, and creates feedback loops showing how stakeholder input has been considered.**

Desk research and targeted interviews carried out in 2025 and 2026 were used to summarise policies, opportunities, and challenges behind engagement approaches, and to explore how more holistic processes can deliver benefits for project developers, communities, and nature. While this report confirms the relevance of connecting engagement across planning levels, it also highlights that further evidence should be collected on how such connections work in practice.

The report also presents a selection of **inspiring practices** from northern European countries, civil society, and wind and grid industry actors, alongside **ten principles** to support public authorities, project developers, grid operators and stakeholders in designing engagement processes that are timely, inclusive, transparent, and connected across planning levels.

INTRODUCTION



2. *For the purposes of this report, Northern and Baltic Seas refers to the Greater North Sea region, Celtic Sea and Baltic Sea.*

The Northern and Baltic Seas[2] are fragile ecosystems that provide us with essential ecosystem services, from food to wind for offshore energy and routes for global trade. In recent years, the development of offshore wind in these waters has been high on political agendas and has been followed by ambitious commitments for the coming decades. European countries in the region aim to take advantage of favourable wind yields at sea, build infrastructure which addresses the urgent need to decarbonise Europe's energy system in the fight against climate change, and ensure energy security during geopolitical uncertainties.

However, these ambitions must contend with the reality that marine and coastal ecosystems are already under severe pressure worldwide (Keijser et al., 2018). On top of the ever-growing and multifaceted impacts from climate change, seabird populations are declining due to various anthropogenic activities; marine mammals are increasingly impacted by underwater noise; human activities such as bottom trawling are disturbing benthic communities; and entire ecosystems face cumulative impacts from various anthropogenic pressures, including offshore wind development (Helsinki Commission — HELCOM, 2023; OSPAR, 2023). At the same time, offshore wind development inherently contributes to climate goals and offers the opportunity to support some biodiversity goals through nature-friendly solutions, provided it follows the mitigation hierarchy. Other marine sectors should also strive towards this as part of an overall effort to reduce cumulative pressures.

Preserving the health of the Northern and Baltic Seas is critical. Yet, oceans are the subject of a central dilemma: how different uses in their waters can be balanced with marine ecosystem protection (Morf, Kull, et al., 2019).

Ocean governance can provide the baseline foundation for managing this balance. Ocean governance is a broad concept which refers to processes across international, regional, national, and local levels focused on maritime activities and involves a wide range of actors: governments, private companies, NGOs, and local communities (Zervaki, 2019). Importantly, governance is not only about ecosystems — it is also about people whose livelihoods, cultures, and recreation are tied to the sea. Therefore, engaging these stakeholders in the energy transition is vital. Stakeholder participation has been mentioned as a fundamental prerequisite to achieve sustainable development already in the UN's Agenda 21, and is further mentioned in other important conventions and principles for nature protection such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi biodiversity targets (Morf, Moodie, et al., 2019).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT RELATED TO OFFSHORE WIND AND GRID DEVELOPMENT CAN ARISE AT DIFFERENT PLANNING LEVELS



MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING (MSP)

Where policies are set to guide spatial decisions and co-existence opportunities and cumulative impacts are addressed



PROJECT PLANNING AND PERMITTING

Where projects are designed and approved

Although research and guidelines on stakeholder engagement exist, they often remain abstract or are framed in a very general way (Ehler et al., 2019; Morf, Moodie, et al., 2019). OCEaN Members aim to close this gap by sharing practical experiences, clarifying the regulatory framework, highlighting good practices, and providing recommendations for improvement. This is particularly timely with the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) under revision — expected by the end of 2026 under the new Ocean Act — and numerous updates to Maritime Spatial Plans at the national level. An implementation report from the European Commission on the progress of the MSPD noted that while positive trends for marine stakeholder engagement have emerged in some European Member States over the past decade[3], these trends are not universal and challenges remain[4]. These challenges include an uneven balance of stakeholder involvement for less organised, non-institutional actors; capacity constraints for administrations; and barriers for more inclusive engagement due to the complexity of some MSP processes, among others (European Commission, 2026).

3. These trends includes engagement models which are ongoing rather than time-fixed and formal, and targeted sectoral consultations and digital tools to complement public consultations.

4. The European Commission has a dedicated activities and principles on stakeholder engagement and public acceptance for onshore grids infrastructure through the Pact for Engagement.





This report also comes at a time when Europe is seeking to accelerate offshore wind and grid development while also meeting biodiversity protection and restoration objectives and ensuring that marine space remains available for nature, fisheries, coastal communities, and other sea users. Several EU policy files are shaping this agenda, including the Renewable Energy Directive, the EU Grids Package, the Pact for Engagement, the Nature Restoration Law, the Environmental Omnibus, and the planned stress test of the Birds and Habitats Directives, with potential implications for environmental safeguards and stakeholder engagement. Against this backdrop, faster delivery should not come at the expense of meaningful engagement or robust environmental scrutiny. On the contrary, it makes it even more important to connect planning levels — from energy and grid planning to MSP, permitting and project design — so that risks, sensitivities, and coexistence opportunities are identified early.

Taking this context into account and diving into the current state of stakeholder engagement at both the MSP and project level, this report seeks to shed light on how to improve engagement approaches within offshore wind and grid planning so that it delivers benefits for both people and nature.

II STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Definitions

Stakeholders can be defined as an individual, group or organisation with an interest in a project or plan and who can either affect or be affected by the project or plan itself or associated actions, objectives and policies (Keijser et al., 2018; Rose & Freeman, 2024). Their involvement during planning and/or project development has different names across literature, guidelines and policies. Some of the most commonly used terms are ‘stakeholder engagement’, ‘public participation’ and ‘stakeholder integration’ (Stober et al., 2021).

For the purposes of this report and the context of offshore wind energy and connected grid infrastructure development, stakeholder engagement is the formal or informal practice of involving individuals, groups, or organisations through information sharing, deliberation, or collaborative decision-making to enable participatory governance, community empowerment, and co-design where appropriate (Morf, Kull, et al., 2019; Morf, Moodie, et al., 2019, p. 20; Rose & Freeman, 2024; Stober et al., 2021, Süsser et al., 2023).

Policy Landscape

In 2008, the European Union (EU) adopted the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)** which requires EU Member States to define strategies to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) of EU marine waters by 2020. The Directive defines GES as “the environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive” (Directive 2008/56/EC, 2008). No EU country has achieved GES by the time of this report’s publication in 2026.

In addition, the EU Integrated Maritime Policy aims to find a balance between blue growth and GES, by using, among other methods, Maritime Spatial Planning (Keijser et al., 2018). Maritime Spatial Planning was established by the **MSP Directive** in 2014 as a mandatory tool for all EU Member States with marine waters. The MSP is defined as “a process by which the relevant Member State’s authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives” (Directive 2014/89/EU, 2014). In practice, this means that all Member States need to prepare their national Maritime Spatial Plan. These analyse and allocate the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas in a way that achieves strategic political and social goals (Custodio et al., 2022; Morf, Kull, et al., 2019; Pomeroy & Douvere, 2008; UNESCO-IOC/European Commission, 2021). Furthermore, in the European North Sea, the rapid development of offshore wind has been a key driver for MSPs (SEANSE project partners, 2020; Spijkerboer et al., 2020).



As part of the MSP Directive, **Article 9** states that Member States need to establish means of public participation by informing all interested parties and by consulting the relevant stakeholders. This is also connected to **the Aarhus Convention**, which asks for stakeholder engagement to take place to inform policy-making and implementation on matters of environmental concern (United Nations, 1998).[5] The Aarhus Convention was transposed into EU law in the Public Participation Directive (Directive 2003/35/EC, 2003) and the Directive on public access to environmental information (Directive 2003/4/EC, 2003); the MSP Directive also aligns with these public participation requirements. Taking into account these legal requirements, MSP should be designed with a collaborative approach rather than being a top-down mechanism, balancing the needs of different stakeholders and proactively shaping the distribution of activities at sea (Partelow et al., 2023; Wächter, 2013). The goal of this approach is to combine the expert knowledge on technical and specific details with the knowledge from local communities and site- and location-specific information (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024).

MSPs and Network Development Plans also fall under the scope of the EU's **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** Directive, which sets out requirements for national and transboundary consultations. Member States must identify the public affected by the draft plan or programme and give stakeholders early and effective opportunities in a reasonable time frame to respond to these plans or programmes and their accompanying environmental reports (Directive 2001/42/EC, 2001).

5. The Aarhus Convention was transposed into EU law in the Public Participation Directive (Directive 2003/35/EC, 2003) and the Directive on public access to environmental information (Directive 2003/4/EC, 2003); the MSP Directive also references with these public participation requirements.

At the project level, stakeholder engagement is mandated as part of the EU's **Birds and Habitats Directives** and the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive**, which states that all major development projects must be first assessed for their impact on the environment in order for the project to start, which includes offshore wind and grid infrastructure (Directive 2014/52/EU, 2014). During this process, developer is also responsible for creating a stakeholder engagement plan explaining how the stakeholders will be involved and in what way their input will be integrated within the project's design and operation. Each Member State also has dedicated national regulations governing the consent of infrastructure projects at sea and on land which may also have engagement requirements that must be fulfilled to proceed with the deployment of an offshore wind or grid project.[6]

While offshore wind developers and grid operators are therefore legally obliged to carry out some level of stakeholder engagement, they usually **go beyond what is required** (Rose & Freeman, 2024). The Directives mentioned above provide requirements and aims but are not prescriptive on formats, timings, indicators, or methods of engagement. Going beyond what is compulsory can include governments working with developers to pursue longer engagement periods and engagement before projects or processes formally begin, different formats of consultation exchange (in the form of roundtables, webinars, fairs, working groups, workshops, etc.), use of innovative digital tools to visualise project plans and routes, additional scientific studies or monitoring to address stakeholder concerns, and/or co-creation of community benefits, among others.[7]

However, the principles, methods and level to which stakeholders are really engaged in both MSP and project-level processes vary between countries and developers, highlighting that **no single approach to stakeholder engagement works universally** and they should be tailored to local and national planning cultures and objectives (Morf, Kull, et al., 2019; Zaucha & Kreiner, 2021).

In order to understand the differences in how stakeholder engagement is conducted, it is crucial to clarify the actor responsible for undertaking stakeholder engagement, types of stakeholders to be involved, and what kind of format(s) would be suitable to carry out engagement (Rose & Freeman, 2024). For an overview of administrative bodies responsible for conducting engagement in selected countries in which OCEaN Members operate it, please see *Annex 1*. In addition, see *Annex 2* for an overview of the stakeholder groups involved in and affected by the development of offshore wind and grids at the MSP and project levels. Concrete examples of approaches and formats to undertake stakeholder engagement will be addressed in the subsequent chapters.

6. In an aim to speed up permitting, the EU's Renewable Energy Directive III (RED III) also requires European Member States to designate Renewables Acceleration Areas, which are then presumed to be exempt from EIAs. If Member States choose to designate offshore wind areas, reduced opportunities for stakeholder engagement could occur at the project level. So far only Germany has implemented this into law for offshore areas and the exact implications for engagement processes are unclear.

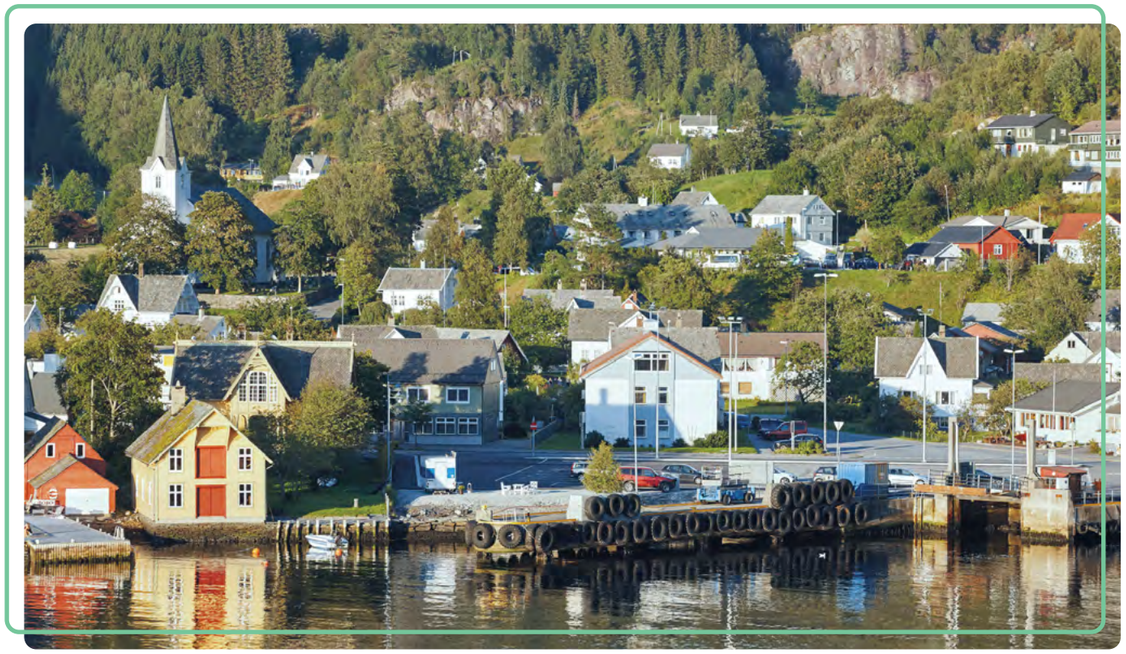
7. See good practices on different types of engagement in the European Commission's 2026 Public Inclusion Toolbox, Annex 1.

Policy Landscape in European Countries not part of the EU

As OCEaN represents some Members operating out of non-EU Member States, namely the United Kingdom and Norway, an overview of their policy landscape is presented below. The UK and Norway are not bound by the MSP Directive or other EU legislation related to stakeholder engagement and have their own policies and regulations at the level of maritime spatial planning and for individual offshore wind and grid projects.

In the **United Kingdom**, a non-EU Member as well as a country consisting of four separate nations (Wales, England, Scotland, Northen Ireland), the UK Marine Policy Statement provides the policy framework for marine planning while the Crown Estate is a separate public body tasked with identifying seabed areas for offshore wind and other sectors. A Statement of Public Participation is required for each marine plan area under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and outlines how, when, and why stakeholders are consulted. Each nation has their own approach to implementing Marine Plans and their required stakeholder engagement. However, all must be supported by a suite of impact assessments and take into account the objectives of the UK Marine Strategies Regulations of 2010, including measures to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in marine waters (The Marine Strategy Regulations, 2010) (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2024).

At the project level in the UK, offshore wind and grid projects require both planning permissions and a marine license covering infrastructure built on the seabed; each have their own respective consultation requirements. Marine licenses may also be required for surveys and activities during development, construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning phases of a wind farm's life. The Marine License and Development Consent Order processes lay out public consultation requirements. Statutory consultation is required under the Planning Act 2008 and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are expected to develop and comply with a Statement of Community Consultation. How this is organised depends on the country in question, the size of the wind farm in megawatts, and its location. Interestingly, in the UK the offshore wind developer is also in charge of connecting the wind farm to transmission infrastructure (on- and offshore), so developers are responsible for conducting further consultations onshore with local authorities for planning permission approval. Stakeholders are considered through impact assessments and engagement plans are required for specific stakeholders. For example, Fisheries Liaison and Coexistence Plans are required, outlining approaches and efforts when engaging with commercial fisheries stakeholders.



Norway has its own approach which includes a system of **integrated ocean management plans** rather than Maritime Spatial Plans. These were first laid out in the 2001 white paper Protecting the Riches of the Seas and subsequently approved by the Norwegian parliament. Their plans follow an approach of ecosystem-based management which considers ecosystems as a whole, including the role of people, for decisions on ocean and marine ecosystem management. There are currently three ocean management plan areas for Norwegian waters. Plans are not legally binding and updated in four-year cycles. The government tasked the Forum for Integrated Ocean Management with creating a dedicated plan to involve and consult affected stakeholders in the latest update pertaining to the years 2024-2028.

Norway's Offshore Energy Act of 2010 also requires strategic impact assessments (SIAs) before areas for offshore wind energy development can be formally opened. However, these SIAs are based on existing data, and extensive knowledge gaps exist. A mandatory public consultation process on these areas occurs once the SIAs are confirmed (Crossgov, 2025). Once a project is in development, an EIA and associated consultations run by the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) are needed before a permit to build is granted. Norway has implemented both the SEA Directive and EIA Directive of the EU into Norwegian law, as under the EEA Agreement they are bound to the EU's environmental legislation, with some notable exceptions (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2023).



Opportunities and Risks for Stakeholder Engagement

In this section, an overview is provided on the benefits of stakeholder engagement, the risks of poorly organised or insufficient engagement approaches, key factors behind successful engagement efforts, and available tools and options for effective planning and implementation of offshore wind and grids.

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component in the successful delivery of offshore projects, particularly given the substantial financial investments and complexities involved. While participatory processes can be **time- and resource-intensive**, they represent a **relatively small cost compared to the potential consequences of neglecting** them (Keegan & Torres, 2021). Research shows that early and extensive engagement can minimise long-term expenses by reducing delays, lowering the risk of litigation, and fostering smoother project implementation (Klain et al., 2015). In contrast, **insufficient stakeholder involvement increases the risk of project failure and perceptions of injustice, which can undermine project outcomes**.

Public opposition remains one of the most unpredictable and politically sensitive risks to infrastructure projects, often resulting in increased costs, reputational damage, or even government-led cancellations (Cuppen et al., 2016).

However, there is a growing body of evidence outlining which stakeholder engagement approaches can enable the delivery of positive outcomes for people and groups consulted, the actors running consultations, and what tactics should be avoided.[8]

8. An overview of the stakeholder groups involved in or affected by the development offshore wind and grids in Europe's Northern Seas can be found in Annex 2.

Benefits of designing inclusive stakeholder engagement

In general, research shows that offshore wind projects are most effective when developed with extensive stakeholder participation **including a diverse set of actors** throughout the process (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024). This approach promotes transparency, inclusiveness, knowledge exchange, conflict mitigation, trust and empowerment (Custodio et al., 2022). Well-designed participatory processes can yield substantial benefits across scales. For individuals, they may provide new skills and increase self-efficacy; for governments, they can foster strategic alliances and policy support; for offshore project developers, they can foster trust, and avoidance of litigation; and for society, they can deliver social learning, more legitimate policies, and improved implementation of projects (Stober et al., 2021).

Early engagement of stakeholders to designate areas for offshore wind is vital and can be facilitated by MSP (Zervaki, 2019). Clear plans by national governments and/or seabed owners alongside engagement with other seas users must be done to outline suitable offshore wind lease areas. This allows infrastructure projects to be developed in a more coordinated, predictable, and planned manner, and for conflicts to be addressed early when spatial changes can still potentially be considered (Dvorak & Bohan, 2024) (UNESCO-IOC & UN Global Compact, 2025). This is also relevant at the transboundary level, as cross-border consultation formats ensure policies on offshore wind, grids, and marine protection are effectively coordinated, relevant information is continuously exchanged, and friction between neighbouring countries is avoided (Zervaki, 2019; United Nations, 1998; Offshore TSO Collaboration, WindEurope, HyNOS, 2025).

Stakeholders contribute **vital knowledge and experience** during both MSP and project planning processes. Fishers, coastal communities, conservation groups, and industry actors all provide data that may not be available through conventional regulatory and scientific channels. This data can be a **key element of project design and risk management**, such as insights which contribute to effective mitigation measures and/or the strategic siting of infrastructure outside of key fishing grounds. Research highlights the importance of integrating fishers' knowledge into marine management, even though this information is often qualitative, localised, difficult to reconcile with standardised quantitative datasets, and access may be limited due to commercial and/or competition-related sensitivities. The integration of such knowledge into MSP is important not only for filling knowledge gaps but also for enhancing legitimacy and achieving stakeholder buy-in (González & Connell, 2022; Yates, 2018).

At the national level, effective engagement at both the MSP and project-level **depends on cross-departmental cooperation, adequate resourcing of permitting authorities, and clear policy roadmaps** that guide local implementation. Enhanced collaboration among ministries not only streamlines permitting processes but also strengthens public trust in governance structures (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024). At the local level, meaningful engagement requires that affected communities have both the capacity to influence decisions and access to transparent, timely, and comprehensible information. This includes mechanisms such as enhanced EIAs — which provide further positive social or environmental benefits beyond legal requirements — as well as community ownership models and proactive two-way communication (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024).

At the project level, **community benefit schemes**, whether financial or non-financial, can play an important role in balancing local costs with broader societal benefits. When designed transparently and with a clear purpose to recognise communities impacted by infrastructure, these benefits can enhance support for projects (Renewables Grid Initiative, 2026); however, they risk being perceived as coercive or as 'bribes' if implemented poorly (Klain et al., 2015). How to organise these benefit schemes depends on local preferences and may differ from community to community. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss this already during stakeholder engagement processes in order to find a solution that satisfies the impacted community (Rose & Freeman, 2024).

One potential benefit of offshore wind and grid projects for local communities can be **job creation** connected to a new industry being introduced to the area. For example, offshore wind energy can provide employment opportunities during planning, construction, and operation, and workers in other industries can be recruited and use their offshore experience to assist in survey assistance and guarding duties, among others. This could be particularly relevant for communities with industries in transition (e.g. from oil to renewables, such as Norway) or communities where previously strong sectors are declining (e.g. fisheries, like in the UK) (Withouck et al., 2023).



Methods and formats for stakeholder engagement

Planning cultures with experience in MSP and associated stakeholder participation show that traditional, conservative engagement methods and formats often fall short. Examples of conservative approaches include one-way transfer of planning information with limited opportunities to collect or include feedback from stakeholders, insufficient or limited use of digital communication tools, and/or the use of technical language poorly tailored to different stakeholder groups, among others. These methods and formats fail to foster common ground, satisfy stakeholders, or ensure genuine participation, and often exclude a diverse range of voices (Gopnik et al., 2012). In contrast, more **interactive, innovative, and creative approaches tend to yield better results**. This can range from digital tools and platforms for viewing planning scenarios to unique participatory methods, and at the project level can include the co-creation of tailored benefits to give back to communities (see chapter on inspiring practices for detailed examples, starting on *page 26*). It is important to match these engagement formats to the type of knowledge stakeholders can provide, so that the general public and experts will naturally be presented with information and provide feedback in different setups, allowing planners to use their time and resources efficiently (Lukambagire et al., 2024).



A wide range of **tools** have been developed to facilitate participatory MSP and renewable energy planning. Decision Support Systems (DSS), such as INDIMAR, have been deployed in the Northern and Baltic Seas to identify suitable offshore wind sites by accounting for environmental, social, and economic considerations (Abramic et al., 2021). Similarly, Ireland's Local Area Renewable Energy Strategies (LARES) provide a geographic information system (GIS)-based, participatory platform that centralises planning and environmental datasets, while incorporating stakeholder feedback to support transparent and collaborative siting decisions (González & Connell, 2022).

Beyond technical tools, diverse **participatory methods** exist and can strengthen the quality and quantity of feedback collected. These range from formal mechanisms such as public hearings and questionnaires, to more collaborative methods like citizen panels and advisory committees (Ehler et al., 2019). Serious games, including the MSP Challenge board game, have also been shown to enhance learning and stakeholder interaction by simulating planning processes in accessible formats (Keijser et al., 2018).

Lastly, **communication and timing** are central. Clear and timely communication enables trust-building and collaboration among stakeholders. Stakeholders must understand what is expected of them throughout the process to provide effective input. Communication should not only translate technical language for lay audiences but also bridge gaps between different professional and technological sectors (Yates, 2018).

Furthermore, if stakeholder participation occurs too late in the planning cycle, opportunities for meaningful influence are limited, reducing both the quality of outcomes and stakeholder trust (Ehler et al., 2019). For example, identification of areas for offshore wind and grids, and associated stakeholder engagement, typically occurs during MSP and network development plans, and therefore large changes to these areas are limited by the time consultations on individual projects begin. Conversely, problems can arise if offshore wind developers or TSOs engage too early on specific projects without sufficient details or too broad of a scope. This can lead to frustration and confusion from stakeholders due to the limited information available, or the the potential for consultation fatigue if plans later change.

Risks of poorly organised engagement processes

Poorly organised stakeholder engagement may foster disinterest, self-serving behaviour, or even destructive opposition, resulting in delays and increased costs (Rose & Freeman, 2024; Miljanović Rusan et al., 2025; Stober et al., 2021). Offshore wind projects can face a 'green-green dilemma': while they deliver renewable energy, they may simultaneously produce negative impacts on marine ecosystems, seascapes and coastal activities, or fishing livelihoods (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024; Keegan & Torres, 2021; Solman et al., 2021). Such impacts can lead to strong public opposition. Mischaracterising opposition as 'NIMBYism' ('not in my backyard') risks overlooking legitimate local concerns and place-based values (Jenkins & Kurkinen, 2024; Klain et al., 2015).

An example of the consequences of weak communication in stakeholder engagement can be illustrated by Centrica's Docking Shoal offshore wind farm in the UK, which became the first project of its kind to be refused planning consent. Analysis indicates that inadequate engagement and unclear communication between developers, regulators, and statutory bodies were significant factors in the refusal decision (Broadbent & Nixon, 2019). In contrast, evidence suggests that **open, early, and genuine dialogue with stakeholders enhances project resilience and legitimacy**. One option to facilitate this dialogue could be to have a bridging organisation involved, trying to translate facts, clarify potential benefits and address any concerns coming from local communities (Klain et al., 2015).

For the development of offshore wind and grids, what does it look like to foster well-organised engagement at the MSP and project level which is open, early, creates meaningful opportunities for exchange, and enables successful project and planning outcomes? In the next chapter, this report lays out a selection of concrete engagement examples undertaken by governments, offshore wind developers, TSOs, and civil society.

III 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, collected in the following categories:

MSP INSPIRATION
5 examples

GOVERNMENT-LED OR COLLABORATIVE 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

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.



© Sarah Vanden Eede | 4Sea

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 4Sea 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



MSP INSPIRATION

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 & Holzhacker, 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 (*Noordzeeakkoord*). 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 Netherland's marine strategy and latest MSP. If its provisions are followed, the NGO WWF states that it is one of the best examples for how to develop offshore renewable energy in EU seas (WWF European Policy Office, 2022).



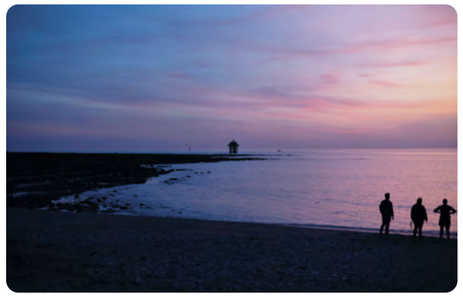
CATEGORIES: Comprehensive Engagement Programmes; Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



MSP INSPIRATION

France's public consultations aim to build trust and buy-in for their marine future

From November 2023 to April 2024, the French government held a large public debate on offshore wind and biodiversity protection as a part of an update of their four sea basin strategy documents, which cover mainland France's waters and define at local level the policy laid out in the National Strategy for the Sea and the Coast (*Stratégie nationale pour la mer et le littoral 2024-2030*). Together these four sea basin strategy documents represent the national-level MSP.



To reach France's goal of 45GW of offshore wind by 2050, 5% strong protected areas by 2030, and sustainable development of activities, this consultation aimed to disseminate knowledge on the marine environment and create a link between offshore wind and onshore infrastructure, increase the amount and type of input received, and inspire the general public to engage with the implications of these goals. Run by the National Commission of Public Debate, an impartial office designated to run debates on public infrastructure projects in France, over 375 events took place and 21000 participants gave feedback. Alongside an online platform for collecting feedback, they organised events in communities along the entire coastline, including in bars and cafés, alongside webinars and thematic workshops. This was followed by another five months of in-depth consultations with maritime experts alongside targeted feedback rounds with stakeholders expressing disagreement with areas allocated to offshore wind, such as some fisheries. All of this feedback led to a ministerial decision on offshore wind and dedicated maps delineating areas for activities, which were adopted as part of the MSP process in November 2025.

CATEGORIES: Comprehensive Engagement Programmes | Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



MSP INSPIRATION

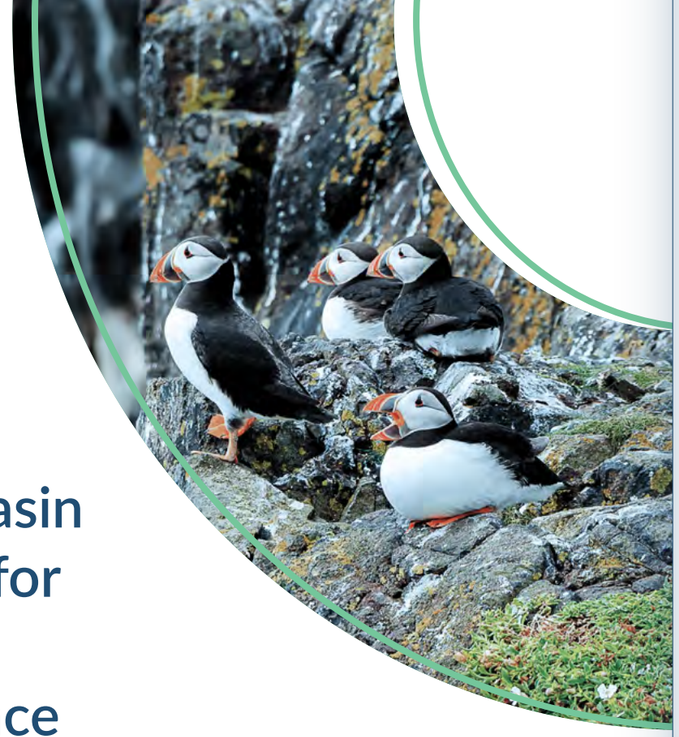
Finland constructs clear scenarios to structure conversations on maritime space

9. Although Finland is not represented in OCEaN's Membership, with a large Baltic Sea coastline, proximity to many of the countries analysed in this report, and a notable approach to their MSP process, it was decided the example was particularly relevant for readers.

Finland[9] has three regional, non-binding marine spatial plans (Northern Bothnian Sea; Gulf of Finland; Archipelago Sea and Southern Bothnian Sea) which are aligned with the EU MSP Directive and were approved in 2020. Because of its unique geography with thousands of islands, Finland's approach to MSP began by working together with regional, coastal communities first and planning space for offshore activities second. They created a Scenarios for maritime areas 2050 report, assessing potential scenarios for blue economy sectors and their impacts on the marine environment.

As a result of the scenario review, three alternative scenarios were created for the Baltic Sea with clear language communicating to the public and stakeholders the overall future seascape vision. The first scenario saw the Baltic Sea as a source of energy and minerals, the second as prioritising recreation and thriving ecosystems, and the third focussed on geopolitical and strategic concerns. These scenarios could be compared online on a dedicated website available in Finnish, Swedish and English. After the scenario review, the planning phase continued as vision and goal work in the autumn of 2019. During an interactive stakeholder cooperation period with national and regional thematic workshops and hundreds of participants, a national sustainable use vision for 2050 was prepared for marine areas, as well as regional development goal overviews and sector-specific roadmaps for 2030. While some stakeholders praised this approach, others noted the sectoral visions were still too abstract and that areas for offshore wind were already determined to be insufficient. For the next iteration of Finland's marine spatial plans, preparation has already begun and stakeholder engagement is being prioritised. There is already a Maritime Spatial Planning Interaction Plan 2024-2027 for the engagement of all stakeholders in the MSP process, and studies are currently underway on offshore wind and how stakeholders should be consulted on this topic specifically.

CATEGORIES: Comprehensive Engagement Programmes



MSP INSPIRATION

Greater North Sea Basin Initiative as a forum for cross-border MSP exchange and guidance

The Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) was established in 2023 among nine northern European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) with the support of the European Commission. GNSBI aims to promote structured and coordinated cooperation among governments and marine stakeholders on developments central to the management of the Great North Sea Basin. This regional platform allows stakeholders from these countries, and external observers, to gather in a common forum and better coordinate on the limits of space in these waters, enhance coordination between sectoral interests, and improve MSP processes.



They discuss many of the concerns raised during stakeholder engagement processess at the MSP level in their individual countries, with working groups on fisheries, knowledge sharing, multi-use, cumulative impacts, and nature conservation and restoration. They are also starting to explore a new area of exchange focused on early dialogues on MSP, recognising that both stakeholder exchanges at a national level and across borders on spatial planning may benefit from opportunities outside the formal MSP consultations in respective countries.

CATEGORIES: Comprehensive Engagement Programmes | Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



GOVERNMENT-LED OR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

FLOWW Best Practice Guide for Offshore Wind and Fisheries in the UK

There is a requirement for developers to engage with fisheries as part of the planning and consenting process in the United Kingdom, but no obligation to compensate fishers if their activities are disrupted by offshore wind farm construction or operation. However, for many years the two industries have been aiming to improve cooperation in their working practices. This has been aided by the collaborative development of best practice approaches which support fisheries and offshore wind in working together, with the aim that development and fishing can proceed in a way which minimises impacts and maximises co-existence. This is a journey in progress. The FLOWW Best Practice guidance, first launched in 2014 and updated in 2025, is developed by the Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables (FLOWW) group — a collaborative endeavour of the offshore wind and fishing industries. It is endorsed by major offshore renewable energy players, fishery associations, government ministries and the Crown Estate. The guidance clearly lays out when in offshore wind lifecycles consultation with fishers should be initiated. It recommends that engagement begins as early as possible — at the site selection stage — and continues throughout the project lifecycle. Early input from the fishing industry can inform project design before surveys and consent applications, helping to avoid or minimise impacts in the longer-term. It also covers key roles and responsibilities of developers and fishers, recommendations and considerations for different types of liaison opportunities, and engagement formats and guidelines. Though the guidance is not mandatory, it provides an agreed benchmark for good practice and states that deviations should only be in 'exceptional circumstances', must be justified and alternatives explained, and actors should demonstrate 'how they continue to work consistently with the overarching aim of promoting cooperation and minimising disruption, whilst ensuring safety and maximising opportunities for co-existence.' Explore the FLOWW guide here.



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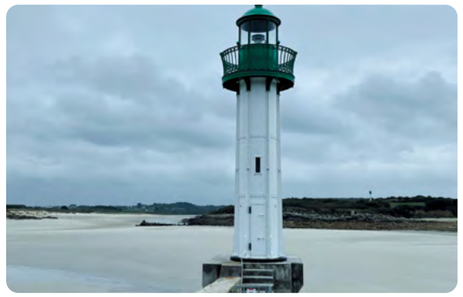
CATEGORIES: Early Engagement Approaches | Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



GOVERNMENT-LED OR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

France's offshore wind and grid funds plan to give back to citizens and nature

FARÉMER, a programme implemented within the framework of the public service contract between the French government and France's TSO RTE, and the offshore wind tax (*tax d'eolienne*) uses funds from offshore wind and grid infrastructure development to support affected communities and marine and coastal ecosystems. FARÉMER (*Fonds d'Accompagnement à la Réalisation des Projets en Mer*) began in 2022 for all RTE's new offshore projects, including offshore substations, subsea cables, and landfall sites. Initiatives are invited to apply for project funding if the project contributes to sustainable development of the area, including preserving heritage, sustainable tourism, biodiversity protection or research, and/or local energy transition support. A state administrative representative oversees the FARÉMER project selection committee which includes local authorities, NGOs, government officials, etc. Projects receive funding after an offshore grid project is authorised.



Restoration of the lighthouse of Mogueriec through FARÉMER, © RTE

The offshore wind tax (begun in 2005), on the other hand, does not apply to electricity grid connections and mandates that operational offshore wind farms up to 22km from the coast pay an annual tax, which in 2025 was €20,248 per megawatt installed. 50% of this tax is given to the coastal municipalities which can visibly see the wind farms, 35% is given to committees working on sustainable aquaculture and fishing, and 10% to the France Biodiversity Office. A similar fee must be paid by wind farms more than 22km from the coast but still within France's EEZ, with the full amount going to the state for sustainable development of the marine space.

CATEGORIES: Community Benefits



GOVERNMENT-LED OR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

Ireland's Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

In 2021, Ireland mandated that all renewable electricity generation projects must 'establish a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the local community' (SEAI, 2026). The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) and Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) have a set contribution of €2 per Megawatt hour of generation per project. The first offshore wind projects that will contribute to the ORESS were auctioned in June 2024. The Community Benefit Fund can support not-for-profit community enterprises where the focus is aligned with UN Sustainable Development goals and will be implemented by an appointed Fund Administrator. The Irish government have a Community Benefit Fund National Register, where all projects must be published, and a community benefit fund rulebook for ORESS1. These funds are now becoming a key part of the engagement efforts undertaken by developers, helping citizens understand how the potential disruptions and changes from offshore wind infrastructure can yield tangible benefits and contribute to the cultural and economic wellbeing of coastal communities. The second offshore wind auction that will deliver benefits under this scheme will be ORESS Tonn Nua, with ESB and Ørsted awarded development rights in November 2025.



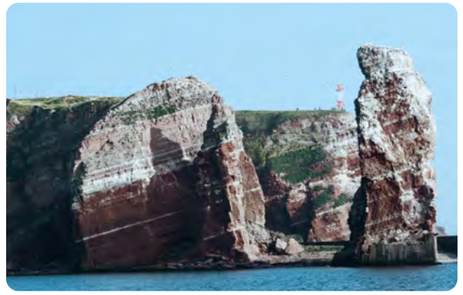
CATEGORIES: Community Benefits



GOVERNMENT-LED OR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES WITH PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

One-stop shops create predictability in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany

In some countries, state authorities have assigned specific bodies to act as a 'one-stop shop' for offshore wind developers. Beyond being the main government contact point for permits and technical considerations, they can also take on the role of managing stakeholder engagement for individual wind and/or grid projects and running official consultation procedures with both the public and potentially affected stakeholder groups. Such is the case in Germany, where the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (*BSH*) runs consultations for wind developers; in Denmark, where the Danish Energy Agency coordinates formal engagement processes for offshore wind projects; and in the Netherlands under the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (*RVO*). While this creates consistency and predictability in consultation procedures and saves time and effort, some stakeholders express that using a standardised consultation method in one-stop-shops can preclude creative and bottom-up engagement approaches on the part of individual organisations and communities. However, it should be noted these agencies are often limited in compromises they can offer as areas for offshore wind have already been designated in the MSP process, highlighting how engagement options at the project level cannot be decoupled from outcomes of engagement at the MSP level.



CATEGORIES: Comprehensive Engagement Programmes



WIND INSPIRATION

Tailoring engagement to island communities around offshore wind farms in Scotland

ScottishPower Renewables is developing MachairWind, an offshore wind farm located Northwest of Islay and West of Colonsay. MachairWind is one of the first proposed offshore windfarms off the west coast of Scotland, with a generating capacity of around 2GW. The project team has been engaging with communities on Islay, Jura, and Colonsay since 2022 and Mull and Iona since 2024, progressing from early awareness raising and relationship-building through to a statutory pre-application consultation in 2025. In recognition of the distinct characteristics and needs of each of MachairWind's 'host communities', the project undertook an extensive programme of non-statutory engagement, comprising of 16 events across the five islands. This early engagement centred on ensuring the communities were familiar with the project team; the project characteristics, activities, and milestones; and the consenting process, including when and how communities can inform decision making. Given the unique geographical and socio-economic context of MachairWind's host communities, ScottishPower Renewables recruited a locally based Community Engagement Manager, based on Jura, to provide a long-term on-the-ground presence, and to enable local knowledge, values and priorities to meaningfully influence decision-making on the project, such as the engagement strategy and the wind farm design itself. An example of this local influence is in the project's identification of ways to give back to communities in the pre-consent stage.

Through discussions with communities, ScottishPower Renewables launched the MachairWind Small Donations Fund in August 2025. This fund — only available to the five host island communities — offers donations of up £500 to local initiatives which benefit education, training and research, social initiatives, arts and culture, and/or biodiversity and climate change. To date, the fund has supported 21 local projects across all five islands. To ensure communities and local businesses harness the opportunities from MachairWind and other offshore wind developments, MachairWind developed a Socio-economic Action Plan; this document outlines the actions and commitments that ScottishPower Renewables has made to host communities, from community benefit funding, to upskilling the existing workforce, and delivering legacy impact reports for transparency and accountability. The Socio-economic Action Plan has been informed by the extensive engagement undertaken on MachairWind to date, and will continue to be shaped by communities, with ScottishPower Renewables 'commitments evolving as communities' priorities crystalise over time.

CATEGORIES: Early Engagement Approaches, Community Benefits



WIND INSPIRATION

Lobster fisheries and offshore wind industry collaborate to co-exist in England

Since planning began on the Westermost Rough wind farm, located eight kilometres off the coast of Yorkshire, England, Ørsted was aware that the site for the infrastructure overlapped with one of the largest commercial lobster fishing grounds in Europe. In the UK, fishing within wind farms areas is not prohibited, but coordination on fishing approaches, including the type of gear used, is vital to address potential risks, ensure safety of all workers, and prevent cable damage. Fishers expressed concerns about effects on lobster stocks and future sustainability, which led to Ørsted working closely with Holderness Fishing Industry Group in Bridlington to investigate potential effects on the crustacean habitat from the wind farm's construction or operation. A multi-year monitoring campaign was initiated in 2013 with Ørsted's financial support, and the gear type and layout tested to check whether successful coexistence was feasible. Results were promising, and once the Westermost Rough wind farm had been operational for a period of 5 years (2015-2020), the lobster fishers were assured their livelihoods could thrive alongside this infrastructure. What made a difference in finding common ground and building a bespoke monitoring campaign that addressed concerns was having the right experts in charge of communication between Ørsted and the fishers. These experts were able to build trust and understand varying perspectives due to their unique backgrounds in science and industry, ultimately contributing to workable solutions acceptable to both parties. Further information can be found here, or summarised in a film by Ørsted.



© Ørsted

CATEGORIES: Early Engagement Approaches | Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence



GRID INSPIRATION

Creating trust by engaging early and applying onshore lessons in Ireland

Over the past decade, Ireland's TSO EirGrid has transformed its approach to community engagement for onshore infrastructure projects. Recognising the need to build trust and fostering meaningful relationships with local communities, EirGrid adopted a people-centred engagement model that prioritises early dialogue, transparent decision-making, and genuine stakeholder participation. This approach has helped shape major projects across Ireland, ensuring that community perspectives are considered from the earliest stages of development while also establishing clear and regulator-supported community benefit schemes and community forums.



© EirGrid

As Ireland's energy infrastructure continues to evolve, EirGrid is applying these lessons beyond its onshore projects. This includes the development of the grid infrastructure to support offshore wind projects on the south and east coasts, and the delivery of the Celtic Interconnector, a major energy project that will create the first direct electricity connection between Ireland and continental Europe through an electricity link between Ireland and France.

The unique challenges and opportunities associated with coastal and marine communities has meant extending its approach to engage with additional stakeholders across fisheries and the wider maritime sector including ports, harbours, and coastguards. Though Ireland's offshore projects are still early in their development, EirGrid is already engaging citizens through their Powering up Offshore - South Coast programme. This early engagement approach means EirGrid can better understand local circumstances, identify potential challenges, address concerns, and conduct detailed monitoring to inform project progress. This approach includes building trust with communities that host this strategic infrastructure, maintaining accountability, taking on board local insights and concerns, acknowledging the project impact, and providing community benefits in the places directly affected by this infrastructure.

CATEGORIES: Early Engagement Approaches | Comprehensive Engagement Programmes


© RTE

GRID INSPIRATION

Electricity grid landing points side-by-side with historical memory in France

On France's Normandy coast, offshore wind development came into opposition with an unlikely user of the sea: the remembrance of the country's liberation at the end of World War II. Juno Beach, where Canadian troops came to shore in France in 1944 as part of the D-Day operations, and the town of Bernières-sur-Mer were to become the site of a landing point for submarine cables to connect the nearby Calvados offshore wind farm. Because of its historic relevance, residents were concerned that this site was becoming industrialised and expressed doubts whether offshore wind infrastructure is compatible with this memory. Understanding they were entering a community with its own ideas of what the seascape and beaches memorialise, French TSO RTE and wind developer EDF sponsored a festival La Berniéraise celebrating the landing of these troops. This festival has taken place every June for the past 10 years, and involves people on sailboats, paddles, canoes, paddle boards forming a joint floating group and coming to shore in a recreation of 1944. Partnering with this festival allowed industry representatives to engage with local citizens in a new way, provide science-based knowledge on nearby wind and grid projects with multiple information booths, and reassure the community that they are partners who recognise and appreciate the unique cultural site they operate in. Learn more about RTE's project in Bernières-sur-Mer, which as of 2026 is moving ahead smoothly after these engagement efforts.


© RTE

CATEGORIES: Early Engagement Approaches, Innovative Formats


© 50Hetrz

GRID INSPIRATION

Bringing citizens to offshore substations and wind farms through 50Hertz's boat tours in the Baltic Sea

Since 2015, the German TSO 50Hertz has brought around 250 interested citizens on a free, yearly boat tour to their offshore substations, where energy from nearby wind farms is collected and transported to land via sea cables. The excursion is part of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Energy Day, hosted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Tourism and Labour. Over the course of around 5 hours, participants travel 40km off the coast of the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to discuss questions about the offshore energy transition, hear presentations from 50Hertz experts about offshore grid construction, planning and permitting, and see this infrastructure with their own eyes. An effort is made to ensure local inhabitants are prioritised in registration to keep an ongoing dialogue with the communities directly affected by transmission lines and substations on land, which are vital to feed offshore energy into the onshore grid. 50Hertz considers these annual boat trips an important contribution to improving understanding of the offshore energy transition, fostering acceptance of grid expansion projects, and supporting a well-informed public discourse.


© 50Hetrz

CATEGORIES: Innovative Formats



GRID INSPIRATION

Co-creation processes for nature-inclusive offshore grid infrastructure in Belgium

In 2022, the Belgium government decided to proceed with creating an offshore energy island, connecting electricity grid infrastructure for a newly designated offshore wind zone in the North Sea and serving as a landing point for interconnectors with neighbouring countries. Though there was no legal requirement to undertake engagement in a specific way, the Belgium TSO Elia decided to initiate a large-scale co-creation process for the island's design to include nature-inclusive measures in the structure. They held a variety of workshops with experts from civil society, scientists, and engineers to formulate distinct NID measures which ranged from scour protection to gravel beds, oyster tables, and more. This was the first time an inclusive process of this magnitude had been undertaken for offshore infrastructure design in Belgium, keeping stakeholder wishes and nature at the forefront and utilising a bottom-up approach to problem solving with tangible outcomes supported by participants of the process. Learn more in Elia's brochure.



© Elia

CATEGORIES:

Early Engagement Approaches

Innovative Formats

Collaborating To Ensure Co-Existence

IV PRINCIPLES TO CREATE MEANINGFUL, IMPACTFUL ENGAGEMENT



The application of good practices related to the engagement of stakeholders at the level of MSP and offshore wind and grid projects, as outlined in the previous chapter with select examples, must be aligned with and tailored to local and regional cultural, national, and geographic contexts. Replicating what works in one location or context cannot always be guaranteed to have the same outcomes for stakeholder inclusion, support, or collaboration. However, there are certain fundamental considerations that can be adopted by national or regional government authorities or offshore wind and grid public engagement teams. Some of the considerations below may require legislative or policy adjustments while others may be more easily adapted into existing structures in government ministries or individual organisations.

These **Principles to Create Meaningful, Impactful Engagement** during offshore wind and grid development summarise recommendations collected during interviews with OCEaN Members and stakeholders from across Europe throughout 2025 and 2026. OCEaN's principles are not meant to be thought of as the only elements in successful stakeholder engagement regimes. They are intended as broad guidelines which, when combined, can contribute to outcomes where projects and plans move forward and those consulted feel included, listened to, and empowered.



GOING BEYOND WHAT IS REQUIRED

Principle #1

Marine spatial planning is not only about coordinating uses and activities at sea. It should provide an integrated, ecosystem-based framework for navigating societal, economic, and environmental objectives. **Statutory requirements for stakeholder engagement should be treated as a baseline**. Responsible planning authorities should tailor engagement approaches to cultural, linguistic, and geographical contexts and use appropriate methods to ensure that stakeholder input meaningfully informs plans and helps address competing interests. At the project level, engagement strategies should also seek to go beyond minimum requirements by identifying opportunities for meaningful participation and local value creation throughout the project lifecycle.



FLEXIBILITY MUST REMAIN AT THE HEART OF ENGAGEMENT DESIGN

Principle #2

No two countries or projects are the same, and governments and offshore wind and grid developers must be able to tailor their engagement efforts to the communities affected and the national, regional, local, and administrative context. **Mandating a one-size-fits-all approach** is counterproductive. Offshore infrastructure is often built in areas where defining the affected stakeholders is challenging and requires a case-by-case analysis, which in turn affects the types of stakeholders targeted for consultation and the potential design of community benefits.



ONGOING COORDINATION IS VITAL

Principle #3

An **open and ongoing dialogue** should exist between ministries, regulatory authorities, wind developers, transmission system operators, and civil society organisations, as well **as cross-border coordination** when appropriate. This should take the form of structured, regular dialogues or working groups to coordinate efforts, discuss challenges, and communicate government plans related to planning space for offshore wind and grids in MSP. Transparency about processes, deadlines, and potential opportunities for co-creation of engagement and planning processes should be central to these conversations. These dialogues should support the execution of early, consistent, and meaningful engagement activities with affected stakeholders.

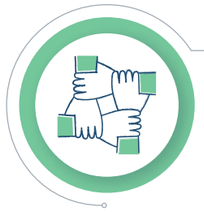
At the MSP level, see the approaches from the Netherlands (*page 29*) and Belgium (*page 28*) and the benefits of their ongoing coordination with stakeholders. At the project level, ScottishPower Renewables' approach in MachairWind (*page 37*) and Ørsted's interaction with lobster fishers (*page 38*) provide good examples of this principle in action.



ALIGNING PROCESSES TO CREATE CLARITY

Principle #4

Aligning both the timelines and processes for planning space at sea during MSP and offshore wind and grid area determination has numerous benefits for engagement efforts. Alignment creates consultation processes with a more complete overall picture, supports clarity for industry and affected communities, prevents duplication of efforts which can save time and budgets, and reduces uncertainties during consultations that can create opposition to projects in the future. France and the Netherlands are good examples where early alignment of MSP and offshore wind planning alongside coordinated consultation efforts have supported the inclusion of stakeholder views (see *page 30* and *29* respectively).



INCLUDING STAKEHOLDERS IN COMMUNITY FUND DESIGN IS A NO-BRAINER

Principle #5

The **creation of funds** tied to wind and grid projects can support communities and nature protection, among other goals. The design of funds can be aided by government support and must include ongoing conversations with those who can benefit from them. Funds are being developed in Denmark, Ireland (*page 35*), UK, Germany, Netherlands, and France (*page 34*) and lessons from their implementation should guide potential replication in other European nations.



LEAD WITH TRANSPARENCY

Principle #6

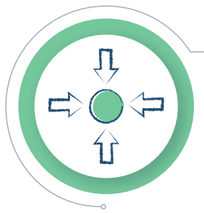
Honesty about limitations on space for certain activities or technical constraints for why infrastructure cannot be planned in a certain desired way is necessary, and must be repeated often, early and consistently. This openness can also contribute to an overall better relationship with stakeholders, as they understand decisions are not necessarily imposed top-down from the developer or government, but are instead related to external factors. Once certain limitations are clear and understood by stakeholders, conversations about possible solutions and compromises can begin. Belgium's recent MSP process (*page 28*) and approaches from Irish TSO EirGrid (*page 39*) provide good examples of the role honesty can play in successful engagement processes.



PROVIDING FUNDING AND STAFFING FOR MEANINGFUL PROCESSES

Principle #7

The competent MSP authorities and authorities approving permits for grid operators and wind developers **must have enough funding and staff support to prepare and analyse responses to consultations**. Properly funded and staffed authorities are an enabling factor for implementing engagement processes (in formats such as written feedback, workshops, events) and are necessary to demonstrate to stakeholders that they were listened to and their feedback was fairly considered. This includes responding to a large volume of opinions and drafting explanations for why certain feedback was taken into account while other feedback could not. These explanations, if communicated properly, can be a valuable trust-building exercise.



REDUCING COMPLEXITY WITH CENTRALISATION

Principle #8

One-stop shops by national authorities for all permits related to offshore wind and grid infrastructure implementation decrease duplication of efforts and streamline stakeholder engagement processes. There are pros and cons to this approach. It creates predictability and consistency for stakeholders on the one hand, but this centralised approach precludes creative, tailored engagement efforts and can appear inflexible and top-down in the solutions offered. In the EU, the RED III Directive mandates that MS set up one-stop shops; Member State that have not done so should adhere to this approach. With regards to the way stakeholder engagement is pursued through one-stop shops, countries can follow the examples of Germany, Netherlands, and Denmark detailed on *page 36*.



ENSURING SUFFICIENT TIME TO REVIEW PROPOSED PLANS

Principle #9

Adequate time for stakeholders to review consultation documents and/or plans is a vital element of successful engagement efforts. If possible, a **clear schedule on the timings** of consultation feedback periods is published and adhered to by authorities regarding MSP and the relevant TSO or wind developer for individual projects. Authorities should avoid, when possible, giving only a few weeks of consultation time with little notice, or having consultation periods during public holidays, as these can hinder the quality and amount of feedback collected.



PRIORITISE COMMUNICATION STYLE AND TONE

Principle #10

The language of public consultation documents must be tailored to audiences, and efforts by the MSP authorities and wind and grid developers should be undertaken to translate complex terms and technical aspects into relevant, digestible texts. This could be complemented by targeted outreach efforts to stakeholders who have traditionally been left out of consultation processes regarding the sea but could be impacted by infrastructure development. Examples of this can be seen in France and Finland's recent MSP process (*page 30* and *31* respectively).

These Principles can guide the design of more meaningful stakeholder engagement for offshore wind and grid infrastructure at the MSP and project level, but even well-designed approaches cannot guarantee universally accepted outcomes. Conflicts between different users may remain even after extensive engagement efforts and discussions on trade-offs, and these stakeholder conflicts may cause additional costs or delays for projects or planning processes.

Engagement approaches must therefore also be accompanied by **more frequent**, **open exchanges** on how countries, industries, and observers from academia and civil society **measure 'success'** for engagement approaches, plans, and programmes surrounding MSP and wind and grid project implementation. **The interaction and connectivity between engagement efforts at MSP and individual project level also requires further exploration and quantifiable data**. Better understanding of targets, metrics, and evaluation methodologies can help guide the creation of future engagement efforts that deliver measurable impacts.[10] OCEaN Members remain ready and willing to be part of this dialogue and will continue to follow the latest developments, offer their expertise, and share inspiring examples across Europe's Northern and Baltic Seas.

10. See the work of the Global Initiative for Nature, Grids and Renewables (GINGR) on this subject on their website.

V CONCLUSION

Meaningful stakeholder engagement is not an additional step in offshore wind and grid development; it is a core condition for planning and delivering infrastructure that works for people, nature, and the energy transition. As European seas become increasingly crowded, and as offshore wind and grid infrastructure expands in ecologically sensitive areas, engagement processes need to help identify concerns, conflicts, knowledge gaps, and coexistence opportunities as early as possible.



This report shows that stakeholder engagement is relevant at different planning levels. At the MSP level, engagement can help shape strategic choices on sea use, identify sensitive areas, and clarify potential conflicts between offshore wind, grids, nature protection, fisheries, coastal communities, and other sea users. At the project level, engagement can then support more concrete discussions on design, routing, mitigation, community benefits, and implementation. These two levels are connected, but they are not interchangeable. Each has a different scope, timing, and level of influence.

For this reason, **clarity is essential**. Stakeholders need to understand what can still be influenced, at which stage of the process, and how their input will be considered. Frustration can arise when consultation comes too late, when decisions appear already closed, or when stakeholders are invited to comment on issues that belong to another planning level. Better alignment between MSP, permitting, and project-level engagement can help reduce this gap, provided that engagement remains transparent about its purpose and limits.

The examples collected in this report show that **there is no single model for good stakeholder engagement**. National planning cultures, governance systems, ecological conditions, spatial constraints, and community expectations all shape what meaningful engagement looks like in practice. Some countries have developed more granular planning processes at MSP level, some were early adopters of one-stop-shop models for permitting projects, some have created permanent stakeholder forums, and others have experimented with innovative formats, community benefit schemes, and early regional engagement. These approaches offer inspiration, but they cannot simply be copied from one context to another.

At the same time, while the report touches upon the connection between engagement at MSP and project level, it also reveals that further evidence is still needed on how this connection works in practice. More systematic collection of evidence (including through targeted case studies, monitoring, indicators, and evaluation methodologies) and open exchanges would help authorities, developers, grid operators, and stakeholders understand which engagement approaches deliver meaningful outcomes, under which conditions, and for whom.

The **ten principles** presented in this report are intended to support this effort. They underline the importance of going beyond minimum legal requirements, ensuring sufficient time and resources, aligning processes, reducing complexity, communicating clearly, involving stakeholders in community benefit design and local value creation, and maintaining flexibility. Applied together, these principles can help make engagement more timely, inclusive, transparent and connected across planning levels.

Offshore wind and grid infrastructure can play a central role in achieving Europe's climate, energy, and nature protection goals. However, this transition will only be durable if coastal communities, sea users, and civil society are meaningfully involved in shaping it. Improving stakeholder engagement is therefore not only about reducing opposition or avoiding delays. It is about building stronger trust between parties that can support better decisions and a more robust, nature-friendly offshore energy transition that works for both people and the planet.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

OVERVIEW OF AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND LEVEL OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION PER EUROPEAN COUNTRY ANALYSED

Country	Body responsible for stakeholder engagement	Legal basis for stakeholder engagement[11]
BELGIUM	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Belgian minister for the North Sea, preparation and implementation by Marine Environment Service of the Federal Public Health Service. **Project Planning Level** TSO Elia and wind developers run the stakeholder and public consultation for their own projects.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Marine Environment Act of 11 December 2022; Royal Decree of 8 November 2023.
DENMARK	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Danish Maritime Authority; Danish Energy Agency; the Ministry of the Environment. **Project Planning Level** Consultations are administered by the Danish Energy Agency for offshore wind and grid projects and by the Danish Agency for Green Land Use and Aquatic Environment (SGAV) for landing points for offshore wind to the onshore transformer station.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Maritime Spatial Planning Act of 2016; 2024 amendment issued as Executive Order on the Amendment of Denmark's Maritime Spatial Plan; 2025 Act on amendments to the Marine Environment Protection Act and the Maritime Spatial Planning Act.

11. MSP legal basis taken from the European MSP Platform and MSP Global.

Country	Body responsible for stakeholder engagement	Legal basis for stakeholder engagement at MSP level
FRANCE	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Ministry in Charge of the Sea; Directorate General for Maritime Affairs; Fisheries and Aquaculture (DGAMPA); Maritime and Regional Prefects. **Project Planning Level** Public consultations for infrastructure projects, including offshore wind and grids, are generally coordinated by the National Commission for Public Debate alongside developers, with some exceptions.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Inclusion in the French Environmental Code via Article 123 of Law n°2016-1087 of 8 August 2016, further elaborated in Decree n°2017-724 of 3 May 2017; foundational public participation framework in Articles L. 121-1 onwards.
GERMANY	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** The Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) under the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB). **Project Planning Level** The BSH acts as a 'one-stop shop' and coordinates all engagement activities and communication between stakeholders for offshore wind and grid projects.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Federal Spatial Planning Act of 2008, amendments in 2017 and 2023. The MSP level is further distilled in a Site Development Plan outlined by the Offshore Wind Energy Act and has its own stakeholder engagement phase.
IRELAND	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Department of Climate, Energy, and the Environment and the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA). **Project Planning Level** Offshore wind developers for their projects. TSO EirGrid for landing points, interconnectors, and offshore substations.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Part 5 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act of 2018, now consolidated and updated in the Planning and Development Act 2024; Maritime Area Planning Act of 2021.

Country	Body responsible for stakeholder engagement	Legal basis for stakeholder engagement at MSP level
SWEDEN	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (HAV). **Project Planning Level** Under the current 'open door' policy[12], developers undertake all engagement. They are also responsible for the stakeholder engagement requirements for grid connections.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** The Marine Spatial Planning Ordinance (2015:400); Planning and Building Act (PBL Act, 2010:900); Swedish Environmental Code (Miljöbalken 1998:808)
UK	**Spatial Planning level (comparable to MSP as non-EU Member State):**[13] **England**: The Marine Management Organisation (MMO). **Scotland**: Marine Directorate, Scottish Government. **Wales**: Welsh Government. **Northern Ireland**: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). **Project Planning Level** Offshore wind developers are responsible for engagement processes for the wind farm, offshore transmission infrastructure, cables, and onshore landing point.	**Spatial Planning level (comparable to MSP as non-EU Member State):** **All nations:** Marine and Coastal Access Act of 2009; UK Marine Policy Statement of 2011. ***In addition:*** **Scotland:** Marine (Scotland) Act of 2010. **Northern Ireland:** Marine Act (Northern Ireland) of 2013.

12. Under 'open door' policies for offshore wind auctions, developers take initiative and propose projects, in contrast to open auctions where developers submit bids to the government.

13. In addition, in the UK the Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland are responsible for leasing the seabed and any related stakeholder engagement related to this process.

Country	Body responsible for stakeholder engagement	Legal basis for stakeholder engagement at MSP level
NORWAY	**Sustainable Ocean Plan & Zoning Plans (comparable to MSP as non-EU Member State):** The Ministry of Climate and Environment; Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) under the Ministry of Energy. **Project Planning Level** The NVE acts as a 'one-stop-shop' and runs both offshore wind and grid stakeholder consultations.	**Integrated Ocean Management Plans (comparable to MSP as non-EU Member State):** Strategically outlined in the White Paper on Protecting the Riches of the Seas (Meld. St. 20 (2019–2020)); Offshore Energy Act provides legal basis.
THE NETHERLANDS	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. **Project Planning Level** For offshore wind, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) acts as a one-stop-shop. TSO TenneT and the Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth are responsible for offshore grid platform and subsea cable consultations.	**Maritime Spatial Planning Level** The North Sea Programme; National Water Act of 2010; Environment and Planning Act of the Netherlands of 2024.

Annex 2

AN OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES INVOLVED IN AND IMPACTED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFSHORE WIND AND GRIDS

Type of stakeholder	Relevance	Potential Conflicts and Opportunities
OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPERS	The private companies who build, and potentially also operate, offshore wind infrastructure.	Offshore wind often enters an already busy seascape. Developers must perform legally mandated engagement with affected stakeholders to secure permits, but regularly go beyond these requirements and collaborate with affected stakeholders. Offshore wind developers give input to governments making decisions on the location of wind farms in their waters, including potential wake effects decreasing energy yields.
TRANSMISSION SYSTEM OPERATORS (TSOS)	Both private and government-owned grid operators with a mandate to connect electricity generated by offshore wind to land.	The construction and operation of cables and substations, both onshore and offshore, requires permits with mandatory engagement procedures. Like wind developers, grid operators regularly go beyond legal requirements to secure social licence for projects.
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES	National, regional, and municipal authorities run MSP processes and confirm zones for offshore wind. They give various permits and licences for construction, environmental impacts, and operation of offshore wind and grid infrastructure.	MSP processes must balance the needs of all stakeholders, but some uses cannot always be reconciled. These decisions are made by government authorities during the MSP process. While some sectoral prioritisation can be clear and acceptable to stakeholders, such as defence needs, others can cause conflicts authorities must contend with.
FISHERIES *Individual fishers, fisher associations at local, regional, and national levels*	Fishers often utilise the same space where offshore wind farms will be deployed, and express concerns their livelihoods will be threatened by the entry of a newer industry.	Fishers may have to contend with temporary or permanent closures of areas at sea, with some receiving compensation depending on the context and country. They can also find new sources of income from offshore wind and grid development. This can take the form of assisting in surveying, monitoring, training, and contributing knowledge for the selection of sites that minimise impacts.

Type of stakeholder	Relevance	Potential Conflicts and Opportunities
ONSHORE COASTAL COMMUNITIES	Landing points for electricity cables, substations, and ports for the vessels which build and maintain this infrastructure are located in coastal communities. For nearshore wind farms, infrastructure could also be visible from the communities.	These communities can benefit from the increased investment brought by a new industry operating in their area, such as upgraded and improved ports and harbours. However, they are also affected by construction works, short-term impacts on tourism, as well as a real or perceived change to their seascape view. Concerns about electromagnetic fields from cables, pollutants, or noise are often expressed. Fears about long-term changes to the character of communities hosting this infrastructure confirm land-sea interactions remain a vital topic to address in engagement activities.
BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION *Represented by civil society organisations, concerned citizens or academics, and/or government ministries focused on biodiversity*	Biodiversity loss and climate change are overarching societal challenges. Offshore wind siting can come into conflict with conservation objectives. These concerns are voiced by conservation groups, interested community members, and carefully considered by government authorities with a responsibility to protect marine life.	Offshore wind and grid developers follow science-based mitigation and avoidance measures and, if necessary, compensate for affected habitats or species. In recent years, close collaborations between industry, NGOs, and research institutes in many countries have led to pilots on nature-inclusive design of infrastructure, restoration projects,[14] innovative mitigation measures[15], monitoring, multiuse opportunities, and more.
TOURISM AND SPORT	Sailing, diving sports, pleasure cruises, and more have to abide by safety distance regulations, which can be more relevant for projects close to the shore.	As newer wind farms are often far out at sea, overlaps with tourism are minimal. However, opportunities such as boat trips to this infrastructure are being explored in countries like Germany, France, UK, and Denmark in tandem with engagement efforts. Other countries allow recreational fishing with certain gear near wind farms, such as the UK and Denmark. Divers must also adhere to safety rules and regulations in different jurisdictions, for example the Netherlands has a 500 meter exclusion zone around offshore wind and transformer platforms (Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, 2024).

14. See OCEaN's database of nature enhancement and restoration projects.

15. See OCEaN's mitigation measures database.

Type of stakeholder	Relevance	Potential Conflicts and Opportunities
MILITARY	Military exercise and security areas cannot host offshore wind farms. These areas are prioritised first in MSPs with limited flexibility.	Security concerns in the Baltic Sea, for example, have raised concerns that areas designated for offshore wind may be altered. Due to multiple factors, including security clearances, there is little chance of collaboration between these sectors.
SHIPPING	Shipping routes may prevent the use of areas available for offshore wind or vice versa. This is typically decided at the MSP level.	Due to security concerns, shipping routes should not overlap in close distance to offshore wind farms. Opportunities for multiuse are limited.
PORTS	Ports to service the construction and maintenance of offshore wind and electricity grid infrastructure are located in coastal areas close to the infrastructure.	Whether ports are expanded, converted, or newly built, this infrastructure can worry local communities if it restricts land/sea front access, creates noise or light pollution, or is perceived to alter cultural heritage. On the other hand, ports can also offer job opportunities and boost local economies.
ACADEMIA	Researchers and institutions work closely with developers and governments throughout the lifecycle of offshore wind, including on the impacts of activities on marine life and how to avoid them, innovative multiuse of infrastructure, and engagement with citizens.	Collaborative relationships between academic researchers and NGOs and wind and grid developers have led to research and pilot projects on multiuse[16], nature-inclusive design, restoration, and monitoring of nature around offshore wind and grid infrastructure.
OIL, GAS, MINERAL, AND SAND EXTRACTION	Extraction of materials from the seabed, such as oil and gas or rare minerals and sand, remain an economic activity at sea. Their space requirements often cannot overlap with those of offshore wind.	While not relevant in all countries, sand extraction from the sea floor, deep-sea mining for rare minerals, and/or oil and gas exploration are industries whose spatial needs are also considered or may compete with offshore wind, grid, and nature planning considerations.

16. See European MSP Platform's multiuse compendium of case studies.

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The Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) brings together NGOs, TSOs and wind industry organisations from across Europe. Together we work towards a sustainable deployment of offshore energy and grid infrastructure, while ensuring alignment with nature protection and healthy marine ecosystems.



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