



Streamlining Regulatory Frameworks for Offshore Wind Energy in the Black Sea Region

Joint Statement

The EU experience shows that the successful penetration of offshore energy depends on a sound public policy design and legislation, and well-coordinated marine spatial planning and permitting procedures, which ensure reliable environmental protection and efficient project implementation.

While the EU has developed an ambitious framework for the acceleration of offshore wind energy projects, the deployment of effective regulations at the national level varies considerably between EU Member States. In comparison to the mature offshore wind markets of Western and Northern Europe, Black Sea Region countries are yet to fully develop legal and regulatory regimes that can ensure the meeting of their long-term offshore wind energy targets.

[The Black Sea Renewable Energy Coalition \(BSREC\)](#) has defined common challenges, principles and recommendations for establishing an effective regulatory environment in the region. The Coalition's members have put particular emphasis on the need to transpose into national law the updated non-binding recommendations and guidelines to the Member States published in May 2024, which focus on speeding up [permit-granting procedures](#) for renewable energy and related infrastructure projects, designating [renewables acceleration areas](#), and [auction design](#) for renewable energy.

Develop strategic offshore wind policy frameworks

The Black Sea region should incorporate specific targets and policies in their strategic frameworks that support the sector based on transparent, competition-friendly principles with a clear allocation of risks, costs, and responsibilities among stakeholders.¹ Consistent policies will foster a stable investment environment, attract private investments, and streamline permitting processes. By minimising the political and regulatory risks, governments can reduce the overall deployment costs:

- National governments should integrate offshore wind energy deployment targets into existing strategic documents to attract the attention of industry players and signal the government's commitment to the sector.

¹ Trifonova M., Catuti M., Mikulčić, H., Smoleń, M. [Winds of Change: Offshore Renewable Energy for a More Secure and Resilient Central and Eastern Europe](#), Sofia: CSD, 2023.

- Black Sea countries should develop a comprehensive roadmap with a concrete timeline, aligning national decarbonisation efforts with the RED III Directive.
- A dedicated national budget should be allocated for research and innovation in the updated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), ensuring financial support for the advancement of offshore wind technologies and related industries.
- To take up the offshore wind energy sector, the Black Sea countries should strengthen regional cooperation for better-coordinated planning efforts and foster offshore wind deployment across neighbouring countries sharing the same sea basin.
- National governments should initiate cross-border projects with neighbouring countries to leverage shared learning and financial mechanisms, promoting effective transborder cooperation in offshore wind endeavours.
- There is a need for detailed mapping of the future workforce needs, and the assessments should be incorporated into national programs for reskilling, upskilling, and preparing the implementation of net-zero industry initiatives.

Development of a legal and regulatory framework

The new **Renewable Energy Directive (RED III)**, adopted in March 2023, reaffirms the 45% target and aims to simplify administrative procedures, emphasize maritime spatial planning and promote grid modernisation to accommodate increased offshore wind capacity. The **EU Strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy**,² unveiled in November 2020, outlined a comprehensive plan to harness this potential. The Strategy aims to increase Europe's offshore wind capacity from its current 12 GW to at least 60 GW by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050.

Moreover, the 2023 **European Wind Power Action Plan**³ builds on the Strategy by addressing the urgent need for accelerated deployment across all elements of the wind energy investment process with a focus on rapid capacity expansion, regulatory reforms to speed up project approvals, and the integration of wind power into the wider energy system to improve grid stability.

In this EU policy context, the first step to unlocking the countries' offshore wind energy potential is to design a regulatory framework based on transparent and consistent procedures. The introduction of special offshore wind energy laws should allocate risks, costs and responsibilities among stakeholders to ensure a stable investment environment.

- Black Sea countries should design and implement a dedicated law to promote offshore wind energy, providing a legal framework to support offshore wind development.
- The multiple use of marine space should be encouraged to minimise potential sea use conflicts and to designate renewables acceleration areas (RAAs) by 21 February 2026 (as per the revised RED).

² European Commission, [EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future](#), November 2020.

³ European Commission, [European Wind Power Action Plan](#), October 2023.

- National governments should appoint an interdisciplinary, cross-institutional state authority to act as a one-stop shop for project developers, streamlining processes and facilitating efficient project approvals.
- Permitting processes should be simplified to expedite deployments, reduce costs, and encourage the timely development of offshore wind projects.
- The Black Sea governments should allocate the responsibility for onshore and offshore grid planning and expansion to the Transmission System Operator (TSO), aligning with offshore wind site development plans.
- The governments should include the EU plans for offshore grid corridors in current national grid development planning to prevent grid capacity competition between offshore wind farms and other renewable energy installations.
- National authorities should establish clear rules for compensating offshore wind companies for their investment in the development of grid infrastructure to provide financial certainty and encourage their interest in developing projects.

Meaningful stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement in the regulatory design process is essential to ensure that national, regional and local specificities are adequately reflected in the regulatory design to ensure the smooth upscaling of offshore wind energy projects by addressing and resolving potential stakeholder concerns before projects have even begun. Stakeholder engagement should start as early as possible to ensure that stakeholders are actively shaping the final version of the legislation.

- National authorities should deploy a comprehensive public awareness campaign about the strategic importance of offshore wind energy for the overall decarbonisation process. The goal will be to debunk disinformation myths about the potential risks related to these projects, which aim to discredit the overall deployment of the nascent technology.
- Engagement tools such as public hearings, workshops, online surveys and the submission of written statements of the proposed legal changes should be actively used to accommodate different stakeholder preferences and needs.
- The special laws on offshore wind can be developed in an active policy co-creation format, such as a task force/committee that discusses the different elements of the regulatory framework and features representatives of all the relevant ministries, executive agencies, and Parliamentary committees, as well as civil society and business representatives.

Effective auctioning, permitting and licensing procedures

Black Sea countries should conduct detailed mapping exercises to delineate the most prospective offshore wind energy zones in national waters to align and determine the realistic short, medium and long-term targets for new capacity additions, considering different constraints such as the limitations in the available power transmission capacity, potential conflicts with environmental zones, marine traffic routes and competing economic activities.

- National authorities should make sure that the design of the auctions contributes to the rapid, efficient and sustainable deployment of offshore wind parks in a competitive manner, attracts private investments and provides benefits such as investment certainty for the sector.
- Introduce financial stabilisation instruments in the design of the auctions, such as two-way Contracts for Difference (CFDs), which will ensure that the awarded offshore wind developer will be able to secure affordable project financing, provide power price predictability and bring additional revenue for the state.⁴
- Non-price criteria in auctions should be included as part of the pre-qualification or award ranking methodology to pursue related policy objectives, which cannot be captured only by the price dimension. Among such criteria are support for the local communities, ability to deliver the project on time, responsible business conduct, cyber-security, robust strategy for environmental risk mitigation and sustainable economic development.
- Introduce a detailed site mapping procedure for offshore wind priority zones through either tenders or an open-door procedure. In the latter option, prospective investors can pre-select the development area⁵. In the former, the government takes responsibility for assessing the wind potential in areas that are part of the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), as well as the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts linked to the deployment process and then auctions off the selected areas.
- Introduce comprehensive decommissioning plans that will ensure the minimisation of the potential negative environmental impacts.
- Include specific measures in the regulatory framework that ensure the completion of projects in a timely manner, such as penalties for non-completion or delayed commissioning based on a detailed assessment.

Navigating the complexities of offshore wind development requires the design of a transparent and effective regulatory framework with clear long-term deployment targets, competitive auction procedures, market-based financial instruments and clear environmental impact and risk mitigation requirements. Adherence to these recommendations is crucial for combating the regulatory, spatial, infrastructure, and environmental challenges related to the development of the offshore wind energy industry.

⁴ Arsani, A., Koeppen, M., Mikulcic, H., Siwinski, P., Vladimirov, M., [At the Frontier: Guidelines for Unlocking the Offshore Wind Energy Potential in Central and Eastern Europe](#), Sofia: CSD, 2024.

⁵ Center for the Study of Democracy, [The Energy Security and Innovation Nexus](#), 2022.

The **Black Sea Renewable Energy Coalition (BSREC)** is committed to advancing sustainable offshore wind energy development in the Black Sea region. The coalition seeks to promote comprehensive planning that balances environmental protection with global climate goals, ensuring that marine renewable energy growth contributes to a healthier planet. We prioritise aligning the varied interests of project developers, infrastructure operators, environmental organisations, the tourism sector, and other stakeholders, fostering collaboration to proactively address the challenges and opportunities of renewable energy expansion.

OUR MEMBERS



ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

