

Scotland and Wales could be home to new floating offshore wind ports thanks to £160m UK government funding

New large-scale floating offshore wind ports and factories are to be built in the UK thanks to government investment, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced today (30 October 2021).

Developers and manufacturers looking to invest in this emerging industry will be able to bid for a share of up to £160 million in new funding, to kickstart projects across the UK.

The newly allocated funding will support the target in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan to deliver 1GW of energy through floating offshore wind by 2030 – nearly 9 times more than the current volumes worldwide – as a stepping stone to substantial further growth in the UK of this technology.

Floating wind allows wind farms to be built further out to sea in deeper waters, boosting energy capacity even further where winds are strongest and ensuring the UK remains at the forefront of the next generation of clean energy.

It is expected that the £160 million, boosted by private sector investment, will develop port infrastructure capable of mass-producing floating offshore wind turbines and installing them out at sea, creating thousands of new jobs in the UK's industrial heartlands, whilst reducing the need to import from overseas.

Making the most of the deep waters off the Scottish coast offers huge opportunities for Scotland's coastal communities, building on its lead as a technology hub for offshore wind, including two of the world's first floating offshore wind farms off the coast of Aberdeen. The Celtic Sea is also a major development opportunity for the offshore wind sector, with a combination of deep waters and strong winds, and which is set to create significant opportunities for development in Wales, creating a new economic cluster that builds on its strong industrial heritage.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Offshore wind is a UK success story in forging our Green Industrial Revolution. Tapping into this emerging sector will boost our clean electricity generation even further, creating jobs and green innovation across the whole of the UK.

This comes as the Prime Minister attends the critical G20 summit in Italy ahead of COP26 next week, as he urges major economies to phase out coal and accelerate the transition to clean technology and energy around the world.

The UK's success story in the offshore wind industry has seen costs fall by 65%. Replicating this around the world will be crucial to helping halve global emissions by 2030, helping to keep within reach the limit to temperatures rises to 1.5C.

Business & Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

This investment will help to attract further private sector backing to boost our industrial heartlands. It will create and support thousands of good quality jobs ensuring they remain at the forefront of the next generation of clean energy as we build back greener.

Floating offshore wind is key to unlocking the spectacular wind energy resource we enjoy in the UK, particularly in the deep waters around the coasts of Scotland and Wales. This new investment will put us in a leading position to capture the full economic benefit of this fast growing industry.

The newly allocating funding follows the success of the UK Government's £160m scheme to upgrade ports and infrastructure for the conventional offshore wind industry, which has secured around £1.5bn of investment, including new offshore wind ports in Teesside and the Humber.

Earlier this year, the Government also kicked off the biggest-ever round of the flagship Contracts for Difference scheme – accelerating low carbon electricity generation, including £200m support for offshore wind projects and £24 million for floating offshore wind.