

RECHARGE

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COP27 | Key nations join Global Offshore Wind Alliance to 'enhance energy security'

GOWA aims to remove barriers to offshore wind. Photo: RWE



US, Japan, Germany, UK and five other countries sign up for new industry body backed by Irena and GWEC as it officially launches during climate summit

By **Bernd Radowitz**

A clutch of the world's largest economies signed up for the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA) ahead of its official launch today (Tuesday) at the COP27 climate summit in Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt, in an effort to drive up ambitions and remove barriers to the deployment of wind at sea in new and existing markets.

The US was among the nine new members that also included Japan, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Ireland and Colombia. The alliance was **founded earlier this year by the International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena), Denmark and the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)** to bring together governments, the private sector, international organisations and other stakeholders to speed up the expansion of offshore wind power.

"Offshore wind power has the scale to accelerate the build-out of renewables and bring benefits to both our planet, our economy, and local communities – while enhancing energy security," said Orsted chief executive Mads Nipper. "But we have to get more countries on board, and we have to speed up. Today, it often takes longer to permit a wind farm than to actually build it."

Nipper at the launch in Sharm-El-Sheikh added that his company will not only share good practices with its partners in GOWA, but also honestly point out "what doesn't work." "We must share good experience like in Denmark, where there is a one-stop shop in order to have somebody coordinate and speed up those approvals. Otherwise we will never be in time for neither 2030 or 2050."

The ambition of the new alliance is to boost global offshore wind capacity from 57GW last year to 380GW in 2030. According to Irena's *World Energy Transitions Outlook*, 2,000 GW of installed offshore wind capacity is needed to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C and achieve net zero by 2050.

"Offshore wind represents a unique opportunity for countries to add huge volumes of new zero-carbon power generation, increase their climate ambition and ratchet up their NDCs," Irena director general Francesco la Camera said. "Offshore wind is more than competitive with fossil fuel generation, and can also provide a massive boost to investment and job creation."

GOWA newcomer Germany with close to 8GW in operational offshore wind currently ranks third in the world (after China and the UK), but has targeted to boost its wind at sea capacity to at least 30GW by the end of this decade, and 70GW by 2045.

'Fabulous alliance'

"Next to the obvious climate crisis, the current energy security crisis, driven by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, is yet another reason for us to double down on our efforts in order to boost offshore wind power in Germany," said Jennifer Lee Morgan, state secretary and special envoy for international climate action at the German government.

"With GOWA, a fabulous alliance founded by trusted partners such as GWEC, Irena and Denmark, we now see an opportunity to leverage our know-how and skills in the offshore space and help other countries in building or increasing their own offshore wind power generation capacity."

Belgian energy minister Tinne van der Straeten added: "Belgium has been one of the frontrunners in offshore wind and is accelerating the energy transition with a quadrupling of offshore wind capacity by 2040 in the Belgian North Sea, **build a hybrid energy island** and new interconnections with North Sea countries. "The North Sea will transform to a large sustainable power plant. With this green acceleration, we can replace gas and oil faster with offshore wind and green hydrogen."

Colombian new energy minister Irene Velez Torres stressed that the country is not only committed to the energy transition, but also "to the transformation of the society through the incorporation of non-conventional sources of renewable energy into our energy matrix." The South American country - together with Brazil **a front-runner in offshore wind in Latin America** - will adopt the development of wind at sea in its northern Caribbean coast "in an inclusive way" to also benefit ethnic communities living in those territories, and allow for a knowledge transfer.