

Friday, 28 October 2005

Press notice

Policy makers from a number of European Countries today adopted the Copenhagen Strategy 2005 which sets a path for the future development of offshore wind power in Europe.

The Copenhagen Strategy refers to the EU goals of achieving a 21% share of renewable electricity by 2010. Offshore wind has a key part to play in achieving that goal. But unless further action is taken offshore wind will fail to deliver its huge potential to contribute to halting global warming and reducing Europe's dependence on oil and gas.

The Strategy is the result of discussions involving EU policy makers who met to discuss the obstacles to the development of offshore wind. The Strategy was adopted at the Copenhagen Offshore Wind Conference 26 – 28 October which allowed offshore wind developers to present their views on what action is required.

The chairman of the seminar, Mr. Jim Campbell from the UK's Department of Trade and Industry said:

“Offshore wind in Europe is at a crucial junction in its development. Early results from the first offshore wind projects have been promising. But it is clear that there remain barriers in the way of its fuller development. EU policy makers have a key part to play working with industry to remove those hurdles. The Copenhagen Strategy we have adopted today presents an agreed way forward to tackling a number of those challenges.”

The Strategy focuses on three key areas: Market Development, Grid Access, and Environment, with a number of actions identified by the policy makers.

To develop the offshore market further participants recommended that the European Commission should establish a European Technology Platform for Wind Energy with an independent chapter for offshore wind. They also proposed an Action Plan be produced on offshore wind power deployment.

A “one-stop shop” approach to offshore regulation was recognised as an efficient way to reduce costs. Connecting offshore wind projects to the grid raises particular issues, and where possible the alignment of grid consenting procedures with other consents should be considered. Participants agreed that long-term planning of the grid is essential to enable the integration of large amounts of offshore wind energy.

Demonstration programmes for offshore wind projects also have an important part to play in reducing costs. Participants urged the continued sharing of environmental data collected which will improve transparency and allow for more multilateral co-operation in environmental research.

On the next steps Jim Campbell said "The Steering Committee consisting of Denmark, UK, Germany and The Netherlands will meet again in six months time to consider progress on the actions set out in the Strategy. We are also pleased that Germany will consider hosting a bigger review meeting in one year's time."

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