

Memorandum of Understanding

Coalition for aligning the development of offshore wind energy with nature protection and healthy marine ecosystems in the Mediterranean basin and adjacent Atlantic waters

Mission Statement

The Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature in the Mediterranean Sea (Med OCEaN) aims to develop a collaborative approach to support the sustainable deployment of offshore wind and grid infrastructure, while preventing the loss of biodiversity, and safeguarding healthy marine ecosystems. Med OCEaN will therefore contribute to the implementation of EU's climate, energy, and environmental objectives, including the nature restoration targets.

Background information

We are at a crossroads where different crises need to be tackled simultaneously: climate change, biodiversity loss, energy security and economic recovery. To address these crises, Europe has, on the one hand, taken ambitious commitments to deploy renewable energy sources and remove fossil fuels from the entire system. This includes the expansion and acceleration of wind energy infrastructure, with offshore wind representing a significant share of the new capacity to be deployed (more than 150 GW by 2030). On the other hand, the European Commission has proposed the EU Nature Restoration Law, which aims to restore 20% of Europe's land and sea by 2030.

However, the commitments and targets set to address these complex crises can overlap and potentially come into conflict. An example of this is the task of allocating space for an increasing amount of offshore renewable energy infrastructure and for nature to recover and thrive, in already busy waters where many marine users interact. It is therefore of paramount importance to advocate for the timely deployment of offshore wind and grid infrastructure hand in hand with the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. It is also crucial to create a space for constructive dialogue between different marine stakeholders, where solutions on how to improve and speed up the planning and deployment of offshore wind and grid infrastructure while preserving and restoring our European seas can be jointly designed.

When it comes to the Mediterranean Seas basin and the adjacent Atlantic waters, offshore wind is still at an early stage of development and relies on complex interactions with different stakeholders. The Mediterranean is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot, representing 4-18% of the world's marine biodiversity, with an estimated rate of endemism of 30%. Furthermore, as a consequence of different anthropological pressures, the region is among the sea areas most impacted by human activities. To tackle the complexity of offshore wind deployment in

such a threatened environment, collaborative approaches between all key actors are therefore imperative.

Aim of the Coalition

Med OCEaN brings together non-governmental organisations (NGOs), wind industry actors and transmission system operators (TSOs) from across the Mediterranean region and adjacent Atlantic waters, who have joint forces to support a collaborative approach for the deployment of offshore wind and grid infrastructure hand in hand with the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) acts as convener and moderator of the group.

Med OCEaN is an open forum for discussion, where relevant information and experiences are collated and assessed, needs for further research are identified, and suggestions on how to improve planning and deployment of offshore wind and grid infrastructure in the Mediterranean Sea basin and adjacent Atlantic waters are made. This includes but is not limited to topics such as Maritime Spatial Planning, regional cooperation, environmental impacts of floating technology and compatibility of offshore wind energy, nature, and other sectors. Members are committed to engage actively and constructively in Med OCEaN’s work and discussions, and their views and suggestions will not be restricted under any circumstance. Members are also committed to collaboratively define yearly activities based on the capacity of each organisation.

Parties to this Memorandum

