

Spain sits at a crossroads ahead of delayed auction

Madrid edges closer to milestone first offshore tender, writes **Karolin Schaps**

Spain's long-awaited first offshore wind tender is expected to finally be launched at the end of 2026, after consecutive delays.

In February, the Spanish government held a public consultation on the structure and terms of the offshore wind auction. It asked participants to submit their views on questions such as how many areas and how many different projects should be put up for tender, which assessment criteria should be given higher weighting than others, or the length of the Contracts for Difference (CfD) support mechanism.

Further details on the content of the auction should be published ahead of the summer, with a view to launching the tender before the end of the year.

Companies gearing up to participate in the tender have differing views on the auction's content, especially on which areas the government should open up first and how many projects these should contain.

Spanish Wind Energy Association



SPANISH PROJECT PIPELINE

Project name, location	MW	Developer
Albacín, Andalucía	510	Capital Energy
Breogán, Galicia	510	Capital Energy
Geroa, Basque Country	48	Saitec
Gofío, Canary Islands	50	Greenalia
Gran Canaria Este, Canary Islands	144	Ocean Winds
Juan Sebastian Elcano, Galicia	522	IberBlue
L'Empordà, Catalonia	510	Capital Energy
La Pinta, Andalucía	990	IberBlue
Lanzarote, Canary Islands	50	Ocean Winds
Maresía, Canary Islands	255	Capital Energy
Medfloat, Catalonia	48	Saitec
Mencey, Canary Islands	150	Capital Energy
Nao Victoria, Andalucía	990	IberBlue
NextFloat demonstration, Mediterranean Sea	8.5	X1 Wind
Northeast Atlantic, Galicia	48	Saitec
Timanfaya, Canary Islands	45	Capital Energy
Volanteiro, Galicia	510	Capital Energy
Xistral, Galicia	810	Capital Energy
Total:	6.2GW	

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Sector wants clear strategy for adding offshore to energy mix

Spain's offshore wind industry is pleading the government to provide long-term visibility of its plans to add offshore wind into the Spanish energy mix.

"More important than launching the tender is to have a clear national long-term strategy. We need visibility

towards the coming tenders, like France is doing. That is when we will allow structural investments in the supply chain and port infrastructure," said X1 Wind chief executive Alex Raventos.

Madrid is targeting 1-3GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030 but it remains unclear how it wants to progressively reach this goal and what its targets are beyond the turn of the decade. In comparison, France recently announced the launch of a large 5GW floating offshore wind tender by next year.

"Visibility beyond this first tender is currently not confirmed and will be critical for offshore wind development in Spain. What is needed is a clear and predictable auction calendar beyond the initial tender, covering 2027-2030," said Ocean Winds' Pinheiro.

Spain is one of Europe's largest onshore wind markets with an installed capacity of 32.9GW,



MODEL BEHAVIOUR: A CGI of X1 Wind's X100 precommercial platform

Photo: X1 Wind



LONG-TERM GOAL: X1 Wind chief executive Alex Raventos

Photo: X1 Wind

according to its wind energy association. But it is yet to tap the country's offshore wind power potential, a market that is more difficult to develop due to deeper waters than in other European

countries, such as the UK, Germany or the Netherlands. "Launching auctions as soon as possible with a defined schedule is essential to provide visibility to the sector," said Capital Energy's Díaz Martínez.

20 AEE, which represents the views of many Spanish offshore wind companies, has urged the government to prioritise one project of 200-225MW off the Canary Islands.

“The first auction should be relatively modest in size but still big enough to be considered a commercial project,” AEE’s technical and industrial director Juan de Dios López told reNEWS. In order to pace industrial development, to give sufficient time to develop grid connections and to build on previous learning experiences, Spain should push for progressive and sustainable growth in overall floating offshore wind capacity and in wind farm size, he added.

“The first offshore wind tender must be a success, as it will set the pace and credibility for the deployment of this technology in Spain,” the association told the government in its consultation response.

Other players disagree and want the government to put several zones up for grabs in the first auction. “If Spain was to launch a tender with a single zone, the impact would be limited because then you’re talking about one single project of medium size being awarded to one developer using one technology,” said Alex Raventos, chief executive at X1 Wind, in an interview with reNEWS.

The Barcelona-based floating wind technology provider would prefer seeing zones offshore Catalonia in the Mediterranean and Galicia in the Atlantic being offered alongside the Canary Islands.

A multi-region tender with projects of 200-300MW in capacity is also supported by Appa, Spain’s association of renewable energy companies, because it would allow for the simultaneous development of various industrial hubs across the



PORT PRIORITY:
Saitec Offshore chief executive David Carrascosa
Photo: Saitec Offshore

country, the lobby group said.

In terms of the period of financial support through the CfD mechanism, Spain’s offshore wind companies want 25-30 years to help mitigate the floating offshore wind projects’ financial risks. “A longer duration means lower risk, which in turn can result in lower, acceptable prices for the installation,” AEE said in its consultation response, in which it asks for a 30-year contract period after commissioning.

“Ideally, (the CfD) mechanism should be available for at least 25 years, which would safeguard the economic viability of the projects,” said Hugo Díaz Martínez, offshore projects development manager at Capital Energy, which has an offshore wind project development pipeline of 3.3GW in Spain.

The company’s eight projects are part of a wider list of floating offshore wind developments that are being pursued based on the Spanish government’s Maritime Spatial Planning (POEM) approved in 2023 that outlined the country’s most suitable offshore wind locations.



PACE SETTER: AEE’s technical and industrial director Juan de Dios López
Photo: AEE

As details of the country’s upcoming first ever offshore wind auction are still unclear, projects remain at the early development phase. Some companies, including Equinor, Ferrovial and Orsted, have already withdrawn their interest in the market due to protracted delays and uncertainty.

Ocean Winds, the Engie-EDP Renováveis offshore wind joint venture, is one of the companies continuing to show interest in Spanish projects, but is cautious not to overpromise on their delivery. “In reality, what exists today are expectations and early-stage plans, not defined projects,” Ocean Winds’ country manager for Iberia, José Pinheiro, told reNEWS.

The joint venture has been conducting technical and environmental studies on its preferred sites, building a detailed understanding of local conditions and engaging with stakeholders. “However, we believe that referring to ‘projects’ at this point can create confusion,” he said.

Despite lingering uncertainty

about the timeline of Spain’s offshore wind development, the Spanish supply chain is gearing up for accommodating potentially large orders in the near future.

X1 Wind, as one of the potential platform technology providers, is eyeing a start of construction early next year to test its X100 platform as part of the NextFloat project under Catalonia’s Plemcat initiative. Installation offshore is expected to take place in late 2028. “Financial close of the tendered projects will probably happen towards 2029. At that moment, we will have our product already operating in an area that is going to be tendered eventually. We expect to be in a very good position to be selected at financial close,” said X1 Wind’s Raventos.

Competitor Saitec Offshore has secured options to obtain long-term land leases in the ports of Castellón, on the Mediterranean coast, and A Coruña on the Atlantic coast.

“There is a lack of space in ports in Europe,” said Saitec Offshore chief executive David Carrascosa.

“It will be very difficult to deliver projects if you don’t act quickly and secure these relevant spots. If you don’t have the construction hub where you would need to deliver from, you have nothing.”

Some of the ports have submitted bids into an EU-funded €160m support scheme to help ports adapt their infrastructure to the needs of the offshore wind industry and other marine renewables.

The port of Tarragona, south of Barcelona, for example, has requested €75m in financial support for the 22-hectare enlargement of one of its docks.

“The Port Authority of Tarragona has received 10 expressions of interest for space occupancy related to floating wind turbine activities,” the port said. ■

Lone operating floating turbine matches onshore production

After more than 30 months of testing, Spain’s only operating floating offshore wind turbine has shown it follows the same power production curve as an onshore turbine, despite disturbances from high waves and harsh winds, its operator told reNEWS.

“The power production is the same, even with huge waves and the harsh environment, the platform is steady. Because of the great performance of the platform, the turbine is performing very well,” said David Carrascosa, chief executive at Saitec Offshore.

The Leioa-based company,



SOLID PLATFORM: Spain’s solitary floating offshore wind platform is performing well
Photo: Saitec Offshore

specialised in floating offshore wind platform concepts, has been leading the 2MW DemoSATH pilot off the

coast of the Basque Country since September 2023, with support from RWE and Kepco.

“We are very happy with the performance so far.

“We are now discussing the possibility to extend the project,” Carrascosa said.

The project obtained final prototype certification from Bureau Veritas in September, paving the way for the technology to be deployed safely elsewhere.

“We are basically involved in a number of projects and opportunities around the globe,” Carrascosa added but declined to give further details because of existing confidentiality agreements. ■