

Jonathan Morton and Jody Anderson in Utility Week: The Challenge and Opportunity of Scaling Up Floating Offshore Wind

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Haynes Boone Counsel [Jonathan Morton](#) and Trainee Solicitor Jody Anderson authored an article for *Utility Week* exploring the significant hurdles to be overcome in scaling up the offshore floating wind industry safely and successfully.

Read an excerpt below.

For the world to realise the promise offered by offshore wind, the use of floating technology is essential. Fixed offshore wind systems can only be installed in water depths up to 60 metres, which rules out around 80% of potential European ocean real-estate. This inability to tap into wind resources at deep or complex seabed locations can be solved by floating structures, a fact which is particularly significant for states that lack a shallow coastline but are keen to invest.

From an energy harvesting perspective, winds blow stronger and more consistently further out to sea. These amplified conditions allow floating wind installations to increase their capacity factors, with floating wind farms potentially achieving significantly higher rates than fixed offshore turbines (for example, BW Ideol's Flotgen pilot achieved a 61.96% capacity factor in December 2023, while the average for fixed bottom was around 45-50%).

The industry consensus is that floating wind has been proven conceptually and now needs to be scaled up. Currently, a few small-scale projects are operating successfully, with notable commercial windfarms at Hywind Scotland and Hywind Tampen in Norway.

With the next UK general election rapidly approaching, the Labour party have announced their intention to invest in building floating wind farms off the British coast, via a state-owned corporate operating with an £8.3bn budget, in an effort to reduce reliance on foreign energy, and the current Conservative government have allocated £160m of grant money to a floating offshore wind manufacturing investment scheme (FLOWMIS), focused on the much-needed development of UK port infrastructure.

The government is also currently consulting with the industry regarding its proposed CfD Sustainable Industry Reward (SIR) allocation framework, which would incentivise activities such as investing in Tier 1 manufacturing and/or ports in UK deprived areas, including parts of Wales and North East Scotland, and considering the social and economic benefits to proposed projects. This is all to be welcomed.

However, the gulf between prototypes and serial manufacture is enormous. The technological, logistical, and legal hurdles, specifically the lack of standardisation in the emerging technologies relating to foundation design; supply chain constraints; current port infrastructure; and uncertainty regarding operations and maintenance, are potentially overwhelming. With growing interest in new

markets and new regions, these obstacles form a significant industrial challenge and need to be addressed head-on.

To read the full article in *Utility Week*, click [here](#).