

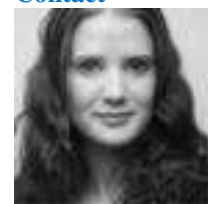
Advancing Public-Private Dialogue in Offshore Wind

The Danish Energy Agency, the Danish Trade Council and Danish Cleantech Hub co-hosted an executive forum on the early stages of offshore wind development, which attracted public officials, private experts and NGOs from both Denmark and the US, including representatives from NYSERDA and BOEM.

The potential for offshore wind power along the windy shores of Northeastern USA is immense, and the US Department of Energy estimates billions of dollars of investment in offshore wind before 2050. Situated centrally in the heart of this region, New York State emerges as a regional powerhouse of clean energy, with political determination and ambitious climate policies. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is spearheading the process by setting ambitious targets for the green transition of the state. In his energy strategy for the State, Cuomo has set a renewable energy target of 50% by 2030 including the implementation of 2.4GW of offshore wind power, of which no less than a third is to be solicited by 2019. To meet these bold goals, the Empire State is looking outside of the US for regulatory expertise and experience within offshore wind power. In an effort to focus this hunt for knowledge, the New York State Research and Development Authority, NYSERDA, is developing a masterplan that could potentially become a blueprint for the future of offshore wind development in the region.

New York City, US
January 26 2018

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Doreen Harris, Director of Large Scale Renewables, NYSERDA, presenting the masterplan process.
Photo credit: Jakob Mose Olesen.

With this backdrop, the high-level forum celebrated and advanced the understanding of good master planning by zooming in on New York's soon-to-be-released Offshore Wind Master Plan and the importance of public private dialogue in the early stages of offshore wind development. Agreement arose that good masterplanning involves the inclusion of all stakeholders from the initial phases of the process. Because involvement shortens development time, it de-risks the project and minimizes costs of developers, which ensures that offshore wind remains an attractive investment. This approach to dialogue throughout the process is increasingly becoming a staple of Denmark's offshore wind parks resulting in record low prices for wind energy.

“Our experiences from Denmark show that public-private dialogue between authorities, industry and developers is instrumental in ensuring cost reductions as well as attractive and flexible framework conditions for the development of offshore wind projects, from the pre-tender phase to the commissioned wind farm”

- Benoît Bizet, Special Advisor, Danish Energy Agency

A challenging aspect of nurturing an offshore wind industry in the US is the gray area between state and federal regulation and support. Representatives of the American wind industry described this as a ‘the chicken or the egg’ standoff, in which both parties are hesitant to make the first move and establish clear regulation and financing options. However, inspiration is not far away, as the Danish Energy Agency has instated a one-stop-shop for all industry inquiries about current and upcoming offshore wind farms, reducing uncertainty and increasing transparency. This simple model provides an avenue of development that could ease USA's transition to a cleaner energy future.

The general sentiment emerging at the forum was an increasing enthusiasm about trans-Atlantic collaboration in an industry that is still experiencing growing pains. As such, this conversation across the Atlantic is expected to spur further dialogue that can assist NYSERDA, New York and the US in the transition towards a future of reliable clean energy.