



Sector characteristics

Tourism and local communities

Tourism and local communities rely on attractive surroundings for a wide range of formal and informal land and water-based activities and quality of life.

Access to particular sites and the right conditions (e.g. water depth, biodiversity) are an important factor for most tourist activities.

Tourism is a fragmented sector, with little transnational and national representatives, but many local and regional stakeholders.

Offshore wind

The competitiveness of the sector depends on cost reduction. Building closer to shore is usually more cost efficient due to lower water depths and shorter distances to grid connection points on land.

Wind turbines have ever larger swept areas and heights, and offshore wind farms are also increasing in size.

Offshore wind is a well organised and funded sector, where a few key developers and manufacturers act on a national and transnational level.

Conflict description

Landscape impacts

There is concern that the visibility of offshore wind farms from the coast could reduce the attractiveness of the locality for tourists and residents. For residents and second home owners, this can be a highly emotional issue as they are often strongly attached to a particular landscape.

Less visitors and lower property value?

Local property owners are concerned that offshore wind farms could decrease the attractiveness of their place and therefore bring down its value. There are also concerns that offshore wind farms could reduce the number of visitors, with possible impacts on the local economy.

Blocking recreational routes/activities

Offshore wind farms can block potential sailing routes, or restrict the available space for other recreational activities, such as windsurfing or diving.

Drivers of conflict

Renewable energy targets

The EU, as well as the EU member states have set themselves ambitious renewable energy targets. More offshore wind farms contribute to reaching these targets.

Reducing costs of renewable energy to decrease subsidies

The costs of renewable energy need to be competitive with other energy sources. Therefore, when developing offshore wind farms, planners and developers look for ways of reducing costs, mainly by building closer to the shore.

Uneven power relations

Tourism is quite fragmented and rarely has direct representatives. The offshore wind farm sector is a new, but financially powerful sector – often with high level political support.

Possible solutions

Prevention

- 1 Zoning to minimise the visual impact of offshore wind farms
- 2 Sensitive siting of offshore wind farms to minimise socio-cultural impacts
- 3 Collect data on the coastal tourism and recreation sector
- 4 Develop a Tourism Impact Statement and possibly include it as a standard part in the SEA or EIA

Mitigation

- 5 Allow access to offshore wind farms to recreational vessels
- 6 Design a multi-use and attractive offshore wind farm
- 7 Use the MSP process to ensure offshore wind farm development benefits local communities
- 8 Use the MSP process for clear and transparent communication on the visibility of the OWF
- 9 Stimulate and facilitate innovation in the OWF sector to decrease potential conflicts with tourism

Future trends

The coastal tourism sector will continue to grow in the coming years, as will the number of holiday homes on the coast and therefore property owners.

A trend towards more nature-based and sustainable coastal and marine tourism, which favours more isolated areas and areas visually less affected by human interference.

Innovation in the offshore wind sector could make offshore wind farm locations further offshore less costly and therefore more attractive (e.g. floating wind farms).

More countries are now opening up their offshore wind farms to smaller vessels up to 24 meters long.

Transmission cable systems may improve, reducing the importance of cable length in bringing down costs.