

Chalk one up for the Netherlands

The offshore sector in the Netherlands finally got its feet wet in 2006 with the successful construction of Shell and Nuon's 108MW Egmond wind farm and initial on-the-water activity at Econcern's 120MW Q7 project.

Turnkey contractor BCE, a joint venture of Ballast Nedam and turbine supplier Vestas, oversaw what industry sources described as a relatively trouble-free development at Egmond, hitting the water in spring and exporting first power by autumn.

Three dozen V90 3MW

Egmond exports power as host of players vie to build next generation of wind farms

turbines were installed by A2Sea while foundation work was carried out by heavy-lift vessel Svanen. Cabling was relatively straightforward with only weather delays and a subsequent need to swap vessels marring subcontractor Oceanteam's scorecard.

Around 13,000 tonnes of monopile foundations were provided by Denmark's Blatt

for the project in up to 15m of water 10 to 18km from shore.

Egmond was developed at a cost of €200 million with support provided by the Dutch government in the shape of the Environmental Quality of Electricity Production scheme, the Ministry of Economic Affairs' CO₂ reduction plan and through tax relief for energy-saving equipment.

At Q7 off IJmuiden, Mammoet Van Oord's installation vessel Jumping Jack is currently in the process of planting the 120MW project's 60 Smulders-built monopile foundations with around half expected to go in this year and the remainder in early 2007.

Onshore work, including a connection to the Continuon substation, is well advanced.

Vestas 2MW turbines and a Blatt-built substation are on schedule to arrive next summer with full operation at the €380

million scheme targeted for early 2008. A2Sea is being lined up to install the turbines.

Econcern, Eneco and Energy Investment Holdings are driving the scheme with Van Oord leading marine construction.

On the horizon for the Netherlands is a further 500MW of offshore wind before 2010 with subsidies of nearly €1 billion promised to smooth the way towards construction.

A total of 64 projects are vying for the rights to build the country's next generation wind farms in 48 locations, with companies including Airtricity, E-Connection, Evelop, Shell and Nuon among those hoping to land permits.

First awards from the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management are likely around spring 2007, although ongoing political machinations are understood to be delaying the process and, according to at least one source, jeopardising the associated financial supports.

Malta queue

As many as 10 companies are understood to have submitted bids for the construction of Malta's debut offshore wind project, an up-to-100MW scheme being driven by the island government.

The successful bidder will be granted authorisation to finance, build and operate an

offshore wind farm on a concessionary basis with Maltese distribution company Enemata buying the output at a fixed tariff.

No timetable for the tender or proposed construction of what would be the Mediterranean's first offshore wind project has been identified.

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slagpans, the concrete pouring machine supported by a steel tower of the pump. At 100 metres, it's a real challenge. The tower is the result of the perfect mix of steel and concrete. The concrete has to be pumped to the top of the tower and then down the tower to the foundation. We know how to do it. We know how to keep concrete in its place.

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