

# Germany's First Offshore Wind Turbines Connected to the Grid

Federal Environment Minister Gabriel visits the construction site of Germany's first offshore wind park Alpha Ventus

Today Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel visited the construction site of Germany's first offshore wind park Alpha Ventus in the North Sea. Anchored in a depth of 30 meters below sea level approx. 45 kilometres off the Borkum coast, the first five wind turbines are feeding power into the grid. "Constructing 150 m high wind turbines out to sea is not only a major technical and logistical challenge, it is also a challenge for the people working there, fighting harsh offshore conditions with courage and resilience", said Sigmar Gabriel. By the end of October a total of 12 plants at Alpha Ventus are scheduled to commence operation, providing power for approx. 50,000 households.

Sigmar Gabriel expects that the construction of offshore wind parks with an investment volume of at least 100 billion euro will generate 30,000 new jobs: "This is the biggest opportunity for economic development in the coastal areas since the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the current financial and economic crisis, which is also affecting maritime industries, the offshore market is an ideal opportunity: industry is finally making substantial investments in production plants and logistics and governments are investing in the required expansion of port infrastructures".

Alpha Ventus marks the start of offshore wind energy utilisation in Germany. Germany's goal is generate up to 25,000 MW of installed capacity by 2030. This would cover approx. 15 per cent of German electricity demand.

More than 20 additional offshore wind parks with a total capacity of about 8,000 megawatt (MW) have already been authorised - among these "BARD Offshore 1", the first wind park of the Emden-based BARD Engineering company. The company manufactures 5 MW class offshore turbines and is currently preparing the assembly of its first 400 MW offshore wind park in the North Sea. Minister Gabriel declared that he was impressed by the company's innovative power when visiting the production site in Emden.

The construction and operation of the first offshore wind park in German waters is aimed at gaining experience which will benefit future offshore wind parks. For this reason the Federal Environment Ministry has launched a research initiative. Research in the test area will be supported with a total of 50 million euro. The two German companies Multibrid and REpower will each provide six so-called multi-megawatt turbines for the park. Investors and operators are working in a consortium set up by EWE, E.ON and Vattenfall which has leased the rights for the site from the Offshore Wind Energy Foundation (Stiftung Offshore Windenergie).