



RenewableUK, the trade body for the UK's wind and marine renewables industries, is celebrating a number of milestones for offshore wind in what it calls 'Super September'.

The headline story is the UK passing the 2.5GW of installed offshore wind capacity figure, enough to power 1.8m British homes.

With the opening of three new offshore windfarms during the month, the UK now has more installed offshore capacity than the rest of the world put together and more than three times greater than that of Denmark, the next largest at 876MW. The UK is now able to deliver more than 60% of the European Union's offshore wind capacity

RenewableUK's announcement coincided with the opening on 27 September of the Sheringham Shoal offshore windfarm off the coast of Norfolk by His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon of Norway. Sheringham Shoal windfarm is owned by Scira Offshore Energy Ltd, a joint venture company between Norwegian energy leaders Statoil and Statkraft. The windfarm now contributes 317MW of capacity from 88 Siemens 3.6MW turbines.

Just a week earlier, Vattenfall opened their Ormonde offshore windfarm in the Irish Sea. The windfarm contains elements of innovation, utilising REpower's 5MW wind turbine along with the deployment of steel jacket foundations (rather than the more traditional monopiles) made in Scotland by Burntisland Fabrications (BiFab). The 30 REpower turbines at Ormonde add a further 150MW to the UK's grand total of wind energy capacity.

Completing the trio of offshore windfarms added to the UK portfolio, at the beginning of September all 140 turbines at the Greater Gabbard offshore windfarm 25km off the Suffolk coast were commissioned and commenced exporting electricity. Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Ltd is a 50/50 joint venture partnership between SSE Renewables and RWE npower renewables and the project comprises 140 Siemens 3.6MW turbines providing a total capacity of 504MW. The completion of the project will probably be accompanied by a sigh of relief for the developers following earlier problems, and a subsequent contractual dispute with principle contractor Fluor Ltd relating to the quality of some of the transition pieces. Despite the early setback, Greater Gabbard remains one of the largest offshore windfarm projects in UK waters

and is now firmly established in the premier league of offshore wind energy providers.

The three developments mentioned above, add to up to £2bn of investment for the industry and RenewableUK also draw attention to other projects, including the manufacture and installation of two weather monitoring stations in the Round 3 East Anglia windfarm zone along with the opening of a new manufacturing facility at the Tata Steel plant in Hartlepool. The £2m Offshore Processing Centre will manufacture windfarm components including steel tubing for jacket foundations.

*Source: maritimejournal.com*