

IJGlobal Renewable Energy ESG Award – Europe – HKZ

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Offshore wind has progressed magnificently since its fledgling years during which the infrastructure and energy community spent more time sucking teeth over risks than it turned out was entirely necessary.

Fast forward to today and we have the likes of Hollandse Kust Zuid (HKZ) off the Netherlands' coast which – at 1.5GW and generating clean energy equivalent to the consumption of more than 2 million Dutch households – would have had those early naysayers frothing at the mouth in horror.

Build into this equation that HKZ will be the first offshore wind farm to be built without subsidies for the power produced and you would have been reaching for a defibrillator.

This award recognises the achievements made on HKZ and that are underpinned by Vattenfall's farm-down of 49.5% to BASF in September 2021 and then its subsequent sale of a 25.2% stake to Allianz (June 2022).

BASF will use its electricity share to support chemical production in sites across Europe, in particular BASF's Antwerp Verbund, which is the largest chemical production site in Belgium and the second largest BASF Group site worldwide.

The wind farm also supports the Netherlands in reaching its target share of renewable power generation and greenhouse gas reduction targets, making it an important project from an energy transition and ESG point of view.

Further, a Vattenfall team of experts in the environment and sustainability department is working with nature conservation organisation De Rijke Noordzee on a joint study at the HKZ wind farm, which looks at the possibilities of how more can be done for nature conservation in wind farms.

The ESG credentials on HKZ are strong as it is deploying Siemens Gamesa's RecyclableBlade which are made with a new type of resin that makes it easier to reclaim the different blade components. Three of the 140 Siemens Gamesa offshore wind turbines will be fitted with the new blades next year (2023).

Vattenfall aims to recycle all wind turbine blades by 2030.

Eva Philipp, head of Vattenfall's environment and sustainability unit, recently said: "The wind industry continues to grow and so will the number of blades that will reach end of life. Vattenfall is committed to promoting a circular economy and reducing environmental impact throughout the product's life cycle. Using recyclable turbine blades is a logical next step to reach those ambitions."

One of the judges said of this winner: "This is an outstanding project given the green credentials it has simply for existing. Build into that the efforts being put into recycling turbine blades and the confidence shown by BASF and the Allianz... clearly this sector has come of age in a responsible manner."

Another added: "At 1.5GW with 140 turbines, providing enough energy to power 2 million homes with in the Netherlands with clean energy – this is an amazing achievement. But when you look at this and take into account their efforts to support circular economy with recyclable blades, it is a stand-out winner."

Picture added after IJGlobal ESG Awards 2022:





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