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HWWI drafts a new study on offshore wind energy and decommissioning

Europe can set the global standard for decommissioning - Great opportunities for Northern Germany and Hamburg through recycling of offshore wind turbines.

The Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) has drafted a new market analysis on offshore wind energy and decommissioning in the scope of the INTERREG-North Sea project „DECOM Tools“. Against the background that offshore wind energy still comprises a high growth potential Europe has the chance to set the global standard when it comes to decommissioning of facilities at the end of their lifespan. Particularly Northern Germany can benefit from great opportunities – as long as the according challenges are solved soon.

Most of the offshore wind energy facilities are designed for an effective life time of 25 years. After that, each park is either replaced by modern components or decommissioned with a sensible dispose of the individual components.

The „Decom Tools“ project aims towards developing eco-innovative concepts for decommissioning. As part of the project, HWWI has drafted a new market analysis of offshore wind and decommissioning in the North Sea Region.

According to the market analysis, the number of turbines coming into question for decommissioning will steadily increase from 2020 onwards. “Despite offshore wind energy being a young industry the number of affected turbines was larger than expected”, says Mirko Kruse, economist and project employee at HWWI. The market analysis shows that 22 offshore wind energy turbines in

2020, 80 turbines in 2022 and 123 turbines in 2023 will come into question for decommissioning or refurbishment.

Europe as the pioneer in offshore wind energy possesses the oldest off-shore facilities. This gives rise to the opportunity to set the global standard for decommissioning in the sector of offshore wind. A requirement for a successful decommissioning is, apart from aligned logistic processes and new recycling procedures for composite materials in the wings, an appropriate infrastructure. “Particularly Northern Germany with its ports can establish important locations for future activities and attract a significant part of the value chain with the related downstream processing activities” says Isabel Sünner, responsible project manager and head of international cooperation at HWWI. “Apart from infrastructural bottlenecks there is a foreseeable lack of qualified employees to organize the decommissioning process. But if the ports and related industries now adapt to the upcoming challenges, there emerges a new field of activity for the Northern German locations” says Sünner.

The project “DECOM Tools” gathers partners from Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Norwayin a four-year project. The project is funded by the INTERREG-North Sea program of the European Union. The overall budget amount to about 4.7 million Euro.

- MARKET ANALYSIS – DECOM TOOLS 2019

Source Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) 2020

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