

**PRESS RELEASE: Offshore gas and wind sign Manifesto for cooperation during the Gas meets Wind: North Sea Energy Symposium in Rotterdam, the Netherlands**



Representatives from the gas and wind industry, together with NGO's, grid operators and science sign on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June the *Declaration of Coordination and Cooperation in the North Sea Energy Challenge* to realise synergies between gas, wind and grid operators in the North Sea area to make the energy transition as sustainable and affordable as possible.

The North Sea region has the potential to become an energy powerhouse. Extensive integration can accelerate the transition of the offshore opportunities the area offers to a sustainable, reliable, affordable and safe energy system in balance with improving ecosystems. Cooperation between offshore wind and gas operators is an unique combination of creating a low carbon energy mix and marks the beginning of a new phase of the energy transition on the way to a sustainable energy supply.

The Gas meets Wind: North Sea Energy Symposium took place in the framework of the Dutch presidency of the European Union. Keynote speaker Mark Dierikx, Director-General Energy, Telecommunications and Competition at the Ministry of Economic affairs of the Netherlands gave an insight on the political commitment to energy cooperation between the North Seas Countries by going into the Political Declaration signed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June by North Sea countries and the Benelux. As the North Sea region has the opportunity to develop itself into a Northern Energy Region for the surrounding countries, it is important to explore smart offshore combinations between gas, wind and grid operators. Now a political framework for cooperation in the North Sea region has been laid out, Mark Dierikx is pleased to see that the industry wants to undertake action. "We have put regional cooperation high on the political agenda. I therefore welcome this bottom up approach and the initiative of the offshore gas, wind and grid operators. Cooperation of the fossil and renewable world, will strengthen the energy transition and creates a win-win for all. We must accept this challenge and look with an open mind to the benefits of the energy transition in the most efficient and effective way."

During two round table session, key stakeholders discusses the long-term vision for cooperation and short-term call for actions by zooming in on tangible joint options in which offshore wind, gas and grid operators can work together. René Peters from research institute TNO said: "A year ago, the gas- and wind industry were not considering integration, now they are talking about synergies. We are witnessing a paradigm shift. What we need to find out is how one can benefit from the other

and develop new systems.” According to Giles Dickson, Chief Executive Officer of WindEurope, there are three challenges: how to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions, create a stable power grid and store a energy. This can be done by dismantling production platforms, use them for energy conversion and invest in a balanced energy grid. The construction of a large number of offshore wind farms, start in the foreseeable future. To make this transition possible and affordable, offshore wind and gas operators can work together and integrate their systems. On short term, this means that we have to explore possibilities of coordination in the conversion, storage and transport of energy. Managing director of ENGIE Ruud Bos states that the technology is there. “We need a pilot and use the existing infrastructure, before it disappears.”

With this in mind, the offshore North Sea oil and gas operators on the Dutch continental shelf, the offshore wind sector and NGO’s have joined forces and ratified and sealed a joint approach by signing of the ‘North Sea Energy Challenge Manifesto’. Hans Timmers, President of the board of NWEA and Jo Peters, Secretary General of NOGEPa are convinced of the benefits of joint efforts. Therefore, they have formed a steering committee together with environmental organization Stichting Natuur & Milieu, Tennet and TNO to further investigate joint possibilities. The steering committee operates in close contact with the MVI-E Lab of the Dutch Topsector Energy in which the many stakeholders in the North Sea region will participate, such as fishery, navigation, ports, nature and agriculture.

The Steering Committee focusses on aligning related initiatives, such as the joint use of logistics and mobility and joint innovation. They will also set up joint research on the potential of electrification of offshore platforms, system-integration, power2gas, storage, E-grid and other matters. Furthermore, the Committee takes upon a common approach in communications and community building by creating a broad council to share interests, expertise, data and logistics support of the energy transition.

By signing the ‘North Sea Challenge’ Manifesto, the gas and wind industry have established an unique collaboration and what could be a new step in the transition to a sustainable, reliable, affordable and safe energy grid on the North Sea.

**Further information:**

Please contact Jo Peters, Nogepe and Hans Timmers, NWEA via Marieke van der Werf: +31 6 50 41 98 96.