

Offshore Wind Development in England & Wales

This flowchart describes how the development of offshore wind farms is regulated in the Exclusive Economic Zone in the United Kingdom, but principally in England & Wales. The long and complex process is described chronologically from left to right in accordance with applicable laws, policies and guidance notes. The blue boxes denote procedures which are applicable to commercial-sized projects, whereas the yellow apply to pilot projects, typically involving small-scale floating offshore wind projects.

The flowchart is primarily based on Leasing Rounds 4 and 5 which have been arranged and governed on a discretionary basis by the Crown Estate. The most recent Round 5 centred on large-scale development of floating offshore wind in the Celtic Seas. Aside from the governance of Leasing Rounds, the flowchart relies on the Planning Act 2008 and its associated regulations which regulate the licensing procedure for offshore wind farms bigger than 100 MW. For pilot projects less than 100 MW, a different and more fragmented licensing procedure applies.

The laws, regulations and policies applicable to offshore wind farm development in the UK is constantly changing and it is therefore stressed that the flowchart should be read keeping in mind that the regulatory hemisphere may have changed since the creation of the chart as per the 15.01.2025.

