

## Newsletter 01.

The BEYOND project is a significant initiative aimed at developing offshore wind farms (OWF) in the Adriatic region, combining renewable energy generation with environmental sustainability and socio-economic growth. The project involves multiple partners from across the Adriatic and Europe, each bringing specialized expertise to ensure that OWF projects are not only feasible but also integrated into regional development plans. By fostering cross-border cooperation, the BEYOND project serves as a model for future renewable energy initiatives in similar coastal regions.

### Key Partners and Their Roles:

IRENA - Istrian Regional Energy Agency, the project's lead partner, shoulders the responsibility for overall project coordination and management. This includes overseeing financial, administrative, and organizational aspects to ensure the project stays on course. IRENA's current focus is on developing a sustainable planning model for offshore wind farms specifically tailored to the conditions of the Adriatic Sea. They are in the process of conducting comprehensive feasibility studies in Istria, analyzing everything from wind energy potential to the social and environmental impacts of developing OWFs in the region. By engaging local stakeholders, IRENA aims to ensure that OWF projects will not only provide clean energy but also deliver economic benefits to the communities involved. As part of their ongoing activities, they are preparing reports that will guide the creation of local policy frameworks supporting the sustainable transition to renewable energy.

The National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics – OGS is a public research institution, monitored by the Italian Ministry of University and Research - MUR, which operates internationally in the field of physical, chemical, biological and geological oceanography, experimental and exploration geophysics, seismology and engineering seismology. OGS will use the experience gained in previous projects for integrating biological information with oceanographic data in order to obtain best representation of current distribution of resources in areas where OWF are going to be installed. Know-how on data availability, potential ways for data integration and modelling are all expertise that OGS will bring to BEYOND in order to provide an assessment of the OWF and the possibility to evaluate management activities that will allow to work in a framework of sustainability of socio-ecological systems.

Sinloc, an Italian firm specializing in consultancy and investment services for public-private partnerships, is heavily involved in the economic and financial aspects of the project. Their current focus is on cost-benefit analyses and evaluating the financial viability of potential OWF projects in the Adriatic. Sinloc is working on developing economic models that will help local authorities and private investors understand the long-term benefits of investing in OWF infrastructure. They are also leading socio-economic impact studies, identifying how the development of these wind farms could benefit the local economy, create jobs, and boost regional development. By linking the project's results with policy makers and regional authorities, Sinloc ensures that the data gathered informs the future direction of energy policy and financial investments.



The Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds (MRDEUF), based in Croatia, manages the communication efforts of the BEYOND project. Currently, MRDEUF is working on the dissemination of project results through a variety of media, including newsletters, digital content, and brochures aimed at keeping stakeholders informed. Their objective is to ensure transparency and the active participation of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. MRDEUF's ongoing activities include crafting communication materials that will be used to engage with local communities, helping to explain the benefits and potential challenges of offshore wind farm development. They are also playing a key role in the preparation of final project reports, which will consolidate the results and lessons learned from BEYOND.

The Puglia Region is playing a key role in the legislative and regulatory aspects of the BEYOND project. Their current activities include developing a comprehensive legal framework that will support the installation and operation of offshore wind farms. Puglia is working on mapping out relevant stakeholders, ensuring that all voices are heard as part of the legislative process. They are engaging with policymakers at both the regional and European levels to ensure that any legal barriers to the development of OWF are addressed. As part of their ongoing work, Puglia is also preparing for the transregional Stakeholder and Business Engagement (SBE) labs. These labs will facilitate discussions on the regulatory challenges and opportunities for offshore wind development, ensuring that policies are adapted to local and regional contexts while still complying with broader EU energy directives.

Split-Dalmatia County, one of the pilot regions for OWF development, is currently focused on conducting an in-depth feasibility study for their proposed offshore wind farm. This includes collecting data on local wind conditions, analyzing environmental impacts, and assessing the region's infrastructure capacity to support offshore wind installations. Split-Dalmatia is also heavily involved in stakeholder engagement, working to ensure that local authorities, businesses, and communities are part of the decision-making process. Their immediate task is to prepare for the Transregional Lab to be held in Split on October 15-16, 2024. This lab will focus on fostering collaboration between Adriatic regions, sharing technical knowledge, and addressing common challenges in OWF development. The lab will bring together a wide range of stakeholders, from policymakers and industry experts to environmental groups, with the goal of developing actionable strategies for the blue energy sector.

T2i - Technology Transfer and Innovation, another key Italian partner, is leading the digital innovation efforts within the BEYOND project. Their current activities include gathering and analyzing regional data to better understand the specific needs of each pilot region involved in the project. T2i is also responsible for mapping stakeholders and developing best practices for the implementation of offshore wind technology. They are in the process of designing an innovation-driven approach to OWF development, ensuring that the latest technological advances are integrated into the project. This includes the use of digital tools for monitoring wind energy production, predicting maintenance needs, and optimizing wind farm performance. T2i is also working on the development of new educational programs aimed at training the future workforce for the offshore wind industry. These programs will help ensure that the region has the necessary skills and expertise to support long-term growth in the renewable energy sector.

Finally, The Faculty of Engineering at the University of Rijeka (RITEH) provides critical technical support to the project, particularly in the area of wind energy analysis and modeling. Their ongoing work includes the



creation of detailed wind energy models that will help determine the best locations for offshore wind farm development in the Adriatic Sea. These models take into account a variety of factors, including wind speed, sea conditions, and environmental impacts, to ensure that wind farms are both efficient and sustainable. RITEH is also leading efforts to develop cross-sectoral educational programs that will train engineers and other technical staff required to build and maintain OWFs. By focusing on technical excellence and sustainability, RITEH's work supports the long-term goals of the BEYOND project, ensuring that the wind farms not only produce renewable energy but also contribute to regional development in a sustainable way.

#### Key Events and Current Activities:

The project's kick-off meeting in April 2024, held during the "Days of Green and Blue Energy Transition of Istrian County" in Labin, served as the foundation for the collaboration between partners. It allowed the consortium to align on key objectives and action plans for the project. With over 100 participants from various sectors, this event marked the official start of the BEYOND project's activities, setting the tone for future collaboration. The meeting facilitated important discussions on renewable energy technologies and emphasized the need for a multi-sectoral approach to OWF development, encompassing both the technical and socio-economic dimensions of the project.

Looking forward, the Transregional Lab in Split, scheduled for October 15-16, 2024, is expected to be a major milestone. This event will gather key stakeholders from across the Adriatic region to discuss common challenges and share innovative solutions in offshore wind farm development. The lab will focus on fostering cross-regional collaboration, enabling participants to exchange insights on regulatory issues, technological advancements, and best practices in wind energy production. The lab will also serve as a platform to strengthen the partnerships between regional authorities, businesses, and local communities, with the ultimate goal of creating a coordinated and sustainable approach to blue energy development.

#### Ongoing Activities Across the Consortium:

IRENA is finalizing feasibility studies and drafting guidelines for sustainable OWF planning in Istria.

OGS is developing the analysis of the ecosystem characteristics in the areas where OWF will be developed considering aspects such as biodiversity, sensitive habitats and protection sites. Moreover, OGS is planning the fisheries analysis.

Sinloc is conducting socio-economic impact analyses and working on financial models for future investment in OWFs.

MRDEUF is enhancing the communication strategy and preparing outreach materials.

Puglia Region is aligning regional policies with EU directives and preparing for legislative adjustments.

Split-Dalmatia County is actively engaging stakeholders and completing its OWF feasibility study.

T2i is driving the digital transformation of the project and designing training programs for future OWF workforce needs.

RITEH continues to refine its wind energy models and support educational program development to ensure technical capacity for future offshore wind projects.

Through these collaborative efforts, the BEYOND project is not only paving the way for a sustainable energy future in the Adriatic but also contributing to the socio-economic development of the region through inclusive and innovative energy solutions.

