



**GOVERNEMENT**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*



Le réseau  
de transport  
d'électricité

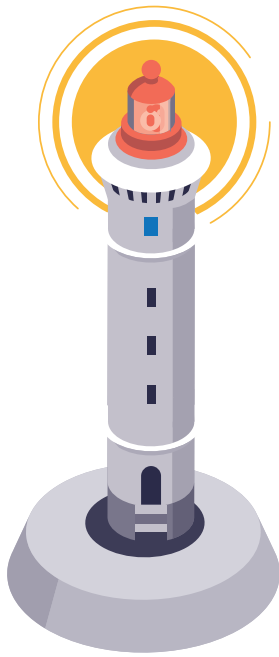
**PUBLIC DEBATE**

# Maritime spatial planning

Mediterranea

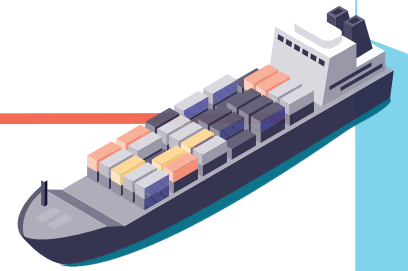


Summary of the project management file



Following a request from French government and RTE (Electricity Transmission Network), the National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP), an independent administrative authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the right to public participation, decided to organize a public debate on maritime spatial planning and offshore wind farm mapping. The CNDP has entrusted the running of the debate to a «Special Committee for Public Debate» for each coastline.

«Debating the sea» public debate begins on **20 November 2023** and ends on **26 April 2024**. It will consist of multiple events that will take different forms depending on the territories and issues at stake (round tables, cruises, digital tools, etc.). The aim is to inform all audiences, whether or not they live on the coastline, and enable them to participate in the choices that **will determine the future of the sea and the place of energy in the sea**.



## 1. Why a public debate on maritime planning?

The sea is a space where **numerous** environmental and socio-economic **uses and challenges** coexist. It is home to **exceptional biodiversity**, provides essential food resources, and hosts economic activities that structure the coastline and beyond.

Today, the sea faces major challenges, including **climate change**. Climate change has a direct impact on the functioning of the oceans (rising water temperatures, acidification, erosion of marine biodiversity, etc.). The marine environment, the planet's leading carbon sink and a crucial thermal regulator, plays an essential role in balancing the climate and mitigating the effects of global change.

The latest assessments of the marine environmental status in France give cause for concern. As elsewhere in Europe and around the world, they show that marine biodiversity and the many services provided by the sea, which are essential to humanity, are under threat, particularly due to the many pressures associated with human activities. **Protecting them is therefore essential.**

The sea is also home to an **ever-growing number** of economic activities, which coexist in a limited space and contribute to the economic development of coastal areas. Existing activities, such as fishing and transport, are developing and evolving alongside others that are emerging. **Marine renewable energy** infrastructures, which contribute to climate change mitigation, are one of these.

France's maritime areas offer **major opportunities** for offshore wind energy projects. This source of energy is essential to meeting the goal of **carbon neutrality**, and should account for nearly a quarter of our electricity production by 2050.

**France's maritime areas are currently facing a number of challenges: preserving and restoring their biodiversity, economic development, managing existing and emerging activities, energy and ecological transition... Maritime planning is a major lever for meeting these challenges.**



## 2. How to meet the challenges of maritime planning in the Eastern Channel - North Sea?

The maritime planning process is supported by «strategic coastline documents» (DSF), which implement the guidelines of the national strategy for the sea and coast (SNML). The aim is to build, in consultation with all stakeholders and citizens, a multi-year, shared and evolving vision of the maritime area in terms of ecological, economic and social issues, and local needs. Maritime planning must enable existing and emerging maritime

uses and activities to be perpetuated and managed sustainably, while helping to achieve good environmental status for the marine environment.

Public participation is an essential step in co-constructing the objectives of maritime planning, particularly with regard to the following objectives:

- Identify best solutions for **reconciling uses**;
- **Set strategic developments to feed into the updating of the socio-economic and environmental objectives of strategic coastline documents**;
- **Strengthen protection of the marine environment** and identify priority study areas for the development of high protection;
- Contribute to the **mapping of priority areas for the installation and connection of offshore wind turbines, 10 years ahead and by 2050**, and thus contribute to the work on the French Energy and Climate Strategy.

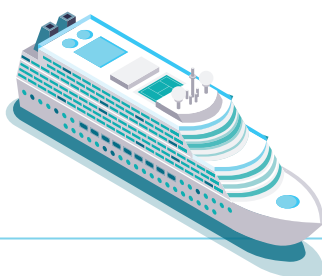
Public debates will provide input for the updating of the strategic coastline documents, the first parts of which are due to be adopted in early 2025.



### Documentation available to the public

Several tools are available to help public understand the project, its context and the issues at stake:

- **public debate website** <https://www.debatpublicfrla-mer-en-debat> for information, documentation, debate events and questions;
- **a project owner's file**, written by French government and RTE, consisting of a basic document and thematic sheets, to provide a detailed understanding of issues and the purpose of public debate;
- **a maritime planning portal** with access to summary data on the marine environment and activities at sea: <https://www.geolittoral.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/portail-de-la-planification-de-la-mer-et-du-a1562.html>;
- **an atlas of maps**, including French government's proposals for zones suitable for offshore wind power development, and for zones of high protection.





# 3. How can we meet the challenges of maritime planning in the Mediterranean?

## 3.1. Strengthening protection of the marine environment to achieve good environmental status

Preservation of the marine environment is essential to guarantee future generations a viable planet and a welcoming environment for human beings and all the species that make it so rich. It is now necessary to **step up efforts to both protect and restore marine ecosystems**, so as to preserve the vital ecosystem services associated with them (climate change mitigation, air quality, food, etc.) and thus achieve **good environmental status**.

To meet these challenges, **marine protected areas** are a **privileged tool**. They imply managing human activities where their impact is incompatible with the conservation of marine species and habitats.

### • Mediterranean issues

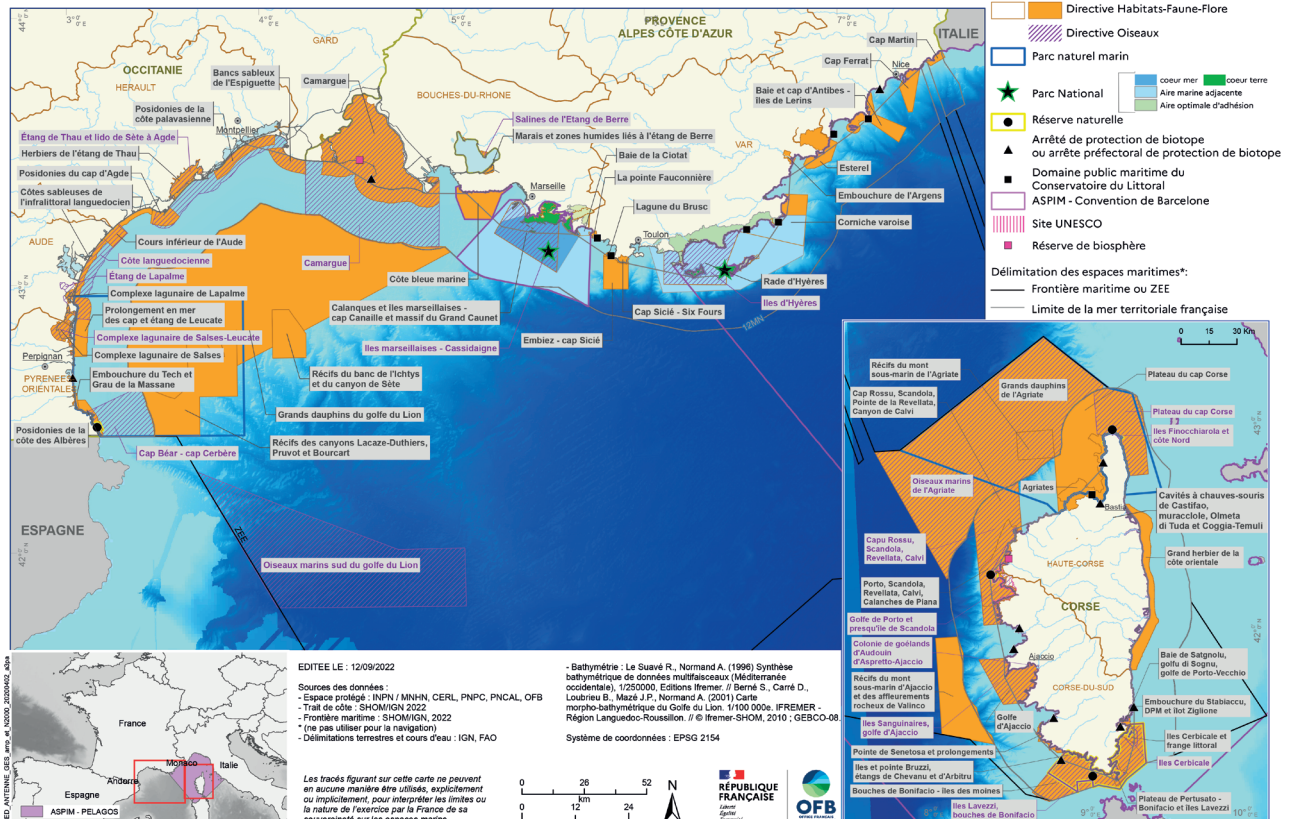
The Mediterranean coastline is home to **102 marine protected areas** covering **52.3%** of its marine waters. This makes it the most protected coastline in terms of surface area covered by marine protected areas. In terms of strong protection, **35 areas are in the process of being recognized** on the Mediterranean coastline, representing **0.2%** of the coast's surface area.

At the World Conservation Congress in Marseilles in September 2021, French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced the goal of covering **at least 5% of the waters along the Mediterranean coastline with high protection by 2027**, in view of the exceptional biodiversity challenges it represents.

Certain areas may be subject to a **very high level of protection**: these are known as «**highly protected areas**», a label marking the exemplary environmental management of an area and the reduction of pressure on the environment - including by controlling or prohibiting activities. **The national strategy for protected areas**, renewed in 2021, aims, by 2030, to strengthen the network of protected areas to cover **30%** of the national territory and marine waters (a target already achieved), and **10% under high protection**. The maritime planning process contributes directly to this goal.

Thus, public debate should make it possible to identify, with regard to the challenges of preserving the coastline's biodiversity, the network of existing marine protected areas and current activities and uses, **the sectors to be prioritized to achieve the target of strong protection assigned to the coastline**. Public's contributions will be based in particular on the areas of ecological interest prioritized for the development of strong protection. Ecological issues covered include, for example, Posidonia meadows, vulnerable marine ecosystems (sensitive deep-sea habitats) or functional habitat zones for seabirds.

Mediterranean coastline - All marine protected areas (Natura 2000 site names apparent)







Posidonia meadows



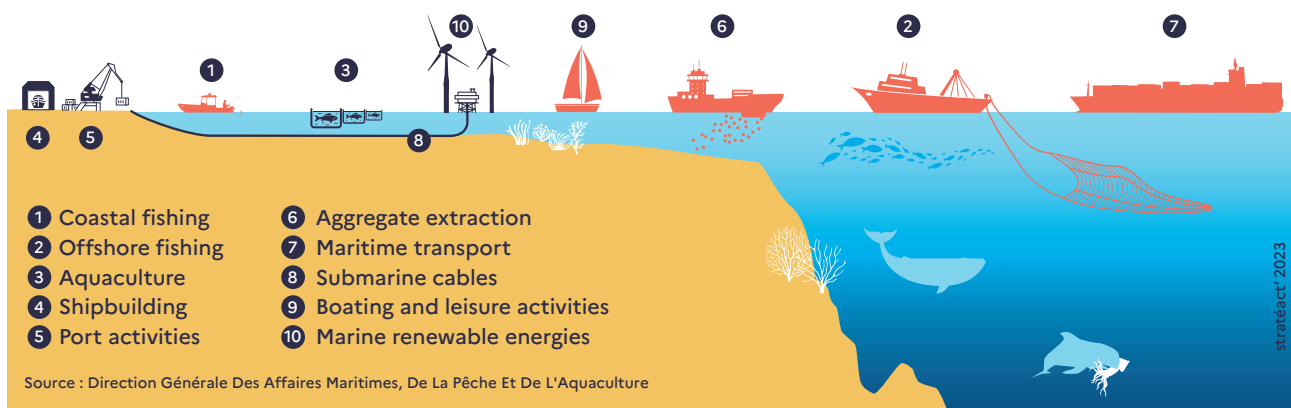
Scopoli's shearwater

### 3.2. Anticipate changes to ensure sustainable management of existing and emerging maritime activities

The sea and its shores are home to an ever-increasing number of activities, which means that we need to rethink the way in which they interact in space and time. Their sustainability and development are major regional and national challenges in terms of energy transition and food

sovereignty, of local jobs and of landscape and tourist identity. The aim is both to pursue development and to respect the carrying capacity of marine and coastal environments, which remain fragile and little-known ecosystems.

#### The sea beyond the beach



The Mediterranean coastline is unique in that it concentrates a high density of maritime activities on a coastline and marine environment of immense ecological wealth, in a maritime area that is rather small compared to other French coastlines.

France is Europe's second-largest producer of **fish and aquaculture** products. On a national scale, 80% of the fishing fleet is made up of vessels of less than 12 meters, with this figure rising to **93% for the Mediterranean fleet**.

**80% of the world's freight is transported by sea.** Every year, an estimated **25% of the world's maritime traffic transits the Mediterranean Sea**. The main ports on this coastline play an important role on a national scale: the Grand Port Maritime de Marseille (GPM) and the ports of Sète and Bastia.

**The submarine cable business** involves the manufacture, installation and maintenance of underwater cables for the transmission of communications and electrical power.

**There are 17 submarine cables** in the Mediterranean. This activity is even more important as communication needs will grow, and offshore wind power is set to develop along the coast.

The coastline is home to numerous **industrial activities**, including shipyards. In France, shipbuilding is mainly focused on specialized and/or high value-added vessels, as well as fishing boats. On the Mediterranean coastline, shipbuilding activities are mainly concentrated in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, around Toulon/Saint-Mandrier, Marseille, La Ciotat and Saint-Tropez.

The Mediterranean is France's busiest and most visited coastline. Since the end of the health crisis, there has been a real upturn in visitor numbers. **The Mediterranean coastline is a prime location for pleasure boating and water sports, home to almost half of all marinas in mainland France.**

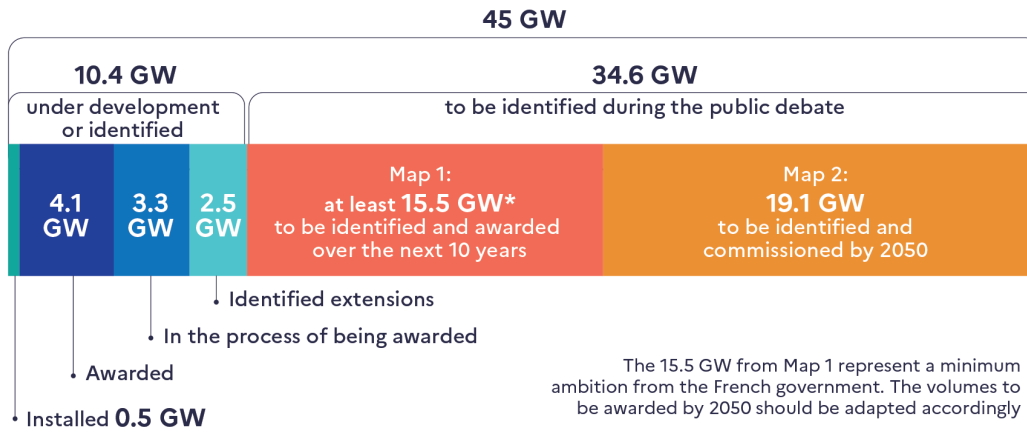
### 3.3. Developing offshore wind power, at the heart of the energy transition challenge

#### • Growing demand for carbon-free electricity

Achieving **carbon neutrality by 2050** implies considerable efforts to reduce energy consumption, but also a **massive increase in the need for decarbonized electricity** to replace greenhouse gas-producing fossil fuels.

To meet this need, offshore wind power must be developed alongside other low-carbon energy sources. To achieve this, it is necessary to **plan the deployment of new production capacity**, so as to give visibility to all players.

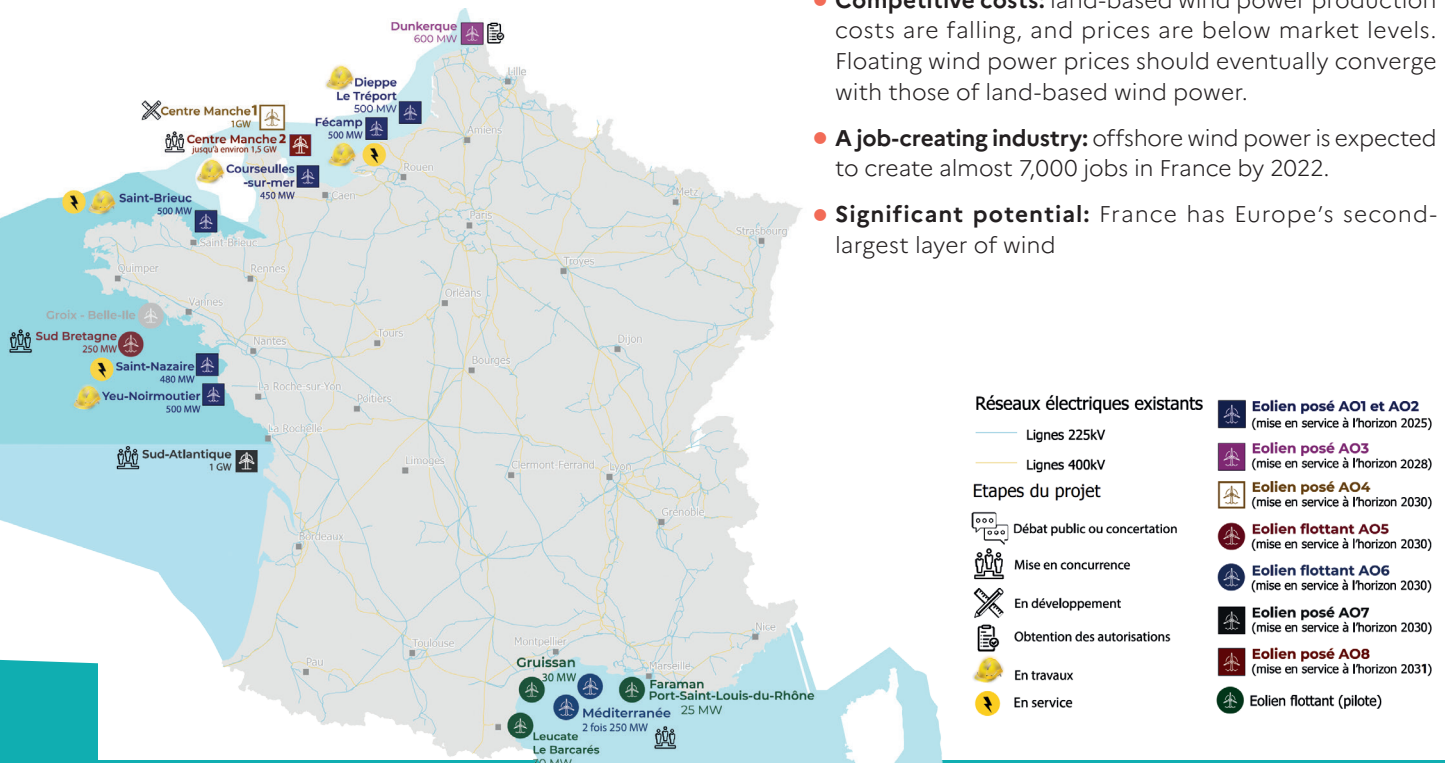
Forecast breakdown of capacities to be identified



#### • An energy source with many advantages

- Significant **electricity production**: as the wind is stronger and more regular at sea, offshore wind turbines produce more electricity than on land.
- **Locally-produced** energy that contributes to France's **energy independence and security of supply**.
- An energy that helps **diversify the energy mix and make it more robust**.
- **Low carbon intensity**: the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of an offshore wind farm are very low, so it contributes to France's energy transition objective.
- **A mature technology**: offshore wind energy benefits from extensive experience feedback in Europe and a leading-edge French industrial sector.
- **Competitive costs**: land-based wind power production costs are falling, and prices are below market levels. Floating wind power prices should eventually converge with those of land-based wind power.
- **A job-creating industry**: offshore wind power is expected to create almost 7,000 jobs in France by 2022.
- **Significant potential**: France has Europe's second-largest layer of wind

Offshore wind farm projects under development on France's coasts

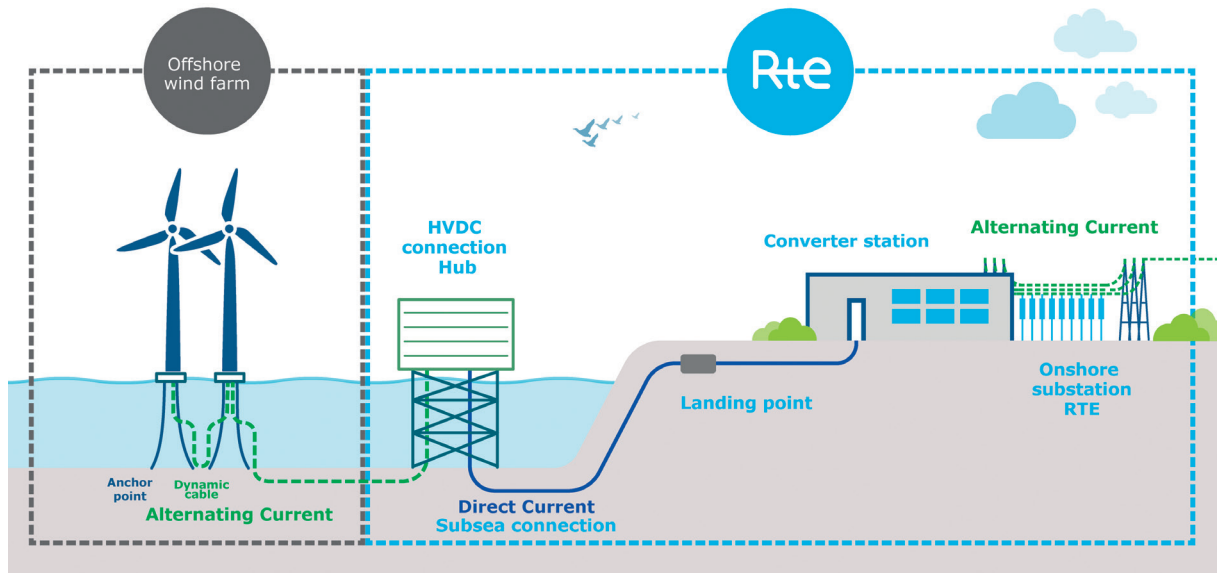


## Characteristics of an offshore wind farm

A wind farm consists of a group of wind turbines, either fixed or floating. They are composed of a mast, a nacelle, and blades, respectively installed on foundations fixed in the seabed or on floaters anchored to the seabed. Fixed technology is more suitable for shallow depths, while floating technology, still undergoing development, can be deployed in deeper areas of the continental shelf.

The connection of the wind turbines allows the electricity generated at sea to be transmitted to the onshore power grid. It consists of an offshore substation with an alternating current (HVAC) to direct current (HVDC) converter station, submarine cables and then onshore cables, and a direct current to alternating current converter station near a substation connected to the electricity transmission network.

Schematic diagram of an electrical connection



### • Current status and outlook for offshore wind power in the Mediterranean

On the Mediterranean coastline, **only floating wind projects in the Gulf of Lion** are feasible, given the depth of the seabed and wind speeds. Three pilot projects are currently under construction and are scheduled to come on stream between early 2024 and early 2025.

Two floating wind farm projects off the Occitanie and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regions, each with a capacity of around 250 MW, are currently in the tendering phase, with commissioning scheduled for 2031. Each project will be complemented by an extension of around 500 MW with a shared connection.

In light of the national objectives for offshore wind energy development, the technical potential, and the constraints of the coastline, French government proposes the following objectives for the Mediterranean coastline and other coastlines. These objectives are intended to serve as a basis for public debate. In particular, the public will be invited to give their opinion on the environmental and socio-economic challenges facing the coastline, so that French government can refine its ambitions.

Front	Capabilities under development or allocated (excluding extensions)	10-year targets for new capacity to be allocated (including extensions) already identified	Targets to 2050 (including all parks already allocated, in the process of being allocated and identified extensions)
Eastern Channel - North Sea	4,5 GW	Between 7 and 11 GW	Between 12 and 15.5 GW
Northwest Atlantic Mid-Ocean Channel	1,7 GW	Between 6 and 9.5 GW (including 0.5 GW of extensions)	Between 17 and 25 GW
South Atlantic	1 GW	Between 2.5 and 5.5 GW (including 1 GW of extensions)	Between 7 and 11 GW
Mediterranean	0,6 GW	Between 3 and 4.5 GW (including 2x0.5 GW of extensions)	Between 4 and 7.5 GW
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,8 GW</b>	<b>Between 18.5 GW and 30.5 GW (including 2.5 GW of extensions)</b>	<b>Between 40 and 59 GW</b>





## JOIN THE DEBATE!

Go to the project website  
for information, documentation  
and debate events  
and ask your questions

