



US Offshore Wind Collaborative

July 2008 Update

The mission of the US Offshore Wind Collaborative (USOWC) is to address the technical, environmental, economic, and regulatory issues necessary to catalyze the sustainable development of offshore wind energy in the waters of the United States.

An *ad-hoc* steering committee has formed to organize and manage the formal launch of the US Offshore Wind Collaborative (USOWC). The nine-member committee, with representatives from industry, environmental organizations, state programs, and academia is building on a foundation established through prior collaboration between Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), the US Department of Energy (DOE), and GE Wind Energy. This initial effort produced **A Framework for Offshore Wind Energy Development in the United States (2005)** (available at <http://www.usowc.org/history.html>) and a draft **Offshore Wind Collaborative Organizational Business Plan**. (See “Origins” below).

The Steering Committee is responding to the changes in US offshore wind activity that have occurred since the idea for the collaborative first emerged—the most significant being the larger number of states now engaged in planning for and promoting the development of offshore wind energy projects. The members of the Steering Committee invite and urge those states to join with us to help build a strong and sustainable US offshore wind energy industry.

Current Activities

The Steering Committee is reaching out to key players in state and federal government, academia, industry, and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community for input on the following priority activities designed to prepare USOWC for formal launch in fall 2008:

- Engage with state-level offshore wind initiatives to learn from their experiences, identify shared concerns and plan for a meeting in conjunction with the AWEA Offshore Wind Power Workshop, September 9-10, 2008, in Wilmington, Delaware.
- Develop a white paper, mirroring the structure of the *Framework*, to update the status of offshore wind and related activities in this country, including recommendations for a near-term agenda for USOWC.
- Define an organizational structure for USOWC.
- Explore ways to work effectively with federal agencies to leverage their resources and support their partnering with USOWC.
- Establish the USOWC’s recruitment capacity by launching a web site, contacts database and information clearinghouse.

Evolving Context: *the Time Is Right*

Since publication of the initial *Business Plan*, the landscape for offshore wind development has changed considerably. While DOE and GE have shifted focus to the high demand for land-based wind development, several coastal states launched significant initiatives to attract, incentivize, and plan for wind development offshore. The regulatory context is becoming clearer with the authority granted to Department of Interior’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) to develop a program for leasing Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lands for renewable energy. The private sector has increased R&D into deep-water technologies and investment in proposed projects. And the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)-based Offshore Wind Working Group has attracted over 100 members. Energy development—renewable energy in particular—is emerging as one of the central issues in federal and state ocean planning agendas.

With this momentum, MTC issued a call seeking organizations to join an *ad-hoc* Steering Committee to organize and manage the formal launch of the USOWC. The Steering Committee includes several organizations that participated in development of the *Framework* and *Business Plan*, and others that represent the expanding interest in offshore wind energy development:

- **American Wind Energy Association** (Laurie Jodziewicz)
- **Battelle Memorial Institute** (Mark Curran)
- **Clean Energy States Alliance** (Mark Sinclair)
- **Great Lakes Wind Collaborative** (John Hummer)
- **Mass Audubon** (Jack Clarke)
- **Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environment** (Greg Watson)
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** (Steve Connors)
- **Massachusetts Technology Collaborative** (Nils Bolgen)
- **Union of Concerned Scientists** (John Rogers)

Origins of USOWC

The idea of creating an interdisciplinary public/private partnership to facilitate the development and growth of a sustainable offshore wind industry in the United States was conceived in 2004 following the first proposal to build an offshore wind energy project in this country. After exploring Europe's experience with wind energy in the marine environment, learning about the potential of our domestic offshore wind resource, and gaining first hand experience with the initial permitting deliberations around Cape Wind, MTC joined with GE Wind Energy, and the DOE to consider the question, "*What would it take to build an offshore wind energy industry here, and do it right?*"

These three partners formed the initial, informal Offshore Wind Collaborative, convening a broad group of stakeholders in Washington, DC, to consider a myriad of opportunities and challenges. The result was the *Framework*, a comprehensive agenda for the development of a sustainable offshore wind industry that anticipates environmental and socioeconomic concerns and calls for harnessing the collective resources of academia, the public sector, business, and the NGO community to address key issues and to take advantage of opportunities to *mitigate by design*.

To demonstrate the value of an offshore wind collaborative, DOE, GE, and MTC jointly funded five pilot projects. The projects were completed in 2005 and covered topics relating to the regulatory framework for offshore wind, technical considerations, and the economic and environmental performance of offshore wind. Project reports are available at: <http://www.usowc.org/init.html>.

MTC took the next step by funding a draft *Organizational Business Plan* to consider, with input from potential partners, how to structure a new national collaborative to build a sustainable offshore wind industry in the US.

Organizational Structure, Funding, and Membership

At this time, the USOWC is unincorporated. However, it is expected that the organizational structure will evolve, influenced by factors such as membership, planned activities, and potential sources of funding. The USOWC may eventually incorporate as a separate entity.

The USOWC has been supported by MTC since inception. Contract management and funding are currently provided by MTC, which is currently willing to continue to provide management and administrative support. The USOWC also benefits from considerable in-kind contributions from Steering Committee members and *pro bono* work from affiliated parties. The Steering Committee is exploring options for grants, dues, and other forms of support as part of the discussion around the priority activities described above.

Membership: The USOWC will be open to any public or private entity which supports the mission and commits to active participation in activities of the collaborative.

Additional Information

Please check www.usowc.org or e-mail Sonya Mitchell at usowc@masstech.org with questions.