

RECHARGE

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‘Cradle to grave’ | Milestone US offshore wind standards follow five-year industry push

Workers stand on the dock side next to offshore wind transition pieces.
Photo: Getty/Getty Images



Consortium that produced first of five best practice documents hailed as model for future collaboration

By [Tim Ferry](#)

The US has its first ever industry-led standards covering the “cradle to grave” lifecycle of offshore wind development after a concerted five-year effort by key industry players. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) – the body in charge of overseeing voluntary best practices – announced it had accepted the *Offshore Compliance Recommended Practices: 2022 Edition* (OCR-1-2022) this week from a consortium led by trade group American Clean Power Association (ACP) with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and other public and private enterprises.

The approval of the document by ANSI establishes it as the official reference within the US regulatory approval process. “Regulators hold responsibility for all stages of development – from cradle to grave – and we’ve now provided them more comprehensive guidance in one document,” said Walt Musial, head of NREL’s offshore wind development programme and chair of the ACP-led technical standards committee.

The scope of the guidance encompasses “the design, manufacturing, installation, commissioning, operation and service, decommissioning, and re-powering within the project life-cycle of a wind farm”, according to ANSI. It covers towers, substructures, foundations, offshore substations, “and any other permanently installed auxiliary platforms or equipment”.

Four more documents are to follow, addressing floating wind, meteorological and oceanographic data, geotechnical and geophysical requirements, and submarine cables. “Combined, the five guidance documents will facilitate safe designs and the orderly deployment of US offshore wind energy by accounting for unique US geophysical, administrative, and environmental constraints,” NREL said in a statement.

The guidance does not create a legal mandate, however, in accordance with the US market-driven approach to setting industrial standards. “American National Standards are voluntary consensus standards and by definition, compliance with them is voluntary unless they are incorporated by reference into laws,” Anne Caldas, director for the Procedures & Standards Administration at ANSI, told *Recharge*.

OCR-1-22 updates a previous government-led standard put in place in 2012 and provides direction for the coming installation boom next year on the national drive for [30GW of offshore wind plant by 2030](#) set by President Joe Biden.

“Standards serve as an essential foundation on which a sound, durable, reliable, and safe US offshore wind industry will be built,” said Tom Vinson, ACP vice president of policy and regulatory affairs, adding that it will “facilitate the timely buildout to meet the growing demand for offshore wind energy”.

Fruits of collaboration

More than 100 experts from public and private organisations participated, including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), lead regulator of energy development in federal waters, as well as industry advocate Business Network for Offshore Wind, and US Department of Energy.

Prior to the OCR-1-22A, ACP as an accredited standards development entity guided the creation of key technical, safety, and performance standards for US onshore and offshore wind. The participatory process involving some of the biggest names in offshore wind, such as turbine makers Vestas, GE, and Siemens Gamesa, and developers [Avangrid](#) and [Vineyard Wind](#), and is being hailed as a model for future industry-regulator collaboration.

“OCR-1-2022 establishes a strong precedent for industry cooperation that... will accelerate the US offshore wind energy industry,” said Musial.