**Report**

**Roundtable 2: Skills Gap in the Offshore Renewable Energy Sector**

POWER cluster
www.power-cluster.net

- NEED OF HARMONISATION / STANDARDISATION: For offshore RES to develop into a safe, dynamic industry there is a need of better knowledge of each other's educational systems, standardization and closer collaboration between partnerships (Northumberland College). Today, duplication of programmes is a problem, caused by secrecy in the industry and regional ambitions. Similar models with different standards are thus developed. Ian Fisher of the Power Cluster confirmed this and named the Windskill project as a best practice and example for this. But even though the requested skills and training methods are standard, the problem of job placement and career opportunities should not be underestimated.

- COSTS OF / INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TRAINING: it is a problem that the cost to train staff is very high, and that infrastructure for training is lacking.

- SYNERGIES WITH SKILLS IN OIL & GAS: to get the PRACTICAL training for those going into the sea, it was seen to be a huge synergy potential in transferring knowledge from oil and gas operations to the needs of the offshore RES sectors. Some places, there are however worries that offshore RES will take away skilled people from the oil and gas sectors (Humber).

- SKILLS AND LOCATION: There is a need to transfers skilled people to where the hot spots for the industry will be. At the same time, skills need to be trained locally, to be adapted to the local needs (Northumberland College). Moreover skills must be adapted to existing problems linked to the financial crisis. The PATCH project is a good example.

- NUMBER OF TRAINED PEOPLE AND TIMING: it is important to train the right amount of people so that the market isn't flowed with people. The industry needs to be brought aboard also to ensure that the appropriate number of people is trained. It is necessary to also map industry skills programmes.

- NEED OF LEADERSHIP: In the skills field, there is a need of leadership from industrial bodies like the EWEA, as well as from the national and European levels, to enable regions to benefit from opportunities, and to contribute to the European /national and regional aims in climate & energy.

-TRIPLE HELIX: The cooperation between companies, universities and authorities is very important.

European Union The European Regional Development Fund

The Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme
Investing in the future by working together for a sustainable and competitive region

- EUROPEAN FUNDING POSSIBILITIES: It is hard to access European funding in the field (Port of Oostende). The relevant possibilities of European funding, with examples that were presented, were identified as:

1) **Marie Curie: For young, skilled researchers**
   High competition: only 10% get support. Example: a **proposal** for a Marie Curie Initial training network, by Marcin Luczac, the Fluid Flow Machinery Polish Academy of Science. Scope: wind turbine technicians for offshore deep water & floating installations. There is a need for involvement of the private sector. This proposal is still open for players who would like to join the partnership.

2) **LLP/the Leonardo da Vinci programme: For the vocational training sector.**
   Example: a **proposal** for a transfer of innovation project for education for wind technicians, with aims to pick up existing experience and implement this in countries where such education is needed, by Frank Emil Moen, Dalane College (NO). Transfer of knowledge of curricula via e-learning. A need industry partners for financing and development of the project. This proposal is still open for players who would like to join the partnership.

3) **CIP/IEE, presented by Dana Dutianu, EC.** Non-technical barriers and issues. Training, networking strategic issues. Turning policy into action and transforming the markets. The skills gap can be bridged by focusing on the market side and by training of policy makers.

   a) **The WINDSKILL** project (2006-09): An industry-led project (the German Wind Energy Association) trying to remedy lack of awareness of other educational systems by harmonization of European qualification standards in the wind energy sector. Development and testing of a European Qualification Profile. A good but not highly visible project.

   b) **GPWIND** project (ongoing 2010-12). The project addresses barriers to the development of on/offshore wind generation by developing good practice in reconciling onshore and offshore wind with environmental objectives. There is a need for dialogue with the public over the benefits of offshore wind, and the project seeks to increase social acceptance and commitment to wind energy.

   A toolkit of good practice from regional and national level will be produced. Lead partner: The Scottish Government.

4) **Regional funds: Mainly directed to local authorities with a view of regional development**

a) The Power Cluster project (INTERREG IVB North Sea, 2008-11, led by Bremerhaven Economic Development, DE) aims to identify similar educational models with different standards for programmes and initiatives in offshore wind. It seeks to remedy the lack of skilled personnel at all levels in the wind sector. An offshore wind training programme is being developed, where the best regional deliverer for each module has been picked, e.g. for:

- Health/safety/survival
- Supply Chain management
- Mechanical / technology aspects

b) PATCH (Ports adapting to change) project (INTERREG IVA, led by the Port of Oostende, BE, 2008-12). An English Channel and North Sea perspective on skills for offshore RES. There is a lack of financial and human resources to implement the wind farms. The ambitions have enormous scale, leading to challenges in supply chain, operations in deeper water (need to optimize on-shore fabrication and assembly). Turbine technicians will be a bottle neck. So will financial planning and availability of skilled people. Niche ports with focus on among other aspects:

- Health & safety
- Construction & industry
- Operations and maintenance
- Logistics.

5) **Public Private Partnerships**

Example: the Port of Oostende. How to make space in harbors for the logistics for wind farms. Clustering and networking with industry to identify needs. Mostly funded by private funds.

- GENERAL CONCLUSION: on top of the challenges in finance and supply chain in the offshore renewables sector, the real bottleneck for the development was found to be in the **skills field** (rather than in technology).