

Submission of Feedback by the Chamber of Engineers:

National Policy for the Deployment of Offshore Renewable Energy

Engineers are indispensable in the energy sector and key players in the surrounding ecosystem. The engineer also needs to be part of any complex project as engineering training and experience prepares such professionals to take key decision in a balanced interest towards a cleaner environment, protecting human communities and ensuring added value to the economy. In such renewable energy projects, the engineer is required at cradle stage of the lifecycle to ensure that the project evaluates all necessary impact assessments, is safe for implementation and delivers the intended output and return on investment throughout its lifecycle.

The Chamber of Engineers (CoE) has compiled this feedback document as input from *Inginiera* as potential contributions to the proposed National Policy for the Deployment of Offshore Renewable Energy.

- Offshore projects are poised to require significantly large investments to be properly implemented, particularly as regards the connection costs. Consequently, the adage "bigger is better" will hold true with respect to many facets of such projects. The limits initially proposed in this policy for the first call may not be substantial enough to entice large corporations which have the necessary know-how, resources, and experience to implement and maintain such projects. This factor needs to be given special consideration in view of the competing opportunities with Malta that such corporations may be driven to pursue.
- While the chosen zones were primarily designated with offshore floating wind farms in mind, there is an intriguing possibility of co-locating floating solar installations alongside wind turbines. However, if a substantial offshore solar farm were to be designed independently, it could be situated much closer to the coastline. This strategic placement would yield significant savings on the connection costs, making it an economically attractive proposition which effectively contributes to Malta's renewable energy sources.
- The subject draft national policy underscores its technology neutrality, provided that specific criteria are met. Moreover, it aptly acknowledges that offshore floating wind farms are still in the early stages of deployment when compared to conventional onshore and offshore wind farms. Additionally, offshore solar farms are in their infancy, with the announcement of the first large-scale installation occurring just this year. This scenario presents a unique opportunity for Malta to assert itself as a leader in this sector. Malta should therefore commit to further investments in Research, Development, and Innovation (R&D&I) related to the innovative technologies. These efforts should include initiatives to attract foreign direct investment and expertise, while simultaneously bolstering support for local researchers. Furthermore, Malta should actively facilitate the utilisation of the surrounding waters as a testbed to demonstrate the viability of such cutting-edge technologies.
- Certification of the project will be crucial to ensure all the project requirements are met prior to the operational phase. The CoE proposes that such certification will be a reserved activity for purposefully trained *Inginiera* who have the professional liability of the warrant and responsibility towards the consumers. Policy and legislation should feel at ease with entrusting *Inginiera* with the responsibility of certifying these projects of such magnitude and national importance. This action would serve as an investment to enrich the capabilities and technical depth of our local resources.

The CoE trusts the above feedback from the engineering community will be useful in consolidating the policy which delivers a long-term vision. The CoE makes itself available to authorities to further elaborate this feedback and give advice and support where needed.