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wpd celebrates wind farm festivals

We have already organised two wind farm festivals in the last few weeks. Numerous guests from surrounding districts were welcomed.
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"Wind is my element"

Hauke Heitmann
Head of the Project Procurement Department

Hauke Heitmann is often to be found on his board, gliding over the water and riding the waves with his kite. And he doesn't just enjoy the power of nature in his private life. Wind is also the driving force in his daily work as the Head of wpd's Project Procurement Department. He has been responsible for wpd's German collaborations for 13 years and a team now numbering twelve people. In the interview, he explains how important partnerships are to wpd.

What status do collaborations enjoy for wpd?
Partnerships with other developers have always been very important for wpd. After all, the company was founded in 1996 on the basis of a collaboration. At the beginning, we specialised in implementing projects together with smaller developers. Our core assignment was limited to securing finance and marketing projects. Over the course of time, we took on responsibility for more and more projects in their early stages with the result that we have implemented no fewer than 1,100 MW in collaborations within the last 13 years. This represents 230 projects with a total of 445 turbines.

There are numerous collaborations which we entered into in our early days and which are still standing today. As a result, many relationships of trust and friendships have evolved with our partners. These good relationships with each other form the basis for our work, and that is precisely what gives me personally a lot of enjoyment in my job: good, friendly ties within the industry and many different characters.

How is the team set up?
One of our greatest strengths is the stability of our team. Many of us have been working in the company for over ten years. That is why our partners who now number 60 have had the same people to talk to for years. This has resulted in the establishment of a large network from which our more recent collaboration partners also benefit. There are twelve of us in total – among them project buyers, technical project managers, implementation managers and contract managers. Our long experience also means that we take our decisions within the department largely independently which enables us to be fast on our feet. Here at wpd, we also combine all the technical expertise required to successfully realise a wind farm. As a result, we are in a position to support every project highly individually and with great expertise.

What developments are to be seen in your project alliances?
Right now, we are experiencing that collaborations represent a good means for many developers to push through their projects. Many with whom we used to collaborate in the past have now come back to us and intensified the partnership. The fact that wpd is not only national but also international in its structure is certainly a help, too. This portfolio effect will enable us to deliver long-term security, minimise project risks and offer good prices.

wpd successful in French tender

Good news from France: wpd has been successful in the country's first tender for electricity from onshore wind power and it has won contracts in all three projects submitted.

In the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region in the centre of the country, wpd scored with its Peyrusse project (eight wind turbines with 18.4 MW), in Nouvelle-Aquitaine the French team met with success with its Hiesse project (four turbines with 13.8 MW) and in the Pays de la Loire region in the North West of France, a contract was awarded for the Auzay project (nine turbines with 32.4 MW).

With a total of 64.6 MW awarded out of a total bidding volume of 500 MW, wpd is thus strengthening its position as one of the leading developers in the French market.

Construction of the three projects is scheduled for the middle of 2020 and commissioning for December 2020. They are currently at very different stages: wpd won approval for the Peyrusse project in 2011, and for Auzay it was mid-July of this year. The Hiesse project has not yet been approved but it has already prevailed in a call for projects at a local level.

Auzay is not only wpd's first project in the Département of Vendée but also the first one that wpd has submitted in the form of a box permit. The nine turbines in Auzay will also produce more MW at a stroke than the 50 turbines already installed in the Plaine-du-Sud-Vendée area as wpd's turbines will be twice the size as those already in operation.

For Peyrusse, the French team will build the transformer substation itself – the second substation in France to be constructed by the company following Joux-la-Ville.

About the bidding process
The French calls-for-applications for onshore wind power were decided upon in May 2017.

They will be held in two rounds per year, each with 500 MW up to an initial total of 3,000 MW. At the same time, a "de minimis" rule will allow smaller projects with up to six turbines and a maximum rated output of three MW to enjoy access to subsidies in the market premium system with the result that in the future, it will also be possible to develop projects in regions with greater restrictions in terms of space.

The lively participation in the first round of the tender and the resulting average price of € 65.4/MWh for 20 years were seen in France as a clear signal of the competitiveness of wind power by comparison with the dominant force of nuclear energy.

Photos: wpd wind farm Blanc Mont

Wind farm celebrations in Holzthaleben and Redlin

Charabanc ride in the Holzthaleben wind farm

wpd has celebrated the commissioning of two new wind farms in the last few weeks. In Holzthaleben in Thuringia, wpd welcomed 200 guests – local residents, Mayor Steinmetz and District Councillor Scheja as well as all those involved and with an interest in the project in order to celebrate the official starting gun for the five Nordex N-117 with a rated output of twelve MW. A show by the local Integrative Nursery and primary school as well as coach rides organised by wpd, guaranteed entertainment and enjoyment.

The Mooster Zwerge (tots) from the nursery of the same name and the regional motorcycle club put everyone in a good mood at the wind farm celebration in Redlin in Mecklenburg Western Pomerania. Together with naturwind, wpd also organised numerous events, e.g. a plastic bag / fabric bag swap, charabanc rides and e-bike test rides. But the wind farm's ten E-101 turbines took centre stage and wpd staff were on hand to provide copious information. The next wind farm celebration is due this autumn in Langwedel.

Come and see us at WindEnergy Hamburg

WindEnergy Hamburg

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At the end of September, the industry will congregate at the world's leading wind power trade fair in Hamburg. A total of 1,400 exhibitors can be found on the wind power exhibition grounds from 25 to 28 September. Numerous conferences and workshops as well as various side events are also planned. Naturally, there will also be a chance to meet wpd's team at the fair. Come and see us at Stand 221 in Hall A1.

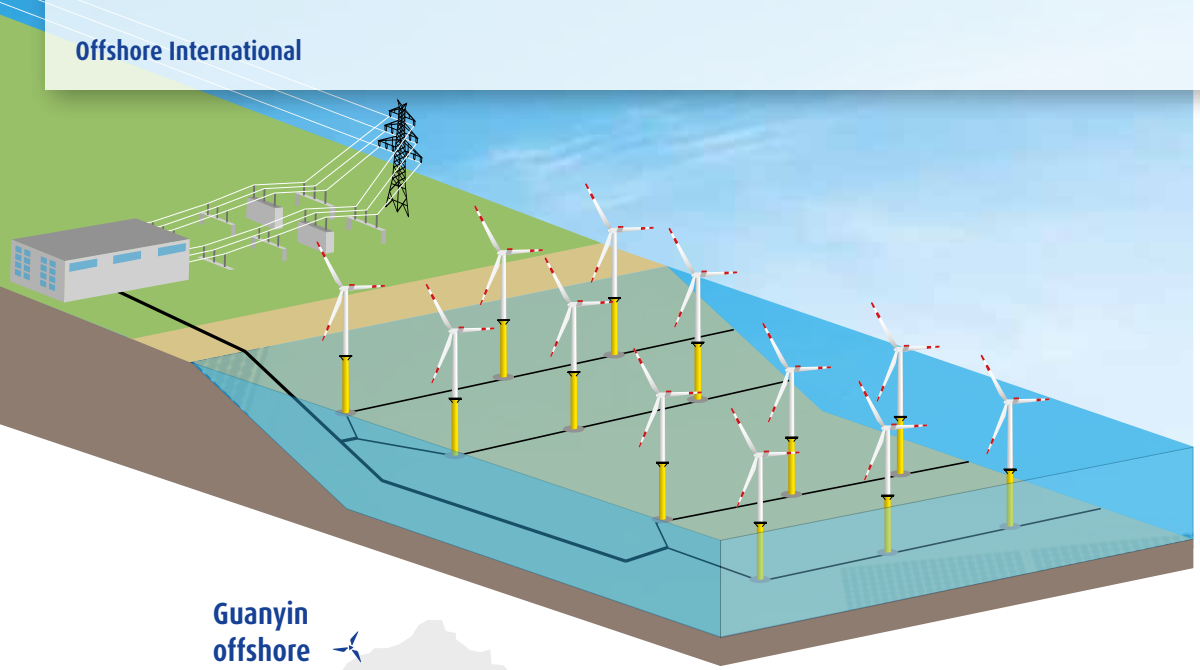
wpd hosts the IEC for a week

In June, the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) met at the wpd headquarters in Bremen at the invitation of wpd windmanager. Experts sat together for four days in order to draw up new guidelines for wind measurements and yield reports. The event was attended by specialists from manufacturers Enercon, SENVION, Siemens, Goldwind, GE and expert assessors from DEWI, Deutsche WindGuard and ANEMOS. Universities, research facilities and operators such as NREL, Natural Power and Ørsted also attended the meeting.

Participants drew up contents for the new guidelines in individual working groups. It did not prove possible to find a final consensus as differences were revealed in the procedure, methodologies and results, especially between the US and European markets. It will therefore be interesting to see to what extent the Commission is able to agree on sensible procedures on a global level. A final result is to be expected in 2020.

wpd shifts the focus onto photovoltaics

Photovoltaics represents an important pillar of renewable energies, and cross-technology solutions often make sense here. wpd is therefore shifting the focus back to photovoltaics. We are currently working on expanding the project pipeline and reinforcing local teams in our priority regions of Europe, North America and parts of Asia. In France, for example, we set up our own office this year to drive the French projects with a pipeline of 360 MWp.



The 640 MW generated by the Yunlin offshore wind farm is fed into the Taiwanese grid via onshore transformer substations.

1,000 MW in Taiwan – wpd building the first major offshore wind farms in the country

千里之行始於足下 – A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. That's how an old Asian adage runs. Although we are not undertaking a one thousand mile journey for our Taiwanese offshore projects in Yunlin and Guanyin, but the aim is to implement no less than 1,000 MW. At the end of April, the Taiwanese government awarded wpd contracts for both projects in a selection procedure.

The fact that the fabled first steps for the project were taken much earlier than for all other competitors, and the Guanyin project was the first to receive the necessary environmental approval, were important factors in the process. The combination of the experience gained from previous onshore projects and our local connections was also impressive. "We have our own team of over 75 Taiwanese employees locally available. This not only gives us a USP, it also provides the perfect platform for successfully realising the farms", states Eike Rietzrau, Deputy Project Manager who moved to Taipei for wpd one and a half years ago.

The projects are now at slightly different planning stages. Yunlin with 640 MW will be the first project. The bidding process for the four main elements (turbines, foundations, cabling and the onshore transformer substation) is more or less completed which establishes that a total of 80 turbines in the eight MW class will be built – the first half of which will be finished by 2020.

Preparations for funding the project are also in full swing. "There is great interest among banks and investors in entering the Taiwanese market. The positive framework conditions and the opportunity to open up a new market with an experienced partner, definitely represent an important motivation", explains Björn Nullmeyer who is responsible for finance at wpd.

Guanyin is the second project. The 350 MW will join the grid in 2021. Detailed soil examinations and wind measurements are now underway as are contract negotiations for the various trades. However, it is already clear that this wind farm will have a fundamentally different design to Yunlin. The location in the North West of Taiwan and its proximity to the airport make aviation safety and height restrictions on the turbines important factors in the planning process. The project will also include even more local value added – an important motivation for the Taiwanese government in its offshore plans.

All inspections and deadlines under control?

The requirements to be met by operations managers are steadily increasing. They have to face growing regulations, especially in the sphere of inspections and deadlines. The complexity involved in properly handling the periodic inspections, Industrial Safety Regulations, etc., grows with the number of turbines.

Schedule and deadline management with wpd windmanager

To keep control of the multiplicity of inspections and deadlines, wpd windmanager uses central schedule and deadline management. "With around 2,000 turbines under our management, this is absolutely essential", emphasises Jonas Lesch, Technical Manager at wpd windmanager. "Without a system of this nature, operations managers cannot process the huge volume of inspections, deadlines and individual contract arrangements with any degree of professionalism."

If a periodic inspection is due at a wind farm, the schedule and deadline management system will inform all the relevant contacts. The work required is scheduled early enough to exploit potential synergy effects, e.g. by carrying out several inspections simultaneously.

Determining inspection deadlines

A certain amount of preliminary work is required before the inspection deadlines enter the system. "The first thing is to determine the deadlines", Lesch explains. "It's not always immediately clear what has to be inspected in a wind farm or what is urgently recommended, for example." Added to this are the various levels involved. "What are the statutory requirements? Are there any additional contractual or insurance-related regulations? And what role does the subject of occupational safety play, in particular?", says Lesch.

For every wind farm, the operators have to identify potential risks and assess them in so-called risk assessments. The aim is to take preventive measures to avoid accidents or other health risks. It is particularly important to conduct regular inspections and determine the inspection deadlines taking the following regulations into account:

- requirements arising from the building approval, current directives, laws and regulations such as DIBt directives (German Institute for Structural Engineering), Industrial Safety Regulations, accident prevention regulations, technical rules, ...
- contractual and insurance-related inspections determined on the basis of existing contracts and confirmed warranty claims
- special requirements arising from HSE regulations (training, plant responsibility, protection at work, fire safety, lightning protection, ...)
- individual inspections depending on the condition of the particular turbine such as annual inspections as part of its continued operation

"In any individual case, the challenge is to clarify what effect the inspections have on the safe operation of the wind farm and which ones have to be given priority", Lesch explains. "That is why we have intentionally set our own higher standards – e.g. with regard to how we deal with the inspections recommended." Operators should seek professional support here. Any failure to meet the required inspections and deadlines entails enormous costs – and usually legal consequences as well.

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