

“Growth in the wind energy sector is attributable to a huge range of factors, including financial confidence, technological advancements, legislative support from local governments and increased public support and awareness” writes David Blake, Renewable Energy Recruitment Manager for Allen & York.

The UK has reached 8 GW of installed wind power capacity at the start of 2012, according to trade association RenewableUK. However, with the government’s Renewable Energy Roadmap calling for 31 GW of onshore and offshore wind combined by 2020, more investment is required.

Climate and Energy Secretary Chris Huhne wants to make the UK the largest market in Europe for offshore wind.

The Crown Estate has already committed over £100 million in order to help develop offshore wind projects and 2012 is expected to be a significant year for the offshore wind industry, with potentially 5 farms becoming operational with over 1.3 GW of generating capability.

This article by Renewable Energy Recruitment Specialists, Allen & York, takes a look at the developing careers within the UK Offshore wind industry, specifically exploring the impact and progress of Round 3 on the jobs market and the growing need for investment in training the renewable energy workforce of the future.

Last year, global investment in renewable energy rose by 32% to \$211 billion. And \$142 billion of that was new financial investment, which excludes government and corporate R&D.

The UK is currently the world leader in the generation of offshore wind energy; this is thanks to the first two rounds of site allocations for offshore wind farms which together comprise 8GW of generation capacity. As offshore wind generation is a key component in the UK’s renewable energy strategy going forward, the UK government is relying upon plans to extend this success through and beyond Round 3.

In 2008, the allocations for Round 3 were launched, with high hopes of producing an additional 25GW of offshore wind energy. The successful bidders were announced in early 2010 bringing with them a large number of job opportunities for the UK offshore wind industry.

“Taking the Bain & Company reports into account, it has been suggested that 45,000 British jobs will be created due to Round 3 adding another 20GW of offshore wind capacity”. This is a significant increase from rounds 1&2 (8GW); and there will be a growing demand for skilled and

experienced workers. The majority of wind energy career opportunities will fall specifically within the areas of Design, Manufacturing, Construction and Installation. As leading renewable energy recruiters who specialise and understand the technical demands within the wind energy sector, our role at Allen & York is to identify talented professionals with experience, as well as those with transferable skills. Currently there simply aren't enough skilled professionals to fill the potential demand within the Offshore market and industry needs to attract professionals with qualifications in Science & Engineering, as well as increasing the number of training courses to reduce the barriers of entry into this market." Alex Hume, Wind Energy Recruitment Consultant, Allen & York.

Wind energy companies are increasingly willing to recognise the value of transferable skills and are investing in their own training schemes to support this. The obvious sector with a transferable skill set is the Oil & Gas market. However, companies will need to offer competitive salary and benefits packages to compete and attract professionals at the levels they require.

The business opportunities are being recognised around the UK, with companies such as Scottish Enterprise announcing an investment of £900,000 in January this year, to support the growth of the Wind Energy industry in Scotland. Chief Executive, Lena Wilson comments; "Many of our existing strong industry sectors such as oil and gas, engineering, aerospace and construction have transferable skills and expertise for the offshore wind market. With construction of offshore wind farms around the UK imminent, we want Scottish businesses to maximise the economic opportunity."

There are exciting opportunities for individuals and companies looking to enter this new and innovative industry. Round 3 will undoubtedly provide huge scope for employment and the consultants at Allen & York will act quickly to source the right people for the increasing number of renewable energy job opportunities. Raising awareness of offshore job opportunities and providing the right incentives and training schemes to encourage cross skilling are vital for the success of the UK renewable energy industry and Allen & York are at the centre of this recruitment drive.