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Co-production of Knowledge and Politics for a Just and Sustainable Blue Economy

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POLICY BRIEF

Offshore wind in Galicia in line with ORRI principles

Thirteen recommendations from the CoBlue community forum

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TIASLab A living lab for public participation

POST-GROWTH INNOVATION LAB

Offshore wind in Galicia in line with ORRI principles. Thirteen recommendations from the CoBlue community forum

This policy brief summarises the report *Implementing offshore wind in line with ORRI principles* (October 2025), based on the community forum on offshore wind in Galicia that the CoBlue project held in June 2025. CoBlue is part of TIAS lab, the living lab for public participation of the Universidade de Vigo.

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Coordinating organisations

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Summary

Galicia is one of the areas of Spain with the greatest potential for offshore wind. To make its development just and sustainable, in June 2025 the CoBlue project brought together public administrations, companies, research centres and civil society organisations in a community forum. The forum applied the six principles of Open and Responsible Research and Innovation (ORRI) to every stage of offshore wind implementation, from planning to monitoring.

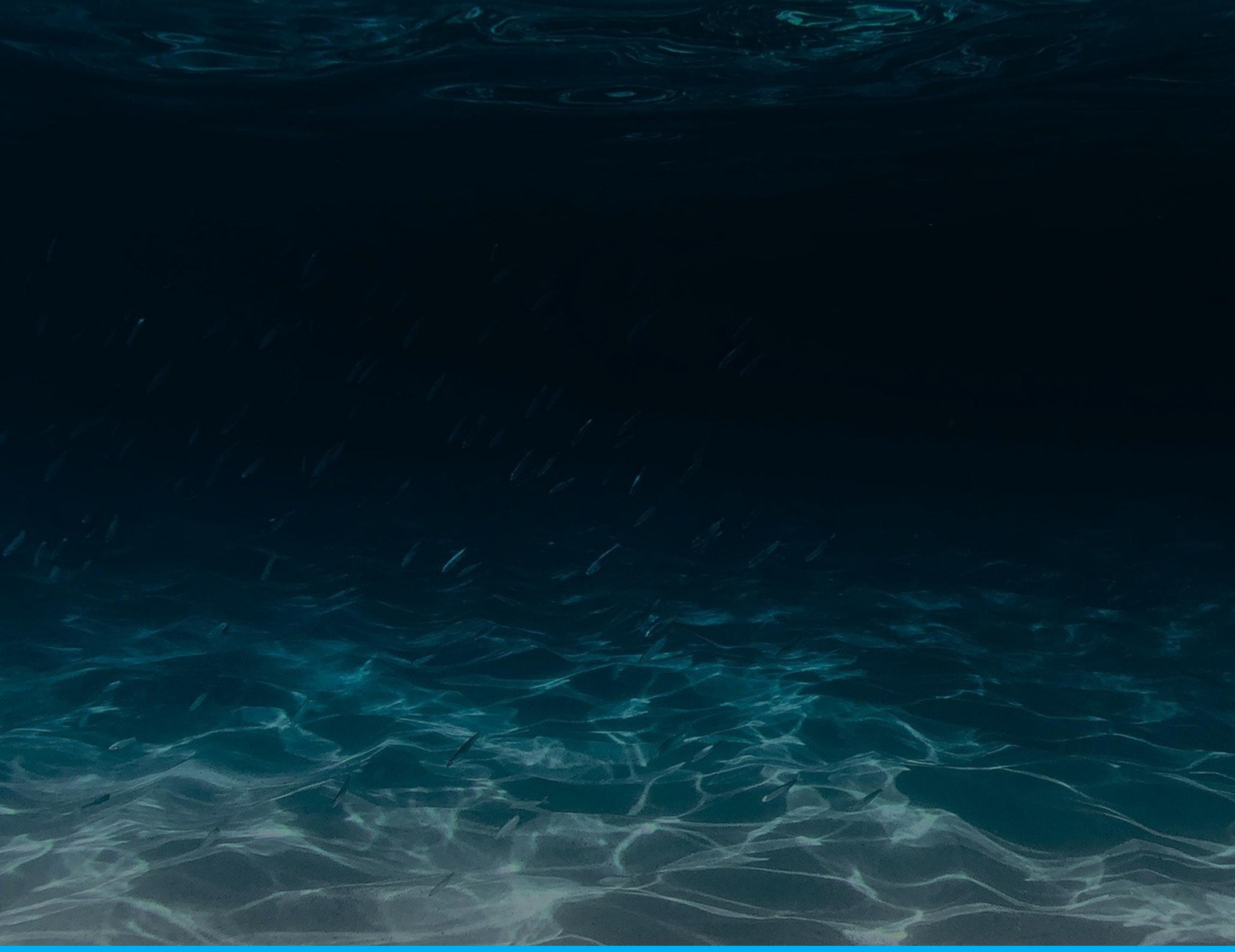
36	29	13	8
participants	organisations	recommendations	organisations validated the report

The shared perception in the forum is that social debate on offshore wind is still insufficient, that decisions are imposed and that benefits are concentrated in a few actors. Participants expressed concern about environmental impacts and socio-economic consequences, and asked for more transparency and inclusivity throughout the process. Building on this diagnosis, the forum co-created thirteen recommendations addressed to public administrations.

Key messages

- **Plan energy before zoning the sea.** Galicia needs its own energy plan, with clear production and consumption targets, and a blue strategy for industrial activities at sea.
- **Participation from the start and with real effects.** Participation has to begin in the early stages of the POEM, be continuous and reach the bodies that take decisions.
- **Open information in a single place.** Environmental data, monitoring and research results should be available in the InfoMAR viewer, in open formats and with simple explanations.
- **Independent and precautionary environmental assessment.** Deployment should be phased, with intensive monitoring and impact assessments carried out by independent bodies.
- **Benefits for the territory.** Local energy communities, the Galician value chain and a visible sharing of benefits make offshore wind contribute to the development of Galicia.
- **Responsibility to the end.** A mandatory fund should guarantee decommissioning and environmental restoration at the end of the service life of the wind farms.

"If offshore wind has to come, it cannot come at any price." Conclusion of the CoBlue community forum.



1
Context and method

1. Context and method

Offshore wind in Galicia

In 2020 the European Commission adopted a strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy. In Spain, the marine technology that is viable on a commercial scale is floating offshore wind, because turbines fixed to the seabed are not compatible with the Spanish continental shelf. In 2025 Spain still had no offshore wind farms installed, although planning for their development was in place.

Galicia, in north-west Spain, is one of the areas with the greatest potential. The Maritime Spatial Plan (POEM) for the North Atlantic marine demarcation, approved by Royal Decree 150/2023 of 28 February, defines the high-potential areas for offshore wind off the Galician coast. The sea is central to the economy, culture and ecosystems of the region, which is why decisions on offshore wind are especially sensitive.

The CoBlue community forum

The CoBlue project, funded by the European project REINFORCING, aims to help ensure that offshore wind is implemented in Galicia in a just and sustainable way. To this end, the Post-Growth Innovation Lab of the Universidade de Vigo and CITTA of the University of Porto organised a community forum in the Redeiras building in Vigo. The forum had two in-person sessions, on 6 and 13 June 2025, and an online validation session, on 20 June 2025.

A total of 36 people from 29 organisations took part. By type of organisation, 15% came from public administration, 22% from industry, 22% from academia and research and 41% from civil society. The aim of the forum was to co-create an agenda that would ensure all stakeholders have a voice during the implementation of offshore wind farms. Eight organisations, including public administrations, later reviewed and validated the recommendations.

This brief is a starting point for dialogue with public administrations and for collectively building an institutional framework that ensures a responsible and just deployment of offshore wind. The CoBlue *Methodological guide* and *Inclusivity guidelines* explain how the process was carried out.

The six ORRI principles

Open and Responsible Research and Innovation (ORRI) is a set of practices that seek to ensure that science and innovation are carried out in an ethical, inclusive, transparent and sustainable way. The forum used six principles to analyse offshore wind.

Table 1. ORRI principles used in the forum

Principle	What it looks at
Participation	Degree of democratic participation in decision-making and equal opportunities to participate
Inclusivity	Inclusion of different perspectives and sharing of costs and benefits
Anticipation	Short, medium and long-term environmental, social and economic effects
Capacity to respond	Monitoring mechanisms to adjust decisions and resources to adapt to change
Reflexivity	Awareness of environmental, social and ethical effects and of possible alternatives
Open science and transparency	Open data, methods and results, and clear and accessible information at every stage

One of the conclusions of the forum is that these principles depend on each other. For science to be open, information has to reach all stakeholders, which connects with participation. To anticipate effects well, all perspectives have to be taken into account, which connects with inclusivity. For example, of the contributions that participants placed in the space devoted to inclusivity, only between 50% and 60% related to that principle, and the rest connected with others.

Five stages of implementation

Based on the *Roadmap for the development of offshore wind and marine energy in Spain*, the forum worked with a simplified map of five stages. The stages feed back into each other. Good cross-sector dialogue, for example, needs thorough and open research, and that research in turn needs dialogue to define its scope.

Strategic plan	Preparations	R&D&I	Implementation	Monitoring
POEM	Adaptation of infrastructure	Research on the marine and socio-economic environment	Competitive tendering	Environmental monitoring
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Adaptation of the administrative framework	Technological development	Environmental impact study	Support for industry
InfoMAR viewer	Cross-sector dialogues	Pilot projects	Permitting procedures	Contribution to sustainability
	Scope of studies	Offshore wind observatory	Construction and operation	
			Maintenance	
			Decommissioning	

Figure 1. Stages and sub-stages of offshore wind implementation in Spain.



2
Thirteen recommendations

2. Thirteen recommendations

The recommendations follow the order of the five implementation stages. Each one describes the problem identified in the forum, the measures it proposes and the ORRI principles it relates to.

Table 2. The thirteen recommendations of the forum

No.	Recommendation	Stage	ORRI principles
1	Energy plan for Galicia and Galician blue strategy	Strategic plan	Inclusivity and Reflexivity
2	Inter-administrative coordination and continuous participation in the POEM	Strategic plan	Participation and Open science and transparency
3	Communication and outreach on the POEM and marine biodiversity	Strategic plan	Inclusivity and Open science and transparency
4	Public participation in the Strategic Environmental Assessment	Strategic plan	Inclusivity and Open science and transparency
5	Environmental information centralised in the InfoMAR viewer	Strategic plan	Capacity to respond and Open science and transparency
6	Results of participatory assemblies that reach decision-makers	Preparations	Participation and Open science and transparency
7	Living Labs promoted by developers	Preparations	Inclusivity and Reflexivity
8	Studies on noise, biodiversity and meteo-oceanographic conditions	R&D&I	Anticipation and Capacity to respond
9	Public-private collaboration framework for informed decisions	R&D&I	Anticipation and Capacity to respond
10	Energy literacy	R&D&I	Inclusivity, Anticipation and Reflexivity
11	Independence and rigour in environmental impact assessment	Implementation	Anticipation and Capacity to respond
12	Mandatory mechanism for decommissioning	Implementation	Anticipation and Capacity to respond
13	Just, decentralised and participatory energy model	Monitoring	Inclusivity and Reflexivity

Strategic plan

The planning of offshore wind starts from Law 41/2010 on the protection of the marine environment, which organises human activities at sea to conserve marine ecosystems. On this basis, the POEM sets where wind farms can be located. The POEM will remain in force until 31 December 2027, when it must be revised, and that revision is an opportunity to apply the recommendations of this stage.

Recommendation 1. Establish an energy plan for Galicia and a Galician blue strategy

The problem. The forum stressed that Galicia needs an energy plan with clear targets before applying spatial plans. That plan should undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment, include the phase-out of fossil fuels and encourage lower energy consumption. In 2025 the Xunta de Galicia (Galician Government) put the drafting of the new Wind Energy Sector Plan of Galicia out to tender.

What the forum proposes

- Draw up, in a participatory way, an energy plan for Galicia that addresses energy production and consumption, integrates the lessons of the climate crisis and includes a wind energy sector plan and a plan to phase out fossil fuels.
- Draw up a blue strategy for industrial activities at sea, in line with the Galician strategy for green infrastructure and ecological connectivity and restoration.
- Extend this approach to each autonomous community.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity and Reflexivity

Recommendation 2. Strengthen inter-administrative coordination and continuous participation in the POEM

The problem. Participants felt that the POEM was drawn up without sufficient involvement of the fishing sector or of scientific reports, and without consensus between administrations. The multi-stakeholder participation defended in the institutional account is perceived as passive and of limited effectiveness.

What the forum proposes

- Establish stable and effective mechanisms of collaboration between the state, regional and local administrations that manage maritime space.
- Systematically include the fishing, scientific and energy sectors and civil society in the implementation, monitoring and revision of the POEM.
- Use the revision of the POEM to correct the shortcomings of the initial process and better integrate the relevant actors and data.

ORRI principles. Participation and Open science and transparency

Recommendation 3. Promote communication and outreach on the POEM and marine biodiversity

The problem. Participants perceived a lack of information on the development of the POEM and on the implications of offshore wind for biodiversity.

What the forum proposes

- Create educational programmes and partnerships with schools, universities, fishing guilds and local associations, with participatory workshops, talks and materials for teachers.
- Establish partnerships with NGOs, marine interpretation centres and museums.
- Design a multichannel campaign on marine biodiversity, with accessible infographics, videos and animations, a presence on social media and in local media, and language adapted to each audience.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity and Open science and transparency

Recommendation 4. Encourage public participation in the Strategic Environmental Assessment

The problem. The POEM complied with the formal procedures, with two public information periods and a strategic environmental statement. The forum perceived that the technical documentation was available for a short time and in closed formats, which limited informed participation. The one-month deadline for submissions is considered insufficient for effective participation.

What the forum proposes

- Establish early dialogue processes with all the sectors involved before each project is designed.
- Create a transparent, accessible and inclusive digital platform for citizen participation in high-impact projects.
- Bring information directly to citizens at local, regional and autonomous community level.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity and Open science and transparency

Recommendation 5. Centralise environmental information in a single place, the InfoMAR viewer

The problem. The InfoMAR viewer of the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge brings together the marine zoning layers and allows them to be downloaded. In the forum, an open platform came up again and again as the priority solution to shortcomings in transparency. The information on each layer is hard to find, there are knowledge gaps that grow further from the coast and monitoring results are missing.

What the forum proposes

- Integrate the results of environmental monitoring and research into the viewer.
- Make the viewer more intuitive and make data and metadata easier to access, with simple explanations.
- Include socio-economic layers and databases that are currently difficult to export to a spatially distributed format.

ORRI principles. Capacity to respond and Open science and transparency

Preparations

Responsibilities are shared. The State plans marine energy and carries out maritime spatial planning, and the Xunta de Galicia promotes offshore wind in its territory and processes permits. Galician Law 2/2024 of 7 November gives the autonomous community responsibility for promoting the social and economic benefits of these projects. The forum identified problems at this stage, such as procedures without co-design, a framework that favours large developers and a lack of traceability on how submissions are taken into account. It also proposed technical and social working groups, communication channels between actors and binding participation mechanisms for dialogue between sectors.

Recommendation 6. Ensure that the results of participatory and inclusive assemblies reach decision-makers

The problem. The forum perceives that the rules adopted to speed up offshore wind projects hinder adequate citizen participation and rigorous environmental assessment. It also perceives legal uncertainty and unclear rules that put economic interests before environmental ones.

What the forum proposes

- Ensure that the results of participatory and inclusive assemblies reach decision-making bodies and have real effects.
- Promote regulatory changes that protect the right to public participation and ensure rigorous environmental impact assessments, for example by updating Law 27/2006 on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.
- Establish institutionalised participation channels, such as the Citizens' Assembly for Climate in Spain or the broad participatory process on marine energy in France.

ORRI principles. Participation and Open science and transparency

Recommendation 7. Ask developers to create Living Labs for social dialogue

The problem. Little information on the permitting and award of wind farms reaches society, and consultations are perceived as mere formalities. The forum identified the need to set the problem and its solutions in context and to size them properly. A Living Lab is a space for open innovation in a real-life setting, which places citizens at the centre and is especially useful for complex problems with conflicting interests.

What the forum proposes

- Create a local monitoring committee, with public participation, to oversee the implementation of each wind farm following the Living Lab model, alongside or within the permitting procedure for the project.
- Ensure that the information prior to concessions is rigorous and accessible to all stakeholders.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity and Reflexivity

Research, development and innovation

Galicia has no offshore wind farms in operation, and knowledge of their impacts depends on occasional pilot projects. The forum proposed funding independent research and increasing knowledge exchange between science, citizens and policy-makers, including with northern Portugal, where the WindFloat Atlantic floating wind farm has operated since 2020. Applying the precautionary principle, the forum proposed a very gradual deployment, starting with a few pilot projects under intensive and continuous monitoring.

Recommendation 8. Include studies on noise, biodiversity and meteo-oceanographic conditions in marine monitoring

The problem. The real impacts on birds, marine mammals, the seabed, hydrographic conditions, wind patterns and coastal areas are unknown. The productivity of the Galician rías depends on wind patterns, and it is not yet known how the exploitation of wind resources will affect them.

What the forum proposes

- Carry out a phased deployment that allows impacts to be analysed.
- Apply environmental monitoring supervised by the administration during construction and operation.
- Establish financial guarantees and severe penalties for environmental effects.
- Encourage the exchange of information and experience and mutual scientific and technical assistance.

ORRI principles. Anticipation and Capacity to respond

Recommendation 9. Create a public-private collaboration framework for informed decision-making

The problem. Research is perceived as a reactive activity, poorly planned to inform policy decisions. The forum identified three priority lines of research, namely floating turbine technology, alternatives to fossil fuels and the circularity of materials when wind farms are decommissioned.

What the forum proposes

- Allocate part of the operating revenue to fund R&D&I pilot projects, within a continuous improvement plan that improves decisions in future projects.
- Create a common space, such as the InfoMAR viewer, that integrates the results of public and private monitoring and research.

ORRI principles. Anticipation and Capacity to respond

Recommendation 10. Promote energy literacy

The problem. The forum detected a lack of knowledge and training, and asked for more communication with different social groups on energy generation, consumption and taxation and on spatial planning. In Galicia, the Offshore Wind Energy Observatory brings together the regional administration, the fishing sector and the industrial sector, and the forum asked for more transparency and communication.

What the forum proposes

- Train and raise awareness in Galician society about the need to protect and manage its natural resources well.
- Disseminate national, European and international knowledge on renewable energy.
- Promote environmental and social debate in the education system.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity, Anticipation and Reflexivity

Implementation

Each wind farm must undergo an environmental impact assessment under Law 21/2013, which includes the environmental impact study prepared by the developer, a public information period and a binding environmental impact statement. The first Galician wind farms will be awarded through competitive tendering. According to the draft ministerial orders available in 2025, economic and technical criteria would weigh 70% and non-economic criteria, such as distance from the coast or the decommissioning plan, 30%. The forum stressed the need to maintain dialogue roundtables throughout the operating life of each wind farm and to draw up a maintenance plan before it is commissioned.

Recommendation 11. Strengthen the independence and rigour of marine environmental impact assessment

The problem. The forum perceives environmental impact assessment as a mere formality. Decisions are influenced by the weight of socio-economic interests over environmental results. It is difficult to estimate the cumulative impacts of several projects, and part of the research is linked to economic interests, which reduces trust.

What the forum proposes

- Promote legislative changes so that environmental impact assessment is carried out by independent bodies.
- Apply environmental monitoring supervised by the administration during construction and operation.

ORRI principles. Anticipation and Capacity to respond

Recommendation 12. Establish a mandatory tax or mechanism to ensure proper decommissioning

The problem. There is a risk that the company will be unable to restore the area at the end of the service life of the wind farm, estimated at 20 to 30 years. The authorisation of Galician waste managers to recover the waste is slow, and wind turbine blades are difficult to recycle. Galician Law 2/2024 creates a levy on the grid connection infrastructure of offshore wind, but it does not mention decommissioning.

What the forum proposes

- Create a mandatory tax, mechanism or bond so that the successful bidder allocates part of its revenue to a fund for decommissioning and environmental restoration.
- Establish severe penalties for environmental effects.

ORRI principles. Anticipation and Capacity to respond

Monitoring

Once a wind farm is in operation, the developer must carry out an environmental monitoring programme. The forum devoted 30 contributions to this phase and asked for a permanent monitoring team and for its data to be shown in real time. The contribution to sustainability appears in the environmental impact statements, but it lacks clear indicators. The forum proposed involving the territory from the outset, going beyond compensating it, and taking energy dependence into account.

Recommendation 13. Promote a just, decentralised and participatory energy model with local energy communities

The problem. The award procedure does not appear to bring social benefits to the areas where the wind farms will be installed. Energy communities make it possible to move beyond the centralised model that dominates the Spanish electricity market.

What the forum proposes

- Promote local energy communities in rural and peri-urban areas, with shared ownership of infrastructure between companies and communities.
- Design differentiated benefits for producing territories, such as tax rebates, reduced tariffs or priority access to self-consumption.
- Develop mechanisms for the territorial redistribution of energy benefits to reduce inequality between producing and consuming regions.

ORRI principles. Inclusivity and Reflexivity



3

What studies should measure, and conclusions

3. What impact studies should measure

The forum identified the minimum topics that any study on the impact of offshore wind should address. The categories of environment, socio-economics and technology already appear in the initial documents of the projects submitted in Galicia, and the forum refines and completes them. For example, it asks for the rigour of environmental information to be guaranteed and for the return on investment in the Galician community to be assessed. The ecological transition category adds topics that are often left out, such as who takes part in decisions, which energy model is promoted and how costs and benefits are shared.

Table 3. Minimum content of impact studies according to the forum

Category	Topic	Examples of aspects to study
Environment	Biodiversity	Birds, cetaceans, fish, algae, currents, reef effect, compatibility with reserves
	Pollution	Noise, electromagnetic fields from cables, materials
	Landscape	Visual effects and perception of the surroundings
	Waste	Maintenance, abandonment and decommissioning
	Use of space	Occupation of the sea and seabed, cables, zoning, onshore constraints
Socio-economics	Local economic development	Supply chain, local industry and investment, regional benefit
	Employment	Jobs created
	Other sectors	Fishing, tourism, maritime activities, circular economy
Technology	Legal compatibility	Fit with the regulatory framework
	Effectiveness and efficiency	Capacity, wind resource, storage, grid integration
	Technical innovation	New technologies and floating solutions
	Technical risks	Safety and stability in storms
	Economic viability	Cost, financing and profitability
Ecological transition	Informed decisions	Evidence, transparency, planning and environmental monitoring
	Decarbonisation	Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
	Governance	Actors and roles, participation, sectoral consensus, social acceptance
	Energy model	Growth or reduction of consumption, decentralisation, self-sufficiency, electrification
	Just transition	Distribution of impacts and benefits, inequality, compatibility with fishing, minerals

4. Conclusions

Spain and Galicia have mechanisms for coordination between administrations and sectors to implement offshore wind. Even so, the forum concludes that social debate is insufficient, that decisions are perceived as imposed and that benefits are concentrated in a few actors. It therefore calls for more transparency and inclusivity throughout the process.

The thirteen recommendations respond to structural problems, such as the lack of citizen participation, the weakness of environmental assessment, conflicts with traditional activities and the outflow of economic benefits from the territory. The solutions strengthen institutional responsibility, make decisions more inclusive, prepare Galicia for technological and environmental change and link the benefits of energy production to the territory.

The central demands of the forum include binding participation from the early stages of the POEM, transparency and access to information, the protection of biodiversity, culture and local ways of life, and the recovery of waste from decommissioning. The forum considers it essential that offshore wind should boost the Galician economy and territory, so that the local value chain grows, benefits are shared visibly and conflicts with traditional uses are prevented through planning, fair compensation and cooperation agreements.

Offshore wind can play an important role in decarbonisation, and Galicia has the resources to develop it. The forum concludes that this development must go hand in hand with local communities and take place within a long-term sustainability strategy that includes the progressive reduction of energy consumption, following the principles of Open and Responsible Research and Innovation.

> *"If offshore wind has to come, it cannot come at any price."*

Annex. Organisations and references

Participating organisations

Type	Organisations
Public administration	Concello de Baiona, Concello de Bueu, Concello de Nigrán, Concello de Tomiño, Axencia Galega de Innovación (GAIN), European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Galicia-North of Portugal (AECT-GNP), Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO)
Industry	Tragsatec, Asociación Clúster de Empresas de Ingeniería, Consultoría y Servicios Tecnológicos de Galicia (AGEINCO), Asociación Profesional de Empresas Medioambientales de Galicia (APROEMA), Autoridade Portuaria de Vigo, Eurofins Iproma, Magallanes Renovables, Nosa Enerxía S. Coop. Galega
Academia and research	Fundación CETMAR, Centro Tecnológico Energy Lab, Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO), Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas (IIM-CSIC), Universidade de Vigo
Civil society	Asociación para a Defensa Ecolóxica de Galiza (ADEGA), Amigas da Terra, Coordinadora para o Estudo dos Mamíferos Mariños (CEMMA), FUNDAMAR, GALP Ría de Pontevedra, GALP Ría de Vigo-A Guarda, Greenpeace, Instituto de Estudos Miñoranos, representatives of adolescents

Organisations that reviewed and validated the recommendations. AECT-GNP, Concello de Nigrán, Concello de Tomiño, Fundación CETMAR, GAIN, MITECO, Tragsatec and Universidade de Vigo.

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More information

CoBlue at TIAS lab · tiaslab.uvigo.gal/case.html?id=coblue
CoBlue project page · postgrowth-lab.uvigo.es/projects/coblue

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