

## PRESS RELEASE

# 98% of South Korean offshore wind projects stuck in bureaucratic nightmare

**Offshore wind permitting takes more than 10 years in South Korea. Government must streamline permitting to meet 2030 targets.**

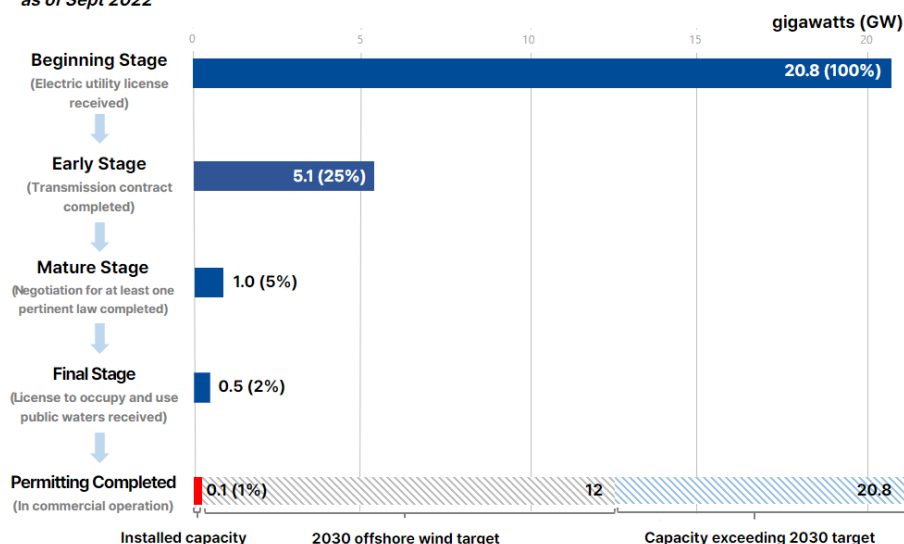
**February 2, 2023** – Slow and unclear permitting procedure poses a major obstacle to accelerating offshore wind energy growth in South Korea, finds a new study from Seoul-based Solutions for Our Climate.

Wind energy is a growing market in South Korea. As of 2022 September, 70 offshore wind projects received electric business licenses, which is the initial stage of permitting. If all the projects are to proceed, South Korea will produce energy that is almost double (1.7 times) its 2030 offshore wind target of 12GW.

Despite high ambitions, only two percent of all South Korean offshore wind power projects – four projects (548MW) - has been able to complete the permitting procedure over the past ten years, the report found. Out of the four projects, only two are operational – making up less than 1% of the 2030 goal.

### Korean offshore wind projects stalled in each permitting stage

as of Sept 2022



Source: KPX, EIASS, KEPCO

“What South Korea lacks are not technical capabilities or interest from developers. Rather, it is the absence of a clear permitting procedure,” said **Eunbyeol Jo, head of the renewable permitting team at Solutions for Our Climate**. “We need political will and leadership from the government to unlock our country’s tremendous potential for wind energy.”

Wind energy is a key component of South Korea's [energy transition](#). Surrounded by the ocean, South Korea has ample space for fixed and floating wind [turbines](#). Vestas, the world's largest producer of wind turbines, recently invested [USD \\$300 million](#) in Korea, pointing to market interest in the region as well.

However, South Korea currently requires offshore wind developers to consult 29 pieces of law across 10 different ministries. This process can take more than ten years, according to government estimates.

Permitting is also becoming an urgent issue in other regions. Currently in Europe, permitting can take more than five years, tying up wind capacity of five times its total installed capacity in 2021.

In order to tackle the bottleneck, the European Union recently adopted [emergency measures](#) to accelerate permitting for wind and solar to under two years. Denmark has also adopted a "one-stop-shop" policy, which centralizes the licensing procedure to a single public agency, which consults and coordinates with relevant stakeholders.

In 2021, a similar bill was introduced in the Korean National Assembly but has remained on hold in subcommittee review for the past two years. The proposed bill calls for government-led maritime zoning and permit centralization.

"Having a dedicated public agency that studies and identifies appropriate offshore wind zones can significantly boost efficiency and speed up renewable growth," added Jo. Europe's new permitting legislation also plans on shifting the [burden of proof](#) for environmental protection from developers to public agencies.

"It is the responsibility of the government, not of developers with vested interests, to designate offshore wind zones by properly assessing environmental, economic, and social impacts. This can also help the developer focus on project development rather than jumping through administrative hurdles."

In 2021, the global wind industry enjoyed its [second-ever best year](#), but this growth must quadruple by 2030 to meet Paris Agreement targets. The rapid expansion of renewable energy is also becoming critical in South Korea, which currently has the [second-lowest](#) share of renewable energy among G20 nations.

## **ENDS.**

*Solutions for Our Climate (SFOC) is a South Korea-based group that advocates for stronger climate policies and reforms in power regulations. SFOC is led by legal, economic, financial, and environmental experts with experience in energy and climate policy and works closely with policymakers.*

### **For media inquiries, please reach out to:**

Chaeyeon Kim, Communications Associate, [chaeyeon.kim@forourclimate.org](mailto:chaeyeon.kim@forourclimate.org)