

# Colombia propelled by tender green light

Lease policy gives sector forward momentum in drive for late-decade build-out

Colombia is to hold its first seabed lease auction in the second half of 2023, clearing the way for first steel to get into the water by the end of the decade.

The Mines and Energy Ministry recently published a resolution governing the sector after the World Bank found a technical 50GW potential on the country's Caribbean coastline.

Resolution 4028 outlines a competitive process for project exploration and development and grants temporary site exclusivity, which will allow developers to conduct pre-feasibility studies for schemes generating at least 200MW before applying for an eight-year concession.

Global Wind Energy Council in Latin America president Ramón Fiestas told reNEWS the move addressed many of its key concerns.

"It is a complete resolution in which the first tender process has been opened," he said.

"It is pretty comprehensive," added Offshore Wind Consultants principal consultant Craig Brown. "It set an appropriate bar of qualifications for developers to compete in the auction for a temporary occupancy permit."

However, the administration of conservative Iván Duque did not address certain items to ensure long-term financing for projects. Fiestas said this was probably done to allow the country's incoming first left-wing government under Gustavo Petro to decide how to move forward.

"Government ministries and agencies are still waiting to hear from the new energy ministry on whether they are going to change the resolution," added Brown.

Once it has been confirmed, maritime authority DIMAR will appoint an administrator to hold the auctions, evaluate the bids and execute the lease agreements.



**CONCERNS ADDRESSED:** Ramón Fiestas Photo: Global Wind Energy Council

The first leases will be granted off the coast of the north-central Bolívar and Atlántico departments, near Barranquilla, Colombia's largest coastal city, and Cartagena.

While the strongest wind energy potential is further east, off the Guajira Peninsula, officials selected the area around Barranquilla because it is near two large demand centres and already has potential substations to which developers might connect, plus adequate port infrastructure.

"La Guajira needs a lot more transmission," Brown said. "They have good port infrastructure, but it needs to be built out more."

However, before any offshore wind farms are connected to the main grid developers will need to sort out the route to market for their power.

Fiestas noted this was the only part of the resolution where the previous government had not taken GWEC's advice.

In 2021, the Duque administration said it would grant 15-year power purchase agreements to projects awarded contracts at auction. According to Fitch Solutions analyst Chris Colacello PPAs remain the mechanism of choice, but the Petro administration may change some of the terms, such as contract length. ■

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**COMPREHENSIVE:** Craig Brown Photo: Offshore Wind Consultants

## BlueFloat 'in the vanguard'

BlueFloat Energy is aiming to lead the development push off Colombia. The developer has exclusivity on its Vientos Alisios site, 32km north of Barranquilla.

The private equity-owned player is expected to install 28 bottom-fixed turbines and generate 500MW, enough to power 180,000 homes.

Despite higher generating costs than onshore wind or solar, the company believes that creating economies of scale and adapting the onshore wind supply chains will make offshore wind more competitive.

"Initially, the first projects are the most expensive ones in terms of cost per megawatt installed, but that is why it is very important to develop

the supply chain engagement with the ports and the local industry," BlueFloat Energy head of grid connection and electrical works Fernando Sada told reNEWS.

Country manager Armando Politi said the project was one step closer to fruition after installation of two acoustic doppler current profilers.

The ADCPs will gather four months of water current data to inform the design of the project.

BlueFloat Energy estimates that Vientos Alisios will be operational within the next eight years.

Eventually, the developer plans to build floating wind farms further off the coast, where the wind resources are more potent. ■