

Uruguay plots GH2 horizon

Only other South American flag flyer plans imminent auction as first step to powering electrolysers

L awmakers in Uruguay have paved the way for the country's state-owned oil and gas company Ancap to open the tendering process for offshore wind developers on the country's Atlantic coast.

"Ancap is ready, but it is waiting for a set of decrees from the government, and it is taking longer than expected," Uruguayan Catholic University's energy observatory director Felipe Bastarrica told reNEWS.

Late last year, the Uruguayan parliament voted to adjust the fossil fuel outfit's legal mandate to participate in offshore wind development. The company is now waiting for the green light from the Ministries of Industry, Energy and Mining; Defence; Environment; and Public Infrastructure.

"Between those four ministries, they need to release these decrees regulating how offshore production might work," said Bastarrica.

Unlike other countries in the region, where the route to market remains unclear, the purpose of offshore wind generation in Uruguay is part of the country's long-term bet on green hydrogen.

According to research carried out in 2020, Uruguay boasts 300GW of offshore wind potential.

Ancap has since identified a 500 square kilometre area with 1.25GW of potential that could produce 100 tonnes of GH2 per annum. Shell is another leading contender to develop offshore wind in the country.

Bastarrica and other observers expect the first tenders to be held by early 2024. However, the first turbines would likely start powering electrolysers after 2040.

No other South American nations are seriously considering offshore wind development, despite significant potential.

While Argentina has the eighth highest technical potential for offshore

wind globally, at almost 2000GW, energy officials are not currently considering offshore wind regulations, according to the Argentine Wind Energy Association.

Argentine Wind Council board member Gustavo E. Castagnino told reNEWS that the high price of electricity generated by offshore wind compared to onshore wind and solar was the main barrier.

On the other side of the Andes, the World Bank estimates that Chile has the thirteenth highest technical potential globally for offshore wind development. Despite this, Global Wind Energy Council president of Latin America Ramón Fiestas said the current government has other energy priorities. This is partly because nearshore depths often exceed 100 metres, making fixed-bottom solutions technically difficult.

According to Fiestas, offshore wind development is not in consideration in Ecuador, Peru or Venezuela. All three countries have the technical potential but lack coherent policy and macroeconomic stability, both of which are prerequisites for developers. ■



GAS LIGHT: The coast at the La Paloma Rocha Department, Uruguay

Photo: Pedro Slinger/Unsplash



WE'RE POWERING PLANS FOR SCOTLAND'S OFFSHORE ENERGY FUTURE
ACTIONS, NOT AMBITIONS, ARE WHAT WE NEED NOW

Scotland needs to deliver more offshore wind, faster, to achieve net zero. Berwick Bank is pivotal, if Scotland is to achieve its offshore wind targets and will help secure Scotland's energy future. The 4.1GW project will generate enough clean, renewable energy to power over 5 million homes and make Scotland a global leader in offshore wind production.

sserenewables.com/berwickbank

