

Written by Ned Haluzan
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One of the largest offshore wind energy projects in the world, the Gemini offshore wind farm, is now officially opened. This 600 MW facility located 85 kilometres north of the Groningen coast, has put Netherlands among the leaders in global offshore wind development.

Once fully operational, this offshore wind farm should provide enough power to supply 785,000 Dutch households with clean, renewable energy. This \$3 billion project is a joint project that includes the Canadian independent renewable energy company Northland Power, wind turbine manufacturer Siemens Wind Power, Dutch maritime contractor Van Oord and waste processing company HVC.

Gemini should provide around 13 percent of the country's total renewable energy supply, and about one quarter of its total wind power.

More offshore wind should help decrease dependence on fossil fuels. The Netherlands is heavily dependent on fossil fuels which still account to roughly 95% of its energy supply.

The Dutch government has taken the first steps to fight this over-dependence on fossil fuels. The government wants to obtain at least 14% of its energy from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar by 2020, with the final aim of being carbon neutral by 2050.

While there is still long road ahead the North Sea could in years to come mean to the Netherlands what oil means to Saudi Arabia. Offshore wind energy sector is one of the fastest

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growing sectors, and the Netherlands has excellent opportunity to become one of the global offshore wind energy leaders.