Cadeler Installs First Monopile at Hornsea 3 Using Purpose-Built Vessel Wind Ally

Danish offshore wind installation company Cadeler completed the installation of the first fully commissioned monopile foundation at Orsted's Hornsea 3 offshore wind farm on 14 May 2026, marking the start of what will become one of the largest foundation campaigns in the industry's history. The milestone also represents the first time Cadeler has taken on a complete transportation and installation scope for offshore monopile foundations, a significant expansion of the company's project capabilities.

The monopile was installed by Cadeler's purpose-built A-class vessel Wind Ally, which was specifically designed to handle XXL monopile foundations of the scale required at Hornsea 3. Each monopile at the site weighs an average of 1,670 tonnes and stretches approximately 90 metres in length, making them the largest foundations Orsted has used on any of its European projects to date. Secondary steel was installed by Wind Orca, while the full commissioning scope was handled by the service operation vessel ESVAGT FROUDE, operated by Danish company ESVAGT. Post-installation commissioning was completed by Boston Energy.

Cadeler will deploy three of its own specialist offshore installation vessels across the broader Hornsea 3 scope, with installation of the remaining 196 monopiles expected to continue through 2026 and into 2027. The project is located approximately 120 kilometres off the Norfolk coast and, once completed, will become the world's single largest offshore wind farm with a total capacity of 2.9 GW, capable of supplying renewable electricity to more than 3.3 million UK households.

Hornsea 3 forms part of the UK's wider offshore wind expansion programme and represents a critical step in the country's ambitions for large-scale clean energy generation. Earlier in May 2026, Abu Dhabi-based sovereign investor Mubadala Investment Company, alongside a consortium led by Apollo Funds, acquired a stake in the project, reflecting continued international investor confidence in the development.

Navantia and Windar Complete Final Monopile Shipment for East Anglia Three

Spanish offshore wind manufacturers Navantia Seanergies and Windar Renovables shipped the final batch of monopile foundations for the East Anglia Three offshore wind farm in May 2026, concluding a major fabrication campaign at their joint production facility at the Navantia shipyard in Fene, A Coruna. The final monopile had been completed in December 2025, and the last shipment was delivered directly to the offshore project site rather than to a marshalling port, streamlining the final stages of the supply chain.

The Navantia and Windar consortium was responsible for manufacturing 45 of the 95 monopiles required for the project, under a contract signed with ScottishPower Renewables, Iberdrola's UK arm, in early 2023. The remaining monopiles were supplied by Haizea Wind Group, while Windar also delivered all 95 transition pieces from its manufacturing facility in Aviles, Asturias. Each of the 45 Navantia-Windar monopiles measures up to 84 metres in length, weighs approximately 1,800 tonnes and has a diameter of 10.6 metres, designed to support next-generation turbines in demanding North Sea conditions.

The completion of the fabrication campaign marks the second monopile contract delivered by the Navantia and Windar alliance for Iberdrola and the third monopile project the two companies have executed together to date. Their collaboration with Iberdrola now spans more than a decade, covering work in the UK, Germany, France and the United States, with total orders under the partnership exceeding EUR 1 billion. The campaign was also run in parallel with monopile production for Iberdrola's Windanker offshore wind farm in the Baltic Sea, demonstrating the industrial throughput now achievable at the Fene facility.

East Anglia Three is a 1.4 GW offshore wind farm located 69 kilometres off the Suffolk coast, being developed by ScottishPower Renewables. The first of the project's 95 monopiles was installed by Seaway7's vessel Seaway Ventus in April 2025. Turbine installation, using Cadeler's Wind Osprey, began in April 2026, and the project is expected to become operational in 2026, capable of supplying clean energy to approximately 1.3 million homes.

France Commissions SolarinThau Floating Solar Demonstrator on the Mediterranean Coast

A new offshore floating solar demonstrator was commissioned in nearshore waters off the French Mediterranean coast in 2026, adding a further dimension to France's growing portfolio of marine renewable energy pilots. The installation, known as SolarinThau, was deployed in a sheltered coastal environment and is designed to evaluate the performance of floating photovoltaic technology under real marine conditions, including waves, wind and salt exposure.

SolarinThau is led by a consortium comprising the Mediterranean Regional Shellfish Farming Committee, startup SolarinBlue and the Thau Basin Joint Association, with financial backing from the French government and the Occitanie Region. The project draws on SolarinBlue's existing experience in offshore floating solar, including its earlier Sun'Sete demonstrator at the port of Sete and the follow-on Mega Sete project, a planned 1 MW offshore solar farm at the same location that was scheduled for commissioning by the end of 2025.

The SolarinThau pilot is designed to withstand waves exceeding 12 metres and winds of up to 200 kilometres per hour, and will undergo an 18-month trial phase running from July 2026 to December 2027. This period coincides with a full oyster farming cycle at Thau Lagoon, enabling engineers to assess how the installation performs alongside the existing shellfish farming operations that the lagoon supports, including more than 10,000 tonnes of oyster and mussel production annually and around 1,500 jobs.

Data gathered during the testing campaign will be used to evaluate the platform's structural resilience, energy production performance and interaction with the surrounding marine environment. Demonstration projects of this kind are seen as essential for bridging the gap between concept development and commercial deployment of offshore solar at scale, particularly as developers and governments seek new ways to expand renewable generation without competing for scarce land resources.

The Port of Augusta in Sicily is establishing itself as a key logistics and assembly gateway for the growing floating offshore wind industry in the Mediterranean. Located in one of the deepest natural harbours in the region, Augusta has been formally recognised by the Italian government as an integration site for floating offshore wind turbines, providing the infrastructure and operational capabilities needed to support large-scale renewable energy developments as the sector prepares for commercial-scale deployment.

At the centre of port operations is Europea Servizi Terminalistici (EST), a multipurpose terminal operator that provides specialised handling services for a broad range of cargoes including offshore wind components, heavy-lift equipment and complex project cargo. EST is backed by the experience of ISLA (Italian Shipping and Logistics Agency), which delivers integrated port and logistics solutions across Sicily and Southern Italy. Together, the combined operations of EST and ISLA have supported hundreds of vessel calls and major industrial projects, including renewable energy developments with a total handled capacity exceeding 10 GW of wind energy equipment.

The terminal offers approximately 90,000 square metres of operational yard space, deep-water quay facilities and an expanding transport network that includes a future direct rail connection. These capabilities enable the efficient handling, storage and mobilisation of oversized offshore structures, turbine components and industrial equipment of the kind required for large-scale floating wind projects targeting Mediterranean deployment zones.

As floating offshore wind moves toward large-scale deployment across the Mediterranean region, Augusta is emerging as a credible assembly and logistics centre capable of supporting the next generation of offshore renewable energy projects. Its combination of deep-water access, industrial handling capacity and strategic location gives it the potential to serve developers, EPC contractors and marine logistics operators across Southern Europe.

COSCO Shipping Specialized Carriers Installs 25,000-Tonne Converter Platform for China's First 2 GW HVDC Offshore Wind System

COSCO Shipping Specialized Carriers completed the transport and float-over installation of a 25,000-tonne offshore converter platform for the Qingzhou V and VII offshore wind project near Yangjiang in Guangdong Province, China, in June 2026. The platform forms part of what the company described as the world's first 2 GW offshore high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission system, representing a significant step forward in large-scale offshore power transmission capability.

The operation was carried out using COSCO's DP2-class 65,000-deadweight-tonne semi-submersible vessel Xiang Tai Kou, a vessel purpose-built to function both as a heavy transport carrier and as an offshore installation platform. The ship's dynamic positioning systems and advanced ballasting capabilities allowed precise positioning of the converter structure and controlled submergence during the float-over installation, a technically demanding operation that required close coordination between marine and engineering teams throughout.

The project required the seamless integration of heavy-lift shipping, offshore engineering and logistics management across multiple stages, from fabrication yard loadout through sea transport to final offshore placement. Operations of this scale demand detailed engineering analysis, advanced planning and strict safety controls at every stage to ensure the safe movement of structures of this weight and complexity from production facilities to their final offshore location.

The achievement reinforces COSCO Shipping Specialized Carriers' position as one of the leading providers of integrated heavy transport and offshore installation solutions for the energy sector globally. The company is also expanding its fleet to meet growing demand, with four new 40,000-deadweight-tonne multipurpose heavy-lift vessels ordered from CSSC Chengxi Shipyard in December 2025, alongside a 70,000-tonne-class semi-submersible vessel currently under construction and due to enter service in the near term.

Van Oord Completes Inter-Array Cable Installation at Windanker Offshore Wind Farm

Van Oord completed the inter-array cable installation campaign at Iberdrola's Windanker offshore wind farm in the German Baltic Sea in early June 2026, marking a key milestone in the project's offshore construction schedule. The campaign involved the installation and burial of 21 inter-array cables with a combined length of 28 kilometres, connecting the wind turbines to the offshore substation to support energy transmission across the wind farm. All work was completed on schedule and without a single lost-time incident across approximately 360,000 working hours.

Van Oord carried out the cable installation using its vessel Nexus, under a contract signed in 2024. The company had also been responsible for all foundation work at the site, completing the transport and installation of all 21 monopile foundations in December 2025 using its heavy-lift installation vessel Svanen. The monopiles, manufactured by the Navantia and Windar joint venture in Spain, were among the largest Van Oord had ever installed, with diameters of 10 metres, lengths ranging from 70.6 to 86.6 metres and individual weights of up to 2,145 tonnes.

Inter-array cable systems form a critical element of offshore wind infrastructure, carrying the electricity generated by each turbine to the offshore substation for onward transmission to shore. The completion of this phase moves Windanker into its next stages of offshore commissioning, with turbine installation now the focus of remaining construction activity. The 21 Siemens Gamesa 15 MW turbines will be installed by DEME's vessel Norse Energi.

Windanker is located approximately 45 kilometres northeast of the island of Rugen in the German Baltic Sea and will add 315 MW of generating capacity to Iberdrola's Baltic Hub, alongside the already operational Wikinger and Baltic Eagle projects. Together the three developments will have a combined installed capacity of 1.1 GW. Windanker is scheduled to reach full commissioning in 2027, at which point it will supply renewable electricity to approximately 315,000 German households.

First Turbine Installed at Ecowende as Inch Cape Completes All 54 Monopile Foundations

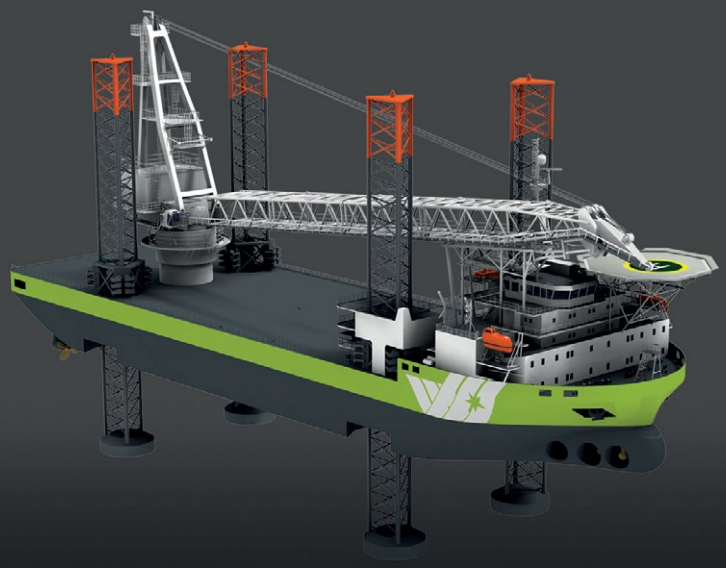
Two significant offshore wind construction milestones were reached in late May and early June 2026, one in the Dutch North Sea and one off the Scottish coast, further demonstrating the pace at which the European offshore wind sector is advancing through active build phases.

At the Hollandse Kust West VI site in the Netherlands, Van Oord's installation vessel Boreas placed the first of 52 Vestas V236-15.0 MW turbines on 30 May 2026, marking the start of the turbine installation campaign for the 760 MW Ecowende offshore wind farm. The Boreas, equipped with a 3,310-tonne crane purpose-built for ultra-large offshore turbines, transported the assembled turbine components from the marshalling port of Eemshaven, where Vestas had been staging equipment at the Buss Terminal. Foundation installation at the site, also led by Van Oord, was completed in spring 2026 following the first monopile placement in December 2025. Ecowende is a joint venture between Shell, Eneco and Chubu Electric Power, and has set an explicit ambition to build the most ecologically advanced offshore wind farm to date. As part of ongoing research into bird safety, Vestas is supplying seven of the 52 turbines fitted with a single, red-painted blade to study whether increased visual contrast reduces the risk of bird collisions. The project is expected to reach full operational capacity by the end of 2026.

Off Scotland's east coast, the 1.1 GW Inch Cape project confirmed the completion of all 54 monopile foundations in early June 2026, following a campaign that began with the first installation on 27 December 2025. Jan De Nul's heavy-lift vessel Les Alizés, on loan from RWE during a gap in its own construction schedule, carried five monopiles per voyage from a purpose-built berth at the Port of Leith in Edinburgh, steadily working through the foundation scope over several months. The monopiles, manufactured by CWHI and Dajin Heavy Industry, are among the largest in the global offshore wind industry, with diameters of 11.5 metres, lengths of up to 102 metres and individual weights of approximately 2,300 tonnes. Detailed installation simulations were developed for each foundation to manage the complex seabed geology along the Angus coastline, and noise mitigation measures including acoustic deterrent devices and gradual piling ramp-ups were implemented throughout to protect marine mammals. Remaining offshore work at Inch Cape in 2026 will include the installation of transition pieces, 18 jacket foundations supported by 54 pin piles, the remaining sections of the second export cable, the first inter-array cables and the first turbines. The project is jointly owned by ESB and Red Rock Renewables and remains on track for first power in late 2026 and full commercial operations in 2027.

GRS OFFSHORE RENEWABLES

AN EXTENSIVE DATABASE OF OFFSHORE VESSELS



Whether you are looking for a vessel to buy or to charter, check out our easy-to-navigate vessel database and request yours now!

Or contact us: info@grs.group

https://grs.group/grs-offshore-renewables/3d-vessel-portfolio/

WE ARE YOUR INDEPENDENT SHIPBROKER FOR CHARTERING AND S&P, SPECIALIZED IN THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLES MARKET

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHARTER OR BUY, HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED INDIVIDUAL ADVICE

CALL:

T.: +49 40 411 60 68 0
F.: +49 40 411 60 68 99
INFO@GRS.GROUP
WWW.GRS.GROUP

GRS.OFFSHORE RENEWABLES GMBH
– STADTHAUSBRUECKE 7 – 20355
HAMBURG

MANAGING DIRECTOR:
P. SCHOENEFELD, M. MROSS

COURT OF REGISTRY:
HAMBURG

COMMERCIAL REGISTRY:
HRB 119000 – VAT-ID: DE27813673