alpha ventus

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Offshore wind power from the North Sea: alpha ventus supplies first kilowatt hours to the German power grid

For the first time, offshore wind power flows from the North Sea to the German power grid: The consortium of EWE, E.ON and Vattenfall – the DOTI (Deutsche Offshore-Testfeld und Infrastruktur GmbH) – has now successfully started up and adjusted for the regular electricity generation the first three of a total of twelve wind turbines at the alpha ventus wind farm. The turbines, with a nominal capacity of five megawatts, are located 45 kilometres north of the island of Borkum. It is anticipated that the wind farm's twelve turbines, five of which have already been completed, will all be in operation by the end of this year.

"The wind turbines 'AV 8', 'AV 9' and 'AV 12' are currently undergoing the so-called adjustment phase", explains Wilfried Hube, the overall project leader of alpha ventus."As the name suggests, during this phase all the functions of the turbines are technically inspected and adjusted for the subsequent long-term operation. This is comparable with making technical adjustments to the engine of a new car," continues Hube. The adjustment phase is followed by a period of so-called trial operation. In this phase, the wind turbines are subjected to various test scenarios, such as operating under full load at different wind speeds. This is comparable with test-driving a new car. The test scenarios described last for several hundred hours. Only once these have been completed will a wind turbine be fully operational. Following 'AV 8', 'AV 9' and 'AV 12', the already constructed further wind turbines will consecutively be put into operation.

Construction of the wind turbines began in mid-April this year, after a first attempt had to be aborted in August 2008 due to poor weather conditions. Since April, work has proceeded at such a pace that construction of the wind farm is right on schedule. Particularly the pile-driving for the underwater foundations of the six Repower 5M wind turbines will shortly be able to be concluded in addition to the setting up and putting into operation of the six Areva Multibrid M5000.

The ongoing activities at sea can also be followed on the internet. A webcam positioned on the research platform FINO1 focuses directly on the construction site. A link to the webcam can be found at www.alpha-ventus.de.

With its successful construction of the offshore transformer station in September 2008, DOTI had already created the necessary prerequisites for the transmission of the generated wind power ashore. An underwater cable, installed last year by transpower gmbh (formerly E.ON Netz), connects the offshore transformer station to the German power grid.

Note to editors:

***Current print-quality images** as well as illustrations of offshore wind turbine construction can be downloaded free of charge at*: http://bildarchiv.alpha-ventus.de

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alpha ventus is the first German offshore wind farm constructed at sea by EWE, E.ON and Vattenfall. A total of 250 million euros has been invested in this pioneering project. The future production capacity of alpha ventus will be equivalent to the consumption of 50,000 households. This pilot project, situated roughly 45 kilometres off the coast of the island of Borkum, is producing fundamental knowledge on the construction and operation of an offshore wind farm. A total of 12 5-megawatt wind turbines will be employed at the alpha ventus test field – six Areva Multibrid M5000 turbines and six REpower 5M turbines. Furthermore, two types of steel foundations will be used for the wind turbines. While the Areva Multibrid turbines stand on tripods, so-called ‘jacket’ foundations are used for the REpower turbines.

For the first time, such turbines will be constructed and operate offshore in waters up to 30 metres deep. The research and development results are being integrated in the design, construction and operation of future offshore turbines. EWE, E.ON and Vattenfall have founded DOTI (Deutsche Offshore-Testfeld und Infrastruktur GmbH & Co. KG) for the realisation of the alpha ventus wind farm. DOTI has leased the licensing rights to the test field from the Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft für die Nutzung und Erforschung der Windenergie auf See (Offshore Wind Energy Foundation) under the name ‘Borkum West’.