



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

# *Letter to Parliament – Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022–2027*

*Commissioned by the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy Unofficial  
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The President of the House of Representatives  
of the States General  
Prinses Irenestraat 6  
2595 BD THE HAGUE

Date 20 March 2026  
Subject Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022- 2027

Dear Mr President,

You hereby receive, also on behalf of the Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning (VRO), the Minister of Climate Policy and Green Growth (KGG), the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food security and Nature (LVVN) and the State Secretary of LVVN, the Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022-2027 adopted by the Government.

This concerns a partially amended North Sea Programme 2022-2027 (PNZ 2022-2027). The draft of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme was already sent to the House on 18 April 2025<sup>1</sup>, and was available for inspection for 6 weeks from 13 May 2025. It was also sent to neighbouring countries under the Espoo Convention.

The views received have been incorporated into the attached Response Note. An opinion has also been obtained from the Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment. Based on the views, the opinion, administrative corrections, and political developments, limited changes have been made to the text. These have also been included in the Response Note. Below, I explain the content of the Partially Revised North Sea Programme.

## **1. Ambition of the Government**

In July 2025, the previous Government set an ambition for offshore wind energy of 30-40 GW in 2040<sup>2</sup>. The Coalition Agreement of the Jetten Government states that we intend to invest in 40 GW of offshore wind energy. To achieve the goal, it is necessary to designate new wind energy areas by amending the PNZ 2022-

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Papers II, 2024/2025, 35 325 no. 10

<sup>2</sup> Climate and Energy Memorandum, Parliamentary Papers 33 043, no. 119, blg-1218518. Because the ambition as originally formulated for this Partial Revision was based on 50 GW and allocated scope for an indicative 21 GW therein, the text still assumes a remaining task for the North Sea Programme 2028-2033. The House will be further informed regarding the scope and ambition of the next North Sea Programme in 2026.

2027. The Government is doing this in this Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022-2027 by designating additional space for the Doordewind Wind Farm Zone and wind energy area 6/7. By adopting the Partially Revised North Sea Programme now, the Government avoids a delay of at least two years in the rollout of offshore wind energy that would occur if new wind energy areas were only designated in the new North Sea Programme 2028-2033, the adoption of which is not foreseen until the end of 2027 at the earliest.

For Doordewind Wind Farm Site II, where TenneT has already been commissioned to develop the direct current connection, the adoption is important in order to avoid social costs. In addition, the adoption contributes to the goals for the realisation of offshore wind energy. With the adoption of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme, no (financial) obligations are entered into simultaneously.

Achieving a sustainable, healthy North Sea capable of providing the services necessary for the Netherlands is a government-wide challenge. The comprehensive nature of this challenge is reflected in the North Sea Agreement, which the Government and North Sea stakeholders concluded in 2020. Due to the significant spatial and ecological interconnectedness of activities in the North Sea, new developments must explicitly be implemented in a coordinated manner. To achieve this integrated task, the Government has made funds available in the Coalition Agreement for the integrated North Sea investment task. The integration costs for the Doordewind II site were covered within the KGG Ministry's budget in the Spring Memorandum 2025. With the available resources in the Coalition Agreement for the integrated North Sea investment task, funding has also been reserved for the integration costs to reach 40 GW.

When designating wind energy areas in this Partially Revised North Sea Programme, space for fisheries was considered first. A careful balance was also struck with other activities in the North Sea, including – in addition to fisheries – mining, shipping and defence, nature, coastal defence, sand extraction, and maritime heritage. Where relevant, coordination took place with neighbouring countries and European nature and environmental legislation was taken into account. A balanced equilibrium between all these interests, with sufficient scope for safeguarding food production and nature restoration, will also form the basis under the current cabinet for developing new search areas.

With this Partially Revised North Sea Programme, the Government is also giving substance to the motion by Member Erkens et al.<sup>3</sup>, which calls for 'clarifying how greater account is taken of the space for various types of fisheries in balance with other players in the North Sea, whereby offshore wind ambitions can proceed'.

## **2. Assignment for the Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027**

The PNZ 2022-2027 was adopted on 18 March 2022 as an independent annex to the National Water Programme 2022-2027 and constitutes a mandatory programme under the Environment and Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*). In the PNZ

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<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Papers II, 2023/2024, 36 550-XIII No. 6

2022-2027, wind energy areas were designated<sup>4</sup> for realisation of the current Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap for 21 GW<sup>5</sup>. The PNZ 2022-2027 also announced an interim amendment, the Partial Revision, with the aim to:

- Designate wind energy areas for the period after 2031, in order to bring the intended ambition for offshore wind energy of 40 GW within reach.
- Indicate where shipping routes (*clearways*) need to be established for assurance by safe shipping around the wind energy areas.

In the Letter to Parliament "Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme 2022-2027"<sup>6</sup>, the target for additional wind energy areas for the Partial Revision was set to at least 23-26 GW, and the previously mentioned topics have been expanded with a number of subjects that were both urgent and the addition would not lead to a delay in the desired adoption of the Partial Revision in 2025. These concerned:

- Sand extraction (expansion of reservation zone)
- Mining design process in relation to offshore wind energy
- Shared use within wind farms
- Sustainable Blue Economy exploratory programme
- Protection of the Southern Dogger Bank under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and border adjustments for Centrale Oestergronden and Borkumse Stenen in accordance with agreements from the North Sea Agreement
- North Sea Infrastructure Protection Programme (*Programma Bescherming Noordzee-infrastructuur*, PBNI)
- Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI)
- Agreements on cables and pipelines in the shipping route buffer zone.

Short after publication of that Letter to Parliament, two topics were added due to increased urgency:

- Solitary wind turbines
- Describe the importance of space for fisheries in more concrete terms.<sup>7</sup>

Two parts by the assignment could not yet be elaborated:

- The aforementioned Letter to Parliament announced

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<sup>4</sup> The designation of wind energy areas is a necessary step to be able to make Site Decisions for wind farms in the North Sea under the Offshore Wind Energy Act.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Papers II, 2023/2024, 33 561, no. 61

<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary Papers II, 2022/2023, 35 325, No. 8

<sup>7</sup> On 8 March 2024, the Vision on Food from the Sea and Large Waters was sent to the House of Representatives (Parliamentary Papers II, 2023/2024, 29 675, no. 210). In this, the importance of space for food is underscored. The Vision stipulates that the importance of space for fisheries should be better substantiated in spatial considerations, in order to weigh it more firmly and with better justification in the spatial planning of all use in the North Sea. This has been implemented in the Partial Revision.

a new search area map with a view to potential additional space for wind energy to be designated in the next North Sea Programme (PNZ 2028-2033). It was not possible to draw up a search area map at that stage, because the process to do so could not be completed in time. A new search area map will be included in the Memorandum on Scope and Level of Detail for the PNZ 2028-2033.

- Also, the Letter to Parliament “Spatial cohesion wind farms and offshore mining activities”<sup>8</sup> announced instruments that required further elaboration. The KGG Minister will inform the House about this shortly.

It is explained below how the task described above, with the exception of the search areas map and the mining design process in relation to offshore wind energy, has been incorporated into the text of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme.

### **3. Elaboration of the assignment for the Partially Revised North Sea Programme**

The Coalition Agreement states the ambition to realise 40 GW of offshore wind energy. The designation of wind energy areas in this Partially Revised North Sea Programme is essential to achieve this ambition.

In all steps leading to the designation of the new Doordewind wind energy areas and area 6/7 (see map in appendix) in this Partial Revised North Sea Programme, the significance of these areas for fisheries has been mapped out together with the fisheries industry, both through bilateral discussions and the North Sea Consultation. The information from these discussions was given significant weight.

- The location of the search areas in the PNZ 2022-2027 had already taken the interests of the fisheries into account, and previously designated wind energy areas off the Dutch coast<sup>9</sup> that were important for the fisheries had been rejected.
- The significance of the Lagelander area for sole fishery is the primary reason for rejecting this previously designated wind energy area and no longer including it as a search area.
- An open zone is being established in area 6/7 for the benefit of langoustine fishery.
- Furthermore, the aim is to enable active fishing in the Doordewind area, provided this is safe, feasible, and practicable, with the intention of protecting the interests of this area for the fisheries as much as possible.

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<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary Papers II, 2022/2023, 34 682, no. 161

<sup>9</sup> This concerns the previously designated Hollandse Kust (zuidwest) and Hollandse Kust (noordwest) wind energy areas.

This Partially Revised North Sea Programme ensures a careful balance with other activities in the North Sea, including mining, shipping and defence, nature, coastal defence, sand extraction, and maritime heritage, in addition to fisheries. All these interests have been weighed and investigated in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Appropriate Assessment. This included investigating, for example, the following:

- Required space for fisheries so impacts on this sector can be prevented as much as possible;
- The socioeconomic value that the considered wind energy areas represent for fisheries, with estimates of significance for the supply chain and regions;
- Ecological effects and uncertainties that must be resolved in the subsequent phase;
- Implications for shipping safety and accessibility;
- Implications for helicopter accessibility by potential future mining platforms and possible mitigating measures;
- Available space for wind energy and associated amounts of energy to be generated.

#### **4. Points of attention regarding the designated wind energy areas**

Partly based on the information included above, the Lagelander wind energy area will not be retained as a wind energy area, nor is this area a search area anymore. The Doordewind area and area 6/7 have been retained and/or designated as wind energy areas. This designates additional capacity for an indicative 21 GW of wind energy.

The stated wind energy quantities (number of GW) are indicative at this stage, partly because there are still uncertainties regarding the ecological integration and permitability of the wind farms, and because (possible future) mining activities are taking place in the designated wind energy areas. In view of the aforementioned uncertainties, I intend to investigate the designation of additional wind energy areas in preparation for the next North Sea Programme 2028-2033. The House will be informed further on this matter as soon as possible.

An open zone is being established in area 6/7. This open zone is of particular importance for langoustine fishing and nature, and offers sufficient space for a *clearway* for shipping. In addition, it contributes to the accessibility of mining platforms. Based on ecological research (specifically into the guillemot), it may become apparent that the open zone needs to be modified. For this process, this Partially Revised North Sea Programme describes a phased approach, starting with realisation in the Doordewind area and the western part of area 6/7, with an indicative total of 13 GW of installed capacity.

For the wind farms in the Doordewind area, the starting point is that active fishing will be permitted, provided this is safe, feasible, and practicable. A tailor-made solution ensures the accessibility of the existing G14-A mining platform in Doordewind. In addition, for the available space for shared use in wind farms in area 6/7, the focus is on nature restoration and nature-enhancing measures. To

this end, efforts are being made to ensure a timely revision of the policy on shared use in the PNZ 2028-2033.

## **5. Participation, North Sea Consultation and advice**

During development of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme, stakeholders have been intensively involved, for example through discussions in the plenary North Sea Consultation (*Noordzeeoverleg*, NZO), and through bilateral talks and information sessions with stakeholders, sector representatives and NZO members. On 23 October 2024, the decision-making information, as collected by the Government for the purpose of decision-making regarding the Partial Revision, was discussed in the NZO. The consensus resulting from this discussion is summarised in the letter from the NZO Chair of 29 October 2024, which was previously sent to the House as an appendix to the draft of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme<sup>10</sup>.

In this letter, the Chair expressed, on behalf of the NZO members, her appreciation for the manner in which the members and their interests were taken into account in the preparation of the Partial Revision. The consensus reached regarding the Partial Revision within the NZO aligned well with the elaboration of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme.

The draft of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme, the EIA and the Appropriate Assessment were available for public inspection and for inspection by the competent authorities of other States for a period of six weeks from mid-May 2025, thereby enabling them to submit views. Additionally, pursuant to the Espoo Convention, the English and German translations of the draft and the relevant information in the EIA have been sent to the surrounding countries. The outcomes of the views obtained through this consultation procedure have been incorporated into the Response Note, which is attached to this letter. In some cases, the public consultation has led to substantive improvement of the texts. Rijkswaterstaat has also assessed the feasibility of this Partially Revised North Sea Programme. Where relevant, insights have been incorporated into official amendments to the text.

## **6. Advice of the Environmental Impact Assessment Commission**

The EIA was submitted to the Commission for the Environmental Impact Assessment (hereinafter: the EIA Commission) with a request for advice. In the preliminary assessment advice<sup>11</sup> of 22 July 2025, the EIA Commission advised supplementing environmental information regarding sand extraction and shipping safety. The Government subsequently drafted a supplement to the EIA regarding both subjects.

The EIA Commission's review opinion on the EIA and its supplement was

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix to the Letter to Parliament cited in footnote 1.

<sup>11</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment Commission. (2025). Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme. Preliminary review opinion on the environmental impact report. 22 July 2025. Project number: 3806. <https://www.commissiemer.nl/docs/mer/p38/p3806/a3806vts.pdf>

published on 6 November 2025<sup>12</sup>. In it, EIA Commission concludes that all important environmental information has been identified. The EIA Commission emphasises that the additional information regarding the effects of sand extraction on the ecosystem must be taken into account in the decision-making process. These effects are, in fact, greater than previously presented. The Government considers the expansion of the reservation zone a responsible decision, as it concerns a spatial reservation and the method of sand extraction and sand quantities will only be addressed in subsequent stages. The Government takes the EIA Commission's recommendations regarding subsequent stages to heart. The advice of the EIA Commission and the response from the Government are included in the Response Note in the appendix to this letter.

## 7. Reading guide for this Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022- 2027

As described under point 3 above, this Partially Revised North Sea Programme is a partial amendment of the PNZ 2022-2027. Therefore, most texts remain unchanged compared to the PNZ 2022-2027 as adopted in March 2022. The included policy changes have been added as continuous text to the already adopted PNZ text wherever possible. The table explains where these texts can be found, by subject.

Subject	Location in the Partial Revised PNZ 2022- 2027
Spatial planning, including the designation of wind energy areas for a total of 21 GW of wind energy, a description of key considerations and a phased approach, and the preparation of surrounding clearways for safe shipping.	H9a
Expansion of the reservation zone for sand extraction from 12 to 14 nautical me <sup>13</sup> to continue meeting the growing demand for sand extraction for coastal protection and raw materials.	H7.1, H10.4 and 10.5
Adapting the process for current forms of shared used within wind farms to increase the chances of success for these forms.	H10
Update developments around the Sustainable Blue Economy Exploratory Programme.	H8

<sup>12</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment Commission. (2025). Partial Revision of the North Sea Programme. Assessment advice about the environmental impact report and the supplement to that. 6 November 2025. Project number: 3806. <https://www.commissiemer.nl/docs/mer/p38/p3806/a3806tsea.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Formally the zone by the -20m NAP line to 2 nautical miles seaward by the 12 miles baseline, as established on 11 April 2014.

Protection of the Southern Dogger Bank under the MSFD and border adjustments of the Centrale Oestergronden and Borkumse Stenen in accordance with agreements from the North Sea Agreement. <sup>14</sup>	H9a.2, H3 Appendix 1
Description of the interdepartmental North Sea Infrastructure Protection Programme (PBNI), established in 2022 to safeguard the strategy for the protection of North Sea infrastructure.	H7.3
Description of the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative, launched in 2023 to strengthen international cooperation between the North Sea countries.	H1.7, H9.6
Assessment framework for the safe and optimal placement of cables and pipelines in and around shipping routes.	H9a.2, H10.7
Enable the placement of solitary wind turbines under conditions to make mining platforms more sustainable.	H10.5.3
Describe the importance of fisheries in spatial considerations more concretely.	H4.3.2, H9a, H10.5.3

*Table: The most important changes by subject in the text*

For the sake of consistency, these policy changes have also been incorporated elsewhere in the text, often with minor textual adjustments. During the public consultation period, all amended texts were marked so that anyone could comment on the changes.

As of now, this Partially Revised North Sea Programme 2022-2027 replaces the North Sea Programme 2022-2027 adopted on 18 March 2022. Therefore, all markings have now been removed from the Partially Revised North Sea Programme. I would like to point out, for the sake of clarity, that the text has only been partially revised. Consequently, much of the text remains unchanged. This reflects the policy established in 2022. As a result, this text contains, for example, names of ministries and laws that have since been amended, or other information that is now due for revision. This is inevitable during the lifespan of any long-term policy document. Adapting the complete text fell outside the scope of the Partial Revision, which, after all, concerned only a partial revision with a limited mandate. A completely new PNZ 2028-2033 will be published at the end of 2027, in which all information will be updated.

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<sup>14</sup> The "Protection of Southern Dogger Bank under the MSFD and border adjustments for Centrale Oestergronden and Borkumse Stenen" mentioned in above table have been implemented in both the main text and Appendix 1 of the PNZ 2022-2027, the Marine Strategy Part 3.

Yours faithfully,

THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER MANAGEMENT,

Vincent Karremans

Unofficial Translation



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