



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Letter to Parliament

Follow-up on the spatial integration of offshore wind farms and offshore mining activities

Commissioned by the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy

>> Sustainable. Agricultural. Innovative.
International.

Return address P.O. Box 20401 2500 EK The Hague

The Speaker of the House of Representatives
of the States General
Princess Irene Street 6
2595 BD THE HAGUE

Directorate-General for
Green Growth Realization,
Directorate for Deep Subsurface
Transition

Visiting address
Bezuidenhoutseweg 73
2594 AC The Hague

Postal address
P.O. Box 20401
2500 E K The Hague

Government identification
number
00000001003214369000

T 070 379 8911 (general)
F 0 70 378 6100 (general)
www.rijksoverheid.nl/ezk

Date July 6, 2026
Re Follow-up on the spatial integration of offshore wind farms and
offshore mining activities

Our trademark
KGG_DGRGG_TDO / 106975495

Dear Chairman,

The electrification and sustainability of the Dutch energy system is one of this Government's key priorities. At the same time, the security of natural gas supply remains crucial for the coming decades. The Dutch North Sea plays an important role in both challenges. It is here that the ambition for offshore wind energy will be realised, while it also holds the natural gas reserves that allow the Netherlands to limit its dependence on imports. Integrating wind farms and mining activities in the North Sea presents challenges. This letter addresses the developments regarding tailored approaches in recent years, the proposed changes to the legal framework required to manage the combined development of wind energy sites and mining activities, and developments concerning flight procedures to enable safe flights to platforms while using less air space. The chosen solution directions will make it possible to spatially optimise the rollout of offshore wind energy, the acceleration of gas extraction, and the development of underground CO₂ storage in the North Sea.

You were informed in the Letter to Parliament of 17 May 2023¹ about the increasing spatial challenges in the North Sea resulting from the rollout of wind farms on the one hand, and existing and future mining activities on the other. It was noted that the current legal framework offers insufficient scope to weigh these interests against each other in a timely manner and thus to manage optimal spatial use. Consequently, that same letter announced: 1) an addition to the legal framework and 2) research into space-efficient methods of flying to and from offshore mining installations. Since then, spatial pressure on the North Sea has further increased, partly due to challenges regarding defense, nature, and a European obligation² to establish CO₂ storage capacity. This underscores the need for more timely direction and the ability to prescribe space-saving (flight) techniques.

¹Parliamentary Papers II 2023/24, 34682, no. 161.

²Regulation (EU) 2024/1735

Challenges in integrating offshore wind farms and mining activities

When activities of national importance, such as wind energy and mining, overlap in the same area, the guiding principle is combined and space-efficient use. The balancing of wind energy against other (national) interests first takes place at the planning level when a wind energy area is designated in the North Sea Programme. In this Programme, the Government carefully weighs the interests of existing and planned mining activities against the need for space for new wind farms, ensuring that both wind energy and mining can be developed to the fullest extent possible. The precise spatial integration of the wind farms in relation to (planned) mining activities is determined through a tailored process led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, in close coordination with the mining operators. The subsequent Wind Farm Site Decision determines the final boundary between mining installation(s) and a future wind farm.

However, in the aforementioned Letter to Parliament, it was noted that there is insufficient opportunity for the competent authority to weight the various interests as long as a wind energy area has been designated in the North Sea Programme, but no site has yet been designated within it by means of a Site Decision or a Preparatory Decision³. Under the existing legal framework, a mining initiative, which was unforeseen during the adoption of the North Sea Programme, can be developed in or near a designated wind energy area. This may restrict the options for wind energy development at that location, without an administrative spatial assessment having been made regarding how the activities can best be combined. This leads to uncertainty regarding the feasibility of achieving the targets for offshore wind energy, while also posing risks to investments in the associated offshore grid, which requires early investments from TenneT. Mining operators may also experience uncertainty regarding the availability of space due to the introduction of a wind energy area near their activities. This can also have a hindering effect on the necessary investments for these activities. In short, parties involved in the development of both activities would benefit from clarity at an earlier stage.

In the same Letter to Parliament, it was noted that there was still insufficient knowledge regarding the obstacle-free space required between wind farms and mining platforms to fly to them safely. This increases uncertainty regarding the realisation of wind energy or limits the integration of mining activities. Through the joint development of tailored solutions for several specific cases, more insight has been gained in recent years.

³as referred to in Article 3.1 and Article 9.1 respectively of the Offshore Wind Energy Act.

Regarding the tailored approach in recent years

Over the past two years, intensive collaboration has taken place with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Energie Beheer Nederland (EBN), mining companies, TenneT, helicopter operators, aviation experts, and knowledge institutions. This has led, among other things, to the successful integration of existing and planned mining activities into Site Decisions for offshore wind energy. The successful completion of two tailored processes was explained in the Letter to Parliament of 16 May 2025⁴. This has yielded the following insights.

- A tailored solution starts with determining acceptable helicopter accessibility for the mining operator and subsequently requires spatial and technical aviation measures to ensure aviation safety while minimising the spatial footprint. Because the various activities on mining platforms also require different degrees of helicopter accessibility, the space needed around each platform varies. This means that a tailored solution is required for each platform.
- The flight procedures currently used to safely reach platforms take up a lot of space, which can limit the area available for new wind farms. There is therefore a need for new, space-efficient flight procedures. I will return to this later.
- Early coordination between mining operators and the Government (regarding wind energy) increases the spatial integration possibilities for both. As various activities and plans progress over time and across locations, achieving effective spatial coordination becomes more complex and costly.
- Intensive collaboration between mining parties and the Government in seeking a tailored solution offers a good starting point for achieving creative, widely supported results that are acceptable to all parties.
- The existing legal framework, namely an environmental permit requirement for the use of the site once the Preparatory Decision for wind farms has been taken, provides market parties—at a stage when decision-making for wind energy is already well advanced—with the appropriate incentive for space conservation. This instrument enables the Government to decide whether or not to permit new mining activities based on their compatibility with the intended wind farm. Due to the timing, however, this instrument currently provides no space-saving incentive in situations where wind energy development is less advanced.

Proposed amendment to the legal framework

In light of the above insights, an amendment to the existing legal instruments within the framework of the Environment and Planning Act will be initiated. The intention is to bring forward the environmental permit requirement for mining site activities. This will make it possible to assess specific situations earlier in the wind energy process regarding the extent to which and the form in which offshore mining and wind energy can coexist. This early clarity is intended to safeguard investment certainty for both the offshore grid and mining operators.

⁴Parliamentary Papers II 2024/25, 33561, no. 84.

The permit requirement will apply from the moment the wind energy area is designated in the Environment and Planning Act. This requires amending the Living Environment Activities Decree (Besluit activiteiten leefomgeving, Bal) and the Decree on the Quality of the Living Environment (Besluit kwaliteit leefomgeving, Bkl), and subsequently the Environment and Planning Act. The aim is to hold an online consultation on the draft amendment decree in mid-2026. The intended entry into force of the final amendment decree is 1 January 2028. This permit requirement will not apply to existing mining installations and advanced mining projects. In those situations, as in previous years, a tailored assessment will be conducted in consultation with mining operators. In this regard, it is up to the Government to facilitate an acceptable solution. In addition to this change to the legal framework, (potentially future) mining locations are currently being mapped so that these can be taken into account when designating new wind energy areas. This helps to prevent integration problems.

Other actions

In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives, the following actions have also been carried out or started to better spatially integrate offshore wind energy and mining activities:

- In collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, I have launched a pilot project for the application of an innovative space-saving flight procedure at sea: the Point in Space (PinS) flight procedure. The goal of the navigation technique used here is to be able to fly safely to platforms using less airspace. The technical results of the flight tests are promising so far. Spatially, we see that the PinS flight procedure can lead to a five- to sevenfold reduction in the space required per mining platform compared to conventional flight procedures. This translates into a gain of a few hundred square kilometres of space freed up for other uses, such as offshore wind energy⁵.
The aim is to have the first PinS flight procedure approved by the end of this year and subsequently put it into service. Due to its innovative nature, there is a risk of delays in the approval procedure. This could lead to delays in the Site Decisions and, consequently, the rollout of offshore wind energy. To mitigate this risk, I am therefore making the draft Site Decision for Nederwiek I-B available for public inspection parallel to the approval procedure. However, the draft Site Decision contains a proviso that the final Site Decision can only be adopted once the approval process has been successfully completed. The development of PinS is a great example of collaboration between various parties, resulting in innovative solutions.
- Based on the knowledge and experience gained, the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management is working on a procedural framework that details the steps and investigations required to assess the aviation safety of a spatial design.
- EBN has provided valuable information regarding existing and potential future mining activities, which has made it possible to determine which areas are

⁵ Every hundred square kilometres offers space for approximately 1 GW of offshore wind energy.

more or less suitable for the development of wind farms. This also played an important role in the identification of new search areas for wind energy in the Memorandum on Scope and Level of Detail for the North Sea Programme 2028-2033. In addition, EBN critically examined the need for helicopter access to various types of operations.

- Agreements have been made with the mining sector in the Sector Agreement on Gas Extraction in the Energy Transition to achieve the most efficient use of space possible in the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons and the dismantling of mining installations.⁶
- Commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, TNO is investigating the potential for space-saving monitoring techniques for CO₂ storage sites. Among other things, the feasibility of using fibre optic cables on the seabed as a monitoring instrument is being investigated. If this proves successful, the monitoring of CO₂ storage sites will require significantly less space.

Follow-up

The above insights and actions already initiated are being elaborated, among other things, in the North Sea Programme 2028-2033, for which preparations have now begun. Through the early and proactive identification of existing and future mining initiatives and associated interests, the intended addition to the legal governance framework, and the deployment of new space-saving flight procedures for helicopters, the rollout of offshore wind energy, the acceleration of gas extraction, and the development of underground CO₂ storage in the North Sea are being spatially optimised.

Stientje van Veldhoven-van der Meer
Minister of Climate Policy and Green Growth

⁶ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2025/04/23/sectorakkoord-gaswinning-in-de-energietransitie>



This is a publication of:

Netherlands Enterprise Agency
Prinses Beatrixlaan 2
PO Box 93144 | 2509 AC The Hague
T +31 (0) 88 042 42 42
[Contact us](#)
www.rvo.nl

This publication was commissioned by the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.

Netherlands Enterprise Agency | August 2026
Publication number: RVO-183-2026/RP-DUZA

NL Enterprise Agency is a department of the Dutch ministry of Economic Affairs that implements government policy for agricultural, sustainability, innovation, and international business and cooperation. NL Enterprise Agency is the contact point for businesses, educational institutions and government bodies for information and advice, financing, networking and regulatory matters.

Netherlands Enterprise Agency is part of the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.