

# World's largest offshore wind farm opened in Kent

September 23 2010

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An undated handout photo received in London on September 23 shows the Vattenfall operated Thanet Offshore Wind Farm, situated off the south east coast of England. The world's largest offshore wind farm was officially opened off the east Kent coast on Thursday, part of the government's bid to reduce the carbon emissions that drive climate change.

The world's largest offshore wind farm opened in Britain on Thursday, as part of the government's bid to reduce the carbon emissions that drive climate change.

The project received a qualified welcome from environmental campaigners.

The site, a forest of giant turbines in the North Sea off the east Kent coast, has 100 turbines installed so far with a total of 341 planned.

Swedish [energy](#) company Vattenfall, which built the farm, says it has the potential to power 200,000 homes.

The farm will increase Britain's capacity to generate [wind power](#) by more than 30 percent.

Situated around seven miles (12 kilometres) out to sea, the 380-foot (115-metre) high turbines are spread over more than 22 square miles (35 square kilometres) and are visible from the shore.

The farm is expected to produce 300 megawatts of energy at full capacity, which would see Britain's renewable [energy capacity](#) rise to five gigawatts.

Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne welcomed Britain's progress on wind power.

"We are in a unique position to become a world leader in this industry," he said.

"We are an island nation and I firmly believe we should be harnessing our wind, wave and tidal resources to the maximum.

Craig Bennett, the campaigns and policy director for Friends of the Earth, said the wind farm was an "important stride forward" but warned that Britain's record on [renewable energy](#) was "dismal".



An undated handout photo received in London on September 23 shows the a wind turbine on the Vattenfall operated Thanet Offshore Wind Farm, situated off the south east coast of England. The world's largest offshore wind farm was officially opened off the east Kent coast on Thursday, part of the government's bid to reduce the carbon emissions that drive climate change.

Critics point out that the turbines only produce energy when the wind is blowing and that as yet no cost-effective fuel cell has been developed for storing the power once it has been produced.

Professor Ian Fells, an energy expert, said: "What worries me is the government seems to be obsessed with the option of wind farms and neglects other sources of renewable energy, which in many ways could be more important.

"The other problem is they are intermittent. You never know when the wind is going to blow," he told the BBC.

Construction work at the 780-million-pound wind farm began two years

ago.

There are around 250 [wind farms](#) operating in Britain, with a further 12 offshore, with 2,909 turbines in operation in total.

The new site opened as the Global Wind Energy Council, the sector's international representative body, forecast that wind power worldwide would double between 2010 and 2014 to reach more than 400 gigawatts.

"Overall, wind energy continues to be a growth market, weathering the economic crisis much better than some analysts had predicted," said GWEC secretary general Steve Sawyer.

"As wind power is becoming more competitive, it is rapidly expanding beyond the traditional markets in North America and Europe. Around half of the growth is now happening in emerging economies and developing countries."

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