

Blue energy

Official reference	COM (2014) 8: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Blue Energy Action needed to deliver on the potential of ocean energy in European seas and oceans by 2020 and beyond	
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// abstract:

The *Blue growth strategy* (COM (2012) 494; p.69) considers the ocean energy sector as one of the five priority sectors with a huge potential to create jobs in coastal areas. The impact assessment accompanying COM (2014) 8 shows that additional support (e.g. European Energy Research Alliance (EERA), ERA network for ocean energy, Horizon 2020) for ocean energy could result in significant economic and environmental benefits for the EU, such as reducing the dependence on fossil fuels, increasing energy security, contributing to a low-carbon economy, maintaining the strong European industrial position in the global ocean energy market and creating new high-quality jobs. The communication also signals the main priorities to be tackled in order to allow the industry to scale up and to compete with other types of energy generation (high cost of technology, expansion and strengthening of the transmission infrastructure, complex licensing procedures, limited knowledge of environmental impact, stable support framework for pre-commercial technologies).

In this communication a two-phase action plan (bottom-up approach) is proposed to support the development of the sector. The first phase (2014-2016) includes the introduction of an Ocean Energy Forum (incl. various working groups), and based on its findings, a strategic roadmap will be developed with clear targets for the industrial development of the sector. The second phase (2017-2020) includes the establishment of a European Industrial Initiative (public-private partnership between industry, researchers, Member States and the Commission) in the framework of the European Strategic plan for Energy Technology (SET), aiming at realising and achieving common goals within a fixed term. A second aspect of this phase involves drawing up guidelines to streamline and facilitate the implementation of the *Habitats directive* (92/43/EEC; p.74) and *Birds directive* (2009/147/EC; p.91) and Article 13 of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC, i.e. administrative procedures), as well as to support maritime spatial planning processes. This aims to reduce the existing uncertainties and administrative burdens.

The Commission will carry out an initial progress assessment in 2017 and by 2020 they'll make a thorough evaluation of the development of the 'ocean energy' sector.