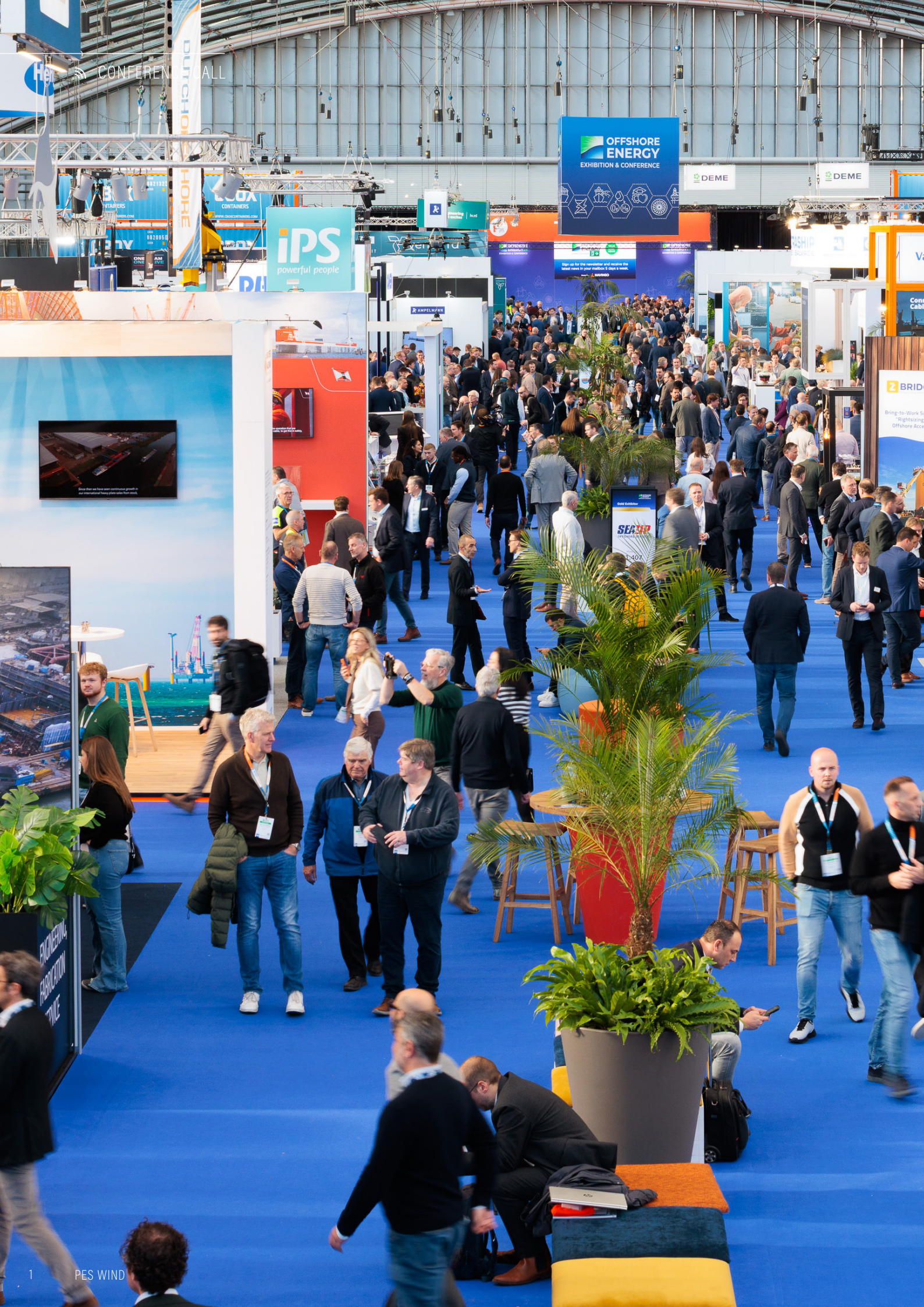
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# Wind needs the whole system

Offshore wind's biggest constraints in 2026 sit outside the wind industry, with vessels, cables, ports, grids and permits. Getting those partners into the same room is what Offshore Energy Exhibition & Conference (OEEC) in Amsterdam is built to do.

Ask any project director what is actually holding up their next project and the answer is rarely a turbine. It is a vessel that will not be free until 2029. A cable factory with a full order book. A quayside that cannot take the load. A grid connection that arrives two years after the foundations are in. A permit caught between a fisheries objection and a defence corridor.

Every one of those constraints sits with a company or an institution that does not describe itself as a wind business at all.

The offshore wind industry has spent the past few years learning an uncomfortable lesson: the pace of offshore wind development is increasingly determined by constraints outside the wind sector. Installation and heavy-lift vessel availability. Export and array cable manufacturing and the capacity to install them. Port terminal space with the bearing strength and quay length for next-generation components. Skilled offshore technicians. Transformer and switchgear lead times.

Underpinning all of this are the cost of capital and the design of the tenders themselves.

Not one of those problems can be solved by the wind industry on its own. They are solved with contractors, vessel owners, subsea specialists, port authorities, engineering firms, regulators and financiers, many of whom hold decades of offshore experience that predates offshore wind, much of it earned in oil and gas.

The Netherlands illustrates the point neatly. Around 4.7 GW of offshore wind capacity is currently in operation, while the national roadmap targets 23 GW of installed capacity. The distance between those figures is not primarily a technology problem. It reflects supply chain, grid, permitting and infrastructure constraints that require decisions across several different industries.

Floating wind sharpens the argument further. Mooring systems, dynamic cables, semi-submersible hull design, tow-out and offshore hook-up are not capabilities the fixed-bottom wind industry developed on its own. They came out of deepwater oil and gas, and the companies that hold them have been exhibiting in Amsterdam for years.

### The whole system, in one event

OEEC is built around three core markets: offshore wind, oil and gas and maritime, with security, carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and nature enhancement alongside them. For a wind audience, that mix is not a distraction from the programme. That cross-sector mix is central to the event.

A vessel owner may be at OEEC because much of its fleet also works in oil and gas. A subsea contractor laying export cables may also work on pipelines and inspection. A port hosting a marshalling yard may serve several offshore markets at once. The engineering expertise behind a floating substructure may have developed through decades of work on semi-submersibles.

It doesn't stop at commissioning, either. Once a wind farm is generating, it becomes a maritime operation for the next 25 to 30 years: crew transfer vessels, service operation vessels, port bases, marine coordination, spare parts logistics and weather-window planning. These are maritime activities, and they are strongly represented at OEEC because maritime is one of the show's three core markets.

### Policymakers in the same building

The second thing that makes Amsterdam different is who else walks the floor. The Dutch government takes part with its own pavilion and its own content programme.


This matters more than it may sound. Offshore wind's growth is determined by tender design, seabed leasing, grid planning and permitting. These are conversations between industry and government as well as within the supply chain. Bringing policymakers and project participants into the same event can make it easier to discuss bottlenecks in the context of the wider delivery challenge.

### Security has become a wind issue

Offshore wind is now critical national infrastructure. Its export cables share a seabed with interconnectors, telecom cables and pipelines. Its substations are networked assets, with the cyber exposure that implies.

Damage to subsea infrastructure in European waters in recent years has moved seabed security from a niche topic to a board-level one, and it has brought a new set of participants into the conversation: navies, coastguards, cable protection specialists and the agencies responsible for critical infrastructure.

For a developer or a supplier, this is no longer somebody else's agenda. It shapes cable route approvals, insurance terms, monitoring requirements and, increasingly, the conditions attached to the seabed lease itself.

The OEEC programme puts seabed security, cybersecurity and AI alongside offshore wind, hydrogen, CCS and sustainable maritime, bringing the security discussion into the same programme as the wider offshore supply chain.

### The North Sea is the right unit of analysis

There is a reason all of this converges at RAI Amsterdam. The North Sea is the most densely developed offshore energy basin in the world: wind farms, platforms, pipelines, cables and some of the busiest shipping lanes on earth, overlapping in a relatively small body of water shared by the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Belgium, Denmark and Norway.

That geography forces the cross-sector conversation whether the industry wants it or not. Spatial planning has to reconcile wind, shipping, fishing, defence and nature restoration. Grid planning crosses borders. Supply chains are shared: the same vessels, the same cable factories and the same technicians serve projects in half a dozen countries.

It also explains why the rest of the world travels here. Delegations, developers and suppliers from Asia, North America and emerging offshore markets come to the North Sea because many of the operational challenges are already being addressed there. They are not simply visiting a market; they are visiting the basin in which the questions they are about to face have already been asked, and in many cases answered.

### What to expect in November

The 2026 edition takes place on 24th and 25th November at RAI Amsterdam, with more than 80 speakers and 55 hours of content across the conference and stage programme, alongside roundtables, matchmaking and the awards dinner.

For companies in offshore wind specifically, the value is concentrated in access to Tier 1, 2 and 3 supply chain firms across offshore disciplines, direct contact with government policymakers and the national pavilion, and cross-sector decision-makers from maritime, oil and gas, ports and government.

### An open invitation

Delivering offshore wind in Dutch waters, and across the North Sea as a whole, will not be achieved by the wind industry acting alone. It will take wind, maritime, oil and gas, ports, grid operators and governments making decisions together, and there are not many occasions in the European calendar when all of them are in the same building on the same day.

OEEC's relevance lies in bringing those interdependent sectors together at a point when offshore wind increasingly depends on decisions made beyond the turbine itself.

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