

Pioneering pilot project: Schmidbauer launches offshore wind farm off the coast of Marseille

The Provence Grand Large offshore wind farm is being built off the coast of Fos-sur-Mer in the Marseille region of France. The special feature: wind turbines are being erected on floating platforms - an innovation with model character.

Marseille/Gräfelfing, 25. April 2023 - After more than three years of planning for Schmidbauer, the Provence Grand Large offshore wind farm off the coast of Fos-sur-Mer in the greater Marseille area is entering the realization phase. Already in 2020, Schmidbauer prevailed as project partner for the French client EDF Renouvelables with innovative engineering and decades of heavy-duty experience. For projects of this magnitude, Schmidbauer has purchased an LR 11350 crawler crane with power boom. From April, the team on site will take over the logistics within the harbour area as well as the assembly of the plant components. Three 8.4 MW wind turbines from Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy are to be erected on pyramid-shaped floating foundations. The assembled wind turbines will be towed by tugboats to another port, where Schmidbauer will assist in the preparation for commissioning with a 130-tonne mobile crane. Towed into the open sea, the three turbines will then be installed at their final location.

Intelligent engineering, strong equipment and practised teamwork

This floating foundation of the wind turbine is a unique prototype worldwide and places special demands on the engineering. Schmidbauer is working closely with the client on the project to ensure planning reliability and flexibility. The first hub is scheduled for the beginning of June 2023. "To handle projects of this magnitude, you need the right equipment. But more important is intelligent engineering for solution concepts with flexibility. This is exactly where we see our performance plus," summarises Stefan Schmidbauer, Managing Director and Technical Director of the Heavy Lift division.

Heavy load logistics with crane giants

The harbour area is the main setting for the pilot project. For example, the crane area in the harbour is being reinforced according to Schmidbauer's specifications and an innovative load-distribution concept is being implemented. Schmidbauer is laying almost three kilometres of Bongossi mats plus several steel plates. A 400-tonne crawler crane works alongside the 1,350-tonne crawler crane as a superstructure and tracking crane. So that the auxiliary crane can be used for other lifting activities and the erection of the plant components, its set up is converted several times during the course of the project. In addition, 40 SPMT axle lines are on the move to control the logistics from the component storage to the erection area of the wind turbine.

The main crane will be equipped with a 150-metre PowerBoom to reach 122 metres hub height - and thus corresponds to the currently largest possible main boom upgrade for the size of this crane. The operation is the first of the new LR 11350: it will be transported from the Liebherr Ehingen factory directly to France, disassembled into individual parts. Approximately 150 truckloads are to deliver the LR11350, the CC2400-1, the SPMTs and the load-distribution mats. The exact planning of the logistics plays a decisive role. Up to 15

experts from the Heavy Lift Department will be on site to carry out the complete set-up of the equipment within a period of one and a half months. There is essential preparatory work before the first lift: the assembly of the main and auxiliary cranes, the delivery of the SPMT axles and the numerous load distribution mats.

Unique pilot project worldwide

The floating offshore wind farm Provence Grand Large, located in the Mediterranean Sea about 17 kilometres off Napoléon Beach, is the first floating farm for France. The sea depth at the corresponding location is around 100 metres. A classic fastening of the steel structures in the seabed is therefore out of the question. The future-oriented floating facilities are a solution for previously unusable sea locations worldwide and at the same time environmentally friendly: the constructions cover only a small amount of sea surface. In addition, the line system used touches the seabed only minimally. "The real challenge of the project is that the entire construction of the floating foundations are prototypes. Therefore, we have been involved with the client in planning and engineering for over three years. We have been supporting the construction of many onshore and offshore wind farms from the very beginning. This particular project shows where the technology to even more efficient wind power takes us," says Managing Director Werner Schmidbauer.

Heavy Lift for the energy transition

It is precisely the routine in the installation of wind turbines that makes Schmidbauer the ideal partner for this special project. Because: "We are aware that heavy lifting plays an important role in the installation of every wind project. We have gathered a great deal of experience from the past 15 years with the installation of conventional wind turbines. This naturally benefits the Provence Grande Large project," affirms Minka St. James, Head of Business Development, who has been part of the project as Contract Manager from the very beginning. The new acquisition of an LR 1800 crawler crane for wind energy projects shows the high demand of large equipment for the energy turnaround, not only in the offshore sector, but also for onshore projects. The commissioning of the Provence Grand Large offshore wind farm is a significant step for the trend-setting renewables. Schmidbauer will provide on-site media support for the entire project and continue to report.

Schmidbauer was asked in detail about his role in the **interview**:

["Pilot project: We erect floating offshore wind turbines" - Erneuerbare Energien Hamburg | EEHH \(erneuerbare-energien-hamburg.de\)](#)

An informative **short documentation is available** for the project:

[Provence Grand Large - Découvrez le projet - YouTube](#)

Company profile:

Schmidbauer is the leading provider in Germany for mobile crane services and special transports of all sizes with the performance plus - a full-service concept that combines state-of-the-art technology with sophisticated engineering and human expertise. Founded in 1932, the traditional company serves many industries as an innovative partner for lifting and moving heavy loads: from the construction, energy and chemical industries to plant and mechanical engineering. The Schmidbauer Group, headquartered in Gräfelfing near Munich, employs around 600 people and provides nationwide coverage with its subsidiaries Fricke-Schmidbauer Schwerlast GmbH and Rieger & Moser GmbH & Co. KG, provides a large fleet of special vehicles at almost 30 locations nationwide, and is also represented internationally with branches and sales offices in Estonia, Finland and France.

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