

News release

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Renewables investment plan faces delivery risks

A Scottish Government plan to boost the offshore wind supply chain is making slow progress and faces multiple risks to achieving its aims.

The government set up the five-year Offshore Wind Investment Programme (OWIP) in 2023. It aims to spend £500 million of public money to speed up building of the port infrastructure and manufacturing facilities needed to support Scotland's offshore wind development projects. So far, only £141 million has been committed across 17 projects due to reasons such as reduced investor confidence and wider regulatory issues. There is currently no clear plan for what will happen beyond 2028/29.

The government put in a place a collaborative investment approach with its delivery partners to make the best use of public money. However, this was significantly weakened after an early data breach. Wider governance issues, including funding, project monitoring and risk management have also hampered efficient delivery of the project.

OWIP is broadly on track to achieve its aim of generating three pounds in private investment for every public pound spent, with £413 million secured to date. However, most of OWIP's investments have been grant-based rather than loans or equity in companies. This limits the potential to get money back and potentially increases costs to the public. Most of the private investment relates to a single subsea power cable manufacturing plant in the Highlands.

Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said:

'The Scottish Government's project to stimulate investment in offshore wind infrastructure has made some progress, but it is slow going and there are clear risks to the programme. The government must address these quickly.'

'Strengthening the programme's governance and delivery arrangements and developing a clear plan for the future will help reduce uncertainty for delivery partners and investors, and give the programme the best chance of being successful.'

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Notes to Editor:

1. OWIP aims to unlock billions of pounds of supply chain opportunities, expected from the construction and maintenance of [ScotWind's](#) 18 offshore wind development projects.
2. The Scottish Government's delivery partners are the Scottish National Investment Bank, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Scottish Enterprise.
3. The largest private OWIP-supported investment is a £350 million high-voltage subsea power cable manufacturing plant at the Port of Nigg in the Scottish Highlands. The plant was supported by £24.5 million of public sector funding.
4. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit.scot
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