

# Marine Renewable Energy in the Philippines: Sustainable Energy from Ocean Spaces and Resources

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## Press Release

The Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership, a multi-donor partnership pursuing acceleration in energy transition in the region, has published a stocktake and options report on Marine Renewable Energy (MRE) for the benefit of the Department of Energy (DOE). ETP brings together the governments of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Canada with Philanthropies such as the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Sequoia Climate Foundation, and other foundations. The MRE study assesses various marine renewable energy technologies, their sustainability and suitability for power supply in the Philippines. The report presents opportunities for the Philippines to accelerate energy transition while ensuring energy security through optimizing use of abundant marine resources.

MRE harnesses energy from ocean resources and includes offshore wind, marine solar, wave and tidal motion energy, and differences in water temperatures, and more. DOE recognizes the benefits of MRE and is taking action to explore how these resources can be utilized. The Philippines' geographical location and archipelagic features endow the country with significant MRE potential as initially outlined in the World Bank's Offshore Wind Roadmap for the Philippines. The MRE report underscores the potential wave energy source and ocean renewable energy options in the country. These capacities can help augment renewable power supply and support the country's goal to increase the share of renewable energy to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

Among MRE technologies, the report denotes, offshore wind is the most commercially ready with numerous installations and well-developed supply chains. Currently, the DOE prioritizes offshore wind development given a high private-sector interest. This policy direction is particularly aimed at the development of offshore wind resources. The broader MRE technologies, such as marine solar, tidal in-stream, wave, and ocean thermal energy conversion, are at various phases of technological maturity. Small pilot systems can still be deployed in the Philippines to explore their economic supply of energy in off-grid areas such as islands and remote locations where energy dispersion is poor.

Developing the MRE offers co-benefits in addition to clean ocean-based energy production. MRE creates local jobs, expands supply chains, and enhances livelihood opportunities. These initiatives promise long-term sustainability and income, especially for the local and indigenous communities in

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isolated off-grid areas. Including indigenous communities within the project supports responsible use of energy supply, due to community understanding and knowledge of their environment.

*“At ETP we aim to provide practicable but bold and pioneering solutions for advancing the Philippines’ ambition to reach its renewable energy targets, deploy resilient and sustainable energy and to decarbonize the economy,”* says Sirpa Jarvenpaa, Director of ETP.

MRE has the potential to contribute to achieving the Philippines’ Paris Climate commitment by substituting fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse gasses and other pollutants. Renewable Energy Management Bureau of DOE (REMB) Director Marissa Cerezo highlighted that it is the government’s endeavor to ensure stable and secure energy supply throughout the country. There are also synergies for the development of blue economy sectors (e.g. water, aquaculture, tourism, aquatic transportation).

However, significant challenges still exist in developing MRE in the Philippines. The technologies are relatively new and the financial institutions view these as high-risk projects. As such foreign direct investment and international support is likely to be needed to deliver the first generation of MRE projects, the ETP report notes. Particularly, technical capacity building, feasibility assessments, and financial assistance are still needed to support the establishment of the MRE testing and deployment. The Department of Justice opens doors to allow the 100% foreign ownership for RE projects. The corresponding DOE Circular in the same context helps the local MRE sector’s establishment by learning from international companies. Also, additional grid connections and stability improvement through the use of digital technologies would be required for effective use of MRE supply. Preceding these, there is a need to improve guidelines for identifying suitable zones for MRE development to ensure that any risk of conflicts with protected seascapes and declared natural zones, trade routes, and other uses are avoided.

The next steps in advancing MRE are to provide a series of capacity development for the key stakeholders necessary in the MRE ecosystem, and to holistically engage them on strategic planning, road mapping, capacity training, market mechanisms, and financing investments. These steps will advance the development of MRE in the Philippines. Currently, ETP is engaging with two projects on MRE, namely, Marine Spatial Planning.

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Notes to the editors:

Marine Renewable Energy in the Philippines: Sustainable Energy from Ocean Spaces and Resources Stocktake report is available on Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership website. Our deepest gratitude to Dr. Michael Abundo and his team in producing the MRE stocktake report.

