



#### **HIGH-WAVE OFFSHORE SOLAR PANELS SOON A REALITY**

**A consortium of Tractebel, Jan De Nul Group, DEME, Soltech and Ghent University is proud to announce the launch of an innovative project in the field of marine floating solar technology. The partners strongly believe that solar photovoltaic (PV) panels in offshore waters are one of the essential future green energy sources. Combined in the same location with aquaculture and offshore wind power, this innovative technology allows for a more efficient use of available space.**

#### **High-wave offshore solar technology as a logical step in the energy market**

While solar PV technology costs are still constantly decreasing, the evolution towards high-wave offshore applications is a logical next step after fresh water floating PV on lakes and dams and low-wave offshore applications in lagoons and other sheltered environments. Factors such as land scarcity, large scale standardization and NIMBY impact are indeed expected to support the growth of the offshore solar energy market as they did for wind energy. More generally, this expansion can be seen as a step towards the further development of the Blue Economy, driving concepts such as cities on the water, offshore energy hubs, etc.

## A challenging environment

Taking solar technology to a rough offshore environment needs the existing solar PV panels to be adapted to resist salty water and withstand strong currents and wave action. In addition, a cost competitive concept for the floater structure should be designed. Finally, ecosystem integration of the floating PV panels will be investigated from the start, to reduce the impact as much as possible.

## A consortium with a proven track record

The consortium partners bring together all required skills and expertise to make this innovative project a success. While Tractebel has built strong engineering skills in both PV technology and offshore engineering, DEME and Jan De Nul Group are highly experienced in marine operations and involved in numerous windfarm developments and installations. Soltech is an expert in specialized solar PV panels and Ghent University is one of the leading knowledge centers in offshore engineering, aquaculture and ecosystem research.

## A joint industry and government initiative

The consortium, led by Tractebel, was set up in the framework of the Flemish Blue Cluster and is strongly supported by VLAIO. For this initiative, the budget of about € 2 Mio is a result of joined forces between industry and government support. With these means, the consortium aims to develop new concepts and perform laboratory and field testing to take the first steps towards the commercialization of the technology.

## A pioneering solution

The partners of the consortium are the first in Belgium to explore this pioneering offshore solar solution. Their ambition is also to be the first to realize offshore solar farms in the Belgian North Sea - eventually in combination with windfarms or aquaculture. In this way, the partners position themselves in this new, fast-evolving market.

**Denis Lohest, CEO of Tractebel in Belgium:** *“This groundbreaking initiative perfectly fits Tractebel’s ambition to become a world leader in offshore engineering for energy production, storage and transport. Following our active involvement in one of the world’s first floating wind farms, it is a great honor for us to team up with key energy players for the development of first-of-its-kind technology for high-wave offshore solar panels.”*

**Luc Vandenbulcke, CEO of DEME:** *“At DEME we are confident that high wave offshore solar technology can play a key role in realising a sustainable energy transition. With our know-how, high-tech equipment and innovative solutions, we have always been a pioneer in the renewable energy market and look forward to working with our consortium partners to develop and install the world’s first high wave offshore solar farm in Belgium.”*

**Philippe Hutse, Offshore Director at Jan De Nul Group:** *“We are proud to be part of this research programme and pioneering solution. Jan De Nul strongly believes in offshore renewables and is keen to explore alternative solutions such as Floating Solar PV as part of the future offshore energy mix. Therefore we wish to join forces with industry and government to accelerate this sustainable solution.”*

**Stefan Dewallef, Product Development Manager at Soltech:** *“Soltech is looking forward to the challenge of developing marine-suitable PV panels that can withstand harsh offshore conditions.”*

**Dr. ir. Margriet Drouillon, Senior Business Developer at Ghent University:** *“This multidisciplinary project fits perfectly within Ghent University’s strong efforts to expand its Research & Development in marine / maritime sciences and Blue Growth in general. With the Laboratory of Aquaculture, the Environmental Toxicology Unit and the Maritime Technology Division, we have three expert research groups in their field participating in the project.”*

#### **About Tractebel**

At the helm of the Energy Transition, Tractebel provides a full range of engineering and advisory services throughout the life cycle of its clients’ projects, including design and project management. As one of the world’s leading engineering and advisory companies and with more than 150 years of experience, it’s our mission to actively shape the world of tomorrow. With about 5,000 experts and presence in more than 70 countries, we are able to offer our customers multidisciplinary solutions in energy, water and urban. [www.tractebel-engie.com](http://www.tractebel-engie.com)

#### **About DEME**

DEME is a world leader in the highly specialized fields of dredging, marine engineering and environmental remediation. The company can build on more than 140 years of know-how and experience. While the company’s roots are in Belgium, DEME has built a strong presence in all of the world’s seas and continents, operating in more than 90 countries worldwide with approx. 5,200 highly skilled professionals across the globe and with a versatile and modern fleet of over 100 vessels. [www.deme-group.com](http://www.deme-group.com)

#### **About Jan De Nul Group**

Design. Build. Connect. Jan De Nul Group shapes water and land. Worldwide. From complex offshore services for the energy sector, over large dredging and reclamation projects on the edge of water and land, to all possible civil constructions on land. Well integrated competences and investments lead to creative, sustainable and innovative solutions. In this way Jan De Nul Group meets the customers’ current and future wishes. To the future. – [www.jandenul.com](http://www.jandenul.com)

#### **About Soltech**

Soltech has been producing, in Belgium, photovoltaic panels for almost 30 years. Next to panels (with complete system engineering) for autonomous and industrial applications, Soltech evolved into a specialist in development and production of Building Integrated Photovoltaic (BIPV). Customized solutions and prototyping are our strengths. Soltech has a strong focus on R&D activities, continuous development of novel products and on improvement of existing ones by applying the most advanced technological solutions. <https://www.soltech.be/>

#### **About Ghent University**

Ghent University is a top 100 university and one of the major universities in Belgium. Ghent University is internationally renowned for its fundamental and applied research in marine and maritime sciences. It is the only knowledge institution with Blue Growth expertise, across six faculties (Bioscience Engineering, Sciences, Engineering & Architecture, Law & Criminology, Veterinary Medicine and Medicine & Health Sciences). Ghent University wants to expand its research activities within marine / maritime sciences at its Ostend Campus. <https://www.ugent.be/en/>

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