



Session 6 Recap: Community Ownership in Practice

Community Participation in Offshore Wind Developments: Insights from Research and Engagement Practice

Community participation in large-scale offshore wind developments ultimately hinges on a practical question: **how can local communities meaningfully share in the benefits of marine-based renewable energy projects while safeguarding their livelihoods and ecosystems?**

In this session of the **JustRE Alliance Community of Practice (CoP)**, participants explored how early engagement, participatory planning, and inclusive governance can shape more just and equitable offshore energy transitions.

Co-facilitated by **Holle Linnea Wlokas (INSPIRE)** and **Juanita Fonseca (JustRE Alliance)**, the session brought together perspectives from Scotland, Colombia, and Southern Africa, with contributions from **Lisandra Matos (SEI)**, **José Vega Araújo (SEI Latin America)**, and **Lesedi Komi (independent consultant)**.

Offshore wind and fishing communities in Scotland



Lisandra Matos

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Drawing on Scotland's experience as a mature offshore wind market, Lisandra highlighted the challenges of enabling coexistence between offshore wind developments and traditional fishing livelihoods.

Key issues include **temporary disruptions during construction, restricted access to fishing grounds, and cumulative impacts across multiple projects**. In response, mechanisms such as **Fisheries Liaison Officers (FLOs)** have emerged to mediate between developers and fishing communities, alongside **evidence-based compensation systems**.

However, the session emphasized that fishing is often tied to **deep cultural identity and intergenerational practices**, meaning that financial compensation alone is insufficient. Strong fisher associations play a critical role in representing community interests and enabling more effective participation.

Colombia's offshore wind roadmap and the COAST-Wind tool



José Vega Araújo

SEI Latin America

José presented Colombia's emerging offshore wind sector, with ambitions to reach **7 GW of capacity by 2040**, primarily in the Caribbean region.

Recent regulatory developments include the country's **first competitive tender for offshore wind areas**, as well as early efforts to embed **benefit-sharing**, such as a **Technical Skills Transfer Program** requiring developers to support local workforce development.

A key focus of the presentation was the **COAST-Wind (Colombia Ocean Activity Sustainability Tool)**, developed by SEI Latin America to support **sustainable ocean planning and offshore wind siting**.

The tool integrates **human activity data and environmental sensitivity analysis** to produce a **Marine-Coastal Susceptibility Index (MCSI)**, helping identify areas of higher or lower socio-environmental conflict.

Currently under development, **COAST-Wind** combines:

-  Ecological sensitivity data with human activity mapping (e.g. fisheries, marine traffic)
-  Stakeholder validation processes to ground findings in local realities
-  An upcoming **open-access interactive platform** to support scenario analysis and planning

By linking **technical planning with socio-ecological realities**, the tool aims to strengthen **Marine Spatial Planning** processes and support more informed and inclusive offshore wind development.

Emerging offshore wind opportunities in Southern Africa



Lesedi Komi

Independent Consultant (Botswana)

Lesedi reflected on early-stage offshore wind developments in **Namibia and South Africa**, where the sector is gaining attention alongside broader ambitions around **energy security and green hydrogen**.

While projects remain in the exploratory phase, key challenges include **fragmented policy frameworks, limited infrastructure readiness, and long project development timelines**.

From a social perspective, Lesedi emphasized that coastal areas are not just technical sites, but **lived landscapes shaped by livelihoods, identities, and cultural practices**.

Effective community participation therefore requires:

-  Early and continuous engagement
-  Culturally sensitive approaches
-  A shift from consultation toward co-decision-making

In this context, participation is central to **building trust, avoiding conflict, and ensuring long-term project viability**.

Key reflections

Across regions, several shared insights emerged:

-  **Early and inclusive engagement is essential** to prevent conflict and build legitimacy

-  **Intermediary roles**, such as Fisheries Liaison Officers, help bridge trust between communities and developers
-  **Data-driven planning tools** can support better integration of social and environmental considerations
-  **Benefit-sharing must be tangible**, including skills development and local economic opportunities
-  **Global lessons require contextual adaptation**, particularly in Global South contexts

Closing reflections

The session underscored that offshore wind's success depends not only on technical feasibility, **but on the social contracts that underpin project development.**

Embedding participation, transparency, and community agency throughout project lifecycles is essential to transforming offshore wind into a driver of **shared value and long-term resilience.**

