

International Regulators Forum Offshore Renewable Energy Subcommittee

Mid-year virtual meeting 2026

May 21, 2026

On 21 May 2026, the International Regulators' Forum Offshore Renewable Energy Subcommittee (IRFORES) held its third mid-year meeting. The meeting was chaired by Australia and attended by representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

Participants provided updates on developments within their respective jurisdictions, including regulatory frameworks, policy settings, and emerging challenges. While offshore renewable energy development continues to expand, progress varies depending on market maturity, infrastructure constraints, financing conditions, and energy security priorities.

Participants highlighted key trends across jurisdictions, including increasing offshore wind deployment, pressure on grid and transmission systems, and evolving regulatory frameworks. Some jurisdictions noted a shift in focus toward energy security and oil and gas production, while others reported strong political support and ambitious renewable energy expansion targets.

Safety risks and regulatory challenges associated with offshore renewable operations were discussed. Walk-to-Work (W2W) systems were identified as a key safety focus due to their growing use for offshore personnel transfer. Participants noted incident trends, potential underreporting, and challenges related to system design, risk assessment, and workforce competency. There was strong support for improved research, guidance, and greater international standardisation.

Emerging risks relating to procurement, quality assurance, and supply chain practices were also considered. Recent issues involving asbestos contamination in wind turbine components highlighted weaknesses in verification processes and reliance on supplier certification. Participants emphasised the importance of strengthening assurance practices at the design and procurement stage.

Common areas of interest for ongoing collaboration include:

- Walk-to-Work systems guidance and standardisation
- procurement and supply chain assurance
- incident reporting and data quality
- integration with existing offshore infrastructure
- regulatory approaches to emerging technologies, including hydrogen

IRFORES agreed to progress key initiatives, including establishing a working group on Walk-to-Work systems and further developing an opportunity statement on procurement and supply chain risks, with a view to forming an additional working group.

The IRFORES Annual General Meeting will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in late September 2026.