

ERL offers customers a drawing board-to-maintenance service

ERL is offering support through all phases of renewable project delivery, including solar and biomass schemes.

It will provide technical development backing such as assessment and advice on grid issues, wind resource, layout and environment factors for planning.

"ERL's input is to

make sure a wind farm will work and has the best chance of getting through planning," said technical chief Patrick Geraets.

Once a project has been awarded a permit, ERL will then deliver a contracting strategy to support financing.

"We work with Platina to do what is necessary to get a project

financed, providing a complete package of technical and commercial documentation to go out to contract for the construction of the wind farm," he explained.

ERL will then manage the construction phase – the easier bit, as Geraets put it.

"This is your usual project management but it is a task you have to

get right and we believe we bring a depth of skills and experience that can add value here.

"If things go wrong, which sometimes can happen, we are then able to get over the hurdles and deliver the farm to budget and schedule."

The final tool in the ERL kitbag is operations and maintenance. "We

currently manage Burton Wold, Garves and Winscales," said Geraets.

ERL is developing a number of wind and solar projects in Europe as well as building the 14MW Pates Hill wind farm in Scotland.

The company has just handed over the 7MW Winscales scheme to Mistral Wind.



In on wind's ground floor

Industry veteran Patrick Geraets (*above*) moved from offshore oil and gas engineering to the Wind Energy Group in 1988.

Here he worked on turbine design and project development until WEG was taken over by NEG Micon in 1998.

At NEG, Geraets was responsible for service within the group and development of turbine test sites such as those on Orkney. He also ran worldwide blade service and worked in sales.

Since Vestas took over NEG Micon in 2004, Geraets has been an independent consultant and was founding partner of the BVG Associates consultancy.

Platina masterminds birth of project delivery vehicle

Private equity fund manager Platina has set up Engineering Renewables Ltd (ERL) to build out a pipeline of European projects and spearhead a move into offshore wind.

The new engineering and project management company is the result of a merger between Your Energy Services and the former project implementation arm of the BVG Associates consultancy.

Former NEG Micon engineer Patrick Geraets, who brings 21 years of wind energy experience, heads up ERL on the technical side.

He has now left BVG, which he helped found.

Long-time Geraets associate and Platina staffer Emma Collins will run the commercial side. She also originally came from NEG Micon.

ERL boasts a core team of 12 engineers and managers with "90-plus years of experience in the wind industry, providing key technology



Mistral Wind has taken the reins of the now complete Winscales wind farm near Workington, Cumbria. The seven-turbine project was developed by Your Energy Ltd and features 850kW Vestas V52s. It is downwind of 11 existing turbines under the same project name but owned by Danish company KS Winscales. Photos: ERL

and project management skills", Geraets said

Platina has a global portfolio of around 1000MW of renewables projects backed by a fund of more than €300m under its management.

After building up an onshore wind track record it is now making a move offshore, bidding in the UK's Round 3 licensing exercise and looking at opportunities elsewhere in Europe.

With ERL, the fund manager can assess and

pursue offshore sites with the confidence that comes from having technical expertise on board, said Geraets.

"Platina is now looking seriously at offshore; they see it as a major growth area."

The finance house's core expertise is bankrolling projects rather than building them. "Its strength is in structuring finance to make projects work," explained Geraets. Platina set up ERL to sure it can deliver

its investments as efficiently as possible. It will hold a majority stake in the venture and Geraets will also be a shareholder.

He said: "Taking a project that looks good to delivery of power, on time and on budget, is a risky thing."

"Rather than leaving it to someone else, setting up an in-house but separate delivery company means Platina can reduce risk, and it should be cheaper."

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