Associated British Ports' energy transition: decoupling growth from carbon emissions.

In 2010, seeing the manifold benefits of on-port renewable energy generation, Britain’s leading port operator, Associated British Ports (ABP), set about identifying suitable locations on its 21 ports in the UK, to generate renewable energy for its operations.

ABP has taken advantage of its ports’ prime locations in relation to the offshore wind opportunities, to become a core member in the development of the UK’s offshore wind industry. But in addition to its important role servicing the renewables sector - ABP’s own operations are increasingly powered by green energy.

The first installation was a 10kWp solar array at on the port office at Fleetwood in Lancashire in 2011.

Since this first step, ABP has continued an ambitious programme to expand renewable energy generation across its port estates.

Annual targets were subsequently set to increase ABP’s total installed capacity and by the end of 2018, the company had installed 40 solar arrays and 3 wind turbines across its port network. Generating over 16.5GWh in 2018, these installations avoided around 5,000 tonnes of CO2e emissions.

This work and other energy and emissions-control efforts, including the implementation of an ISO 50001 certified Energy Management System (EnMS) in 2014, have seen ABP’s absolute carbon footprint decrease by more than 21% (Scope 1&2) in four years.
An ongoing focus on driving efficiency has guided the significant additional investment in more energy-efficient technologies, such as cranes, port lighting, new pilot vessels and a fleet of electric vehicles, all of which can run on the renewable energy generated on-site. This has led to energy performance improvements and the recertification to ISO 50001 in 2017.

But ABP is not resting in its efforts. Part of its ongoing energy and emissions focus is the continuing installation of more solar arrays, which will significantly increase green energy generation, further reduce climate emissions and build resilience within the port estates. It is hoped that additional arrays, being installed now, will significantly increase ABP’s annual renewable generation by another 40% in 2019.

As part of the wider strategy to minimise its impact on the environment, ABP will also continue the growth of clean energy by exploring energy storage and alternative fuels, among other innovations which offer considerable potential to reduce emissions in the supply chain.

Additionally, ABP is integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into its strategies and will measure future performance in relation to these SDGs, to better guide its contribution to these important global goals.