Decommissioning
of offshore wind farms:
how to overcome
conservation challenges
at a wind farm's end of life.

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Recommendations for promoting innovation and
policy improvements in sustainable decommissioning

What happens at the end of life?

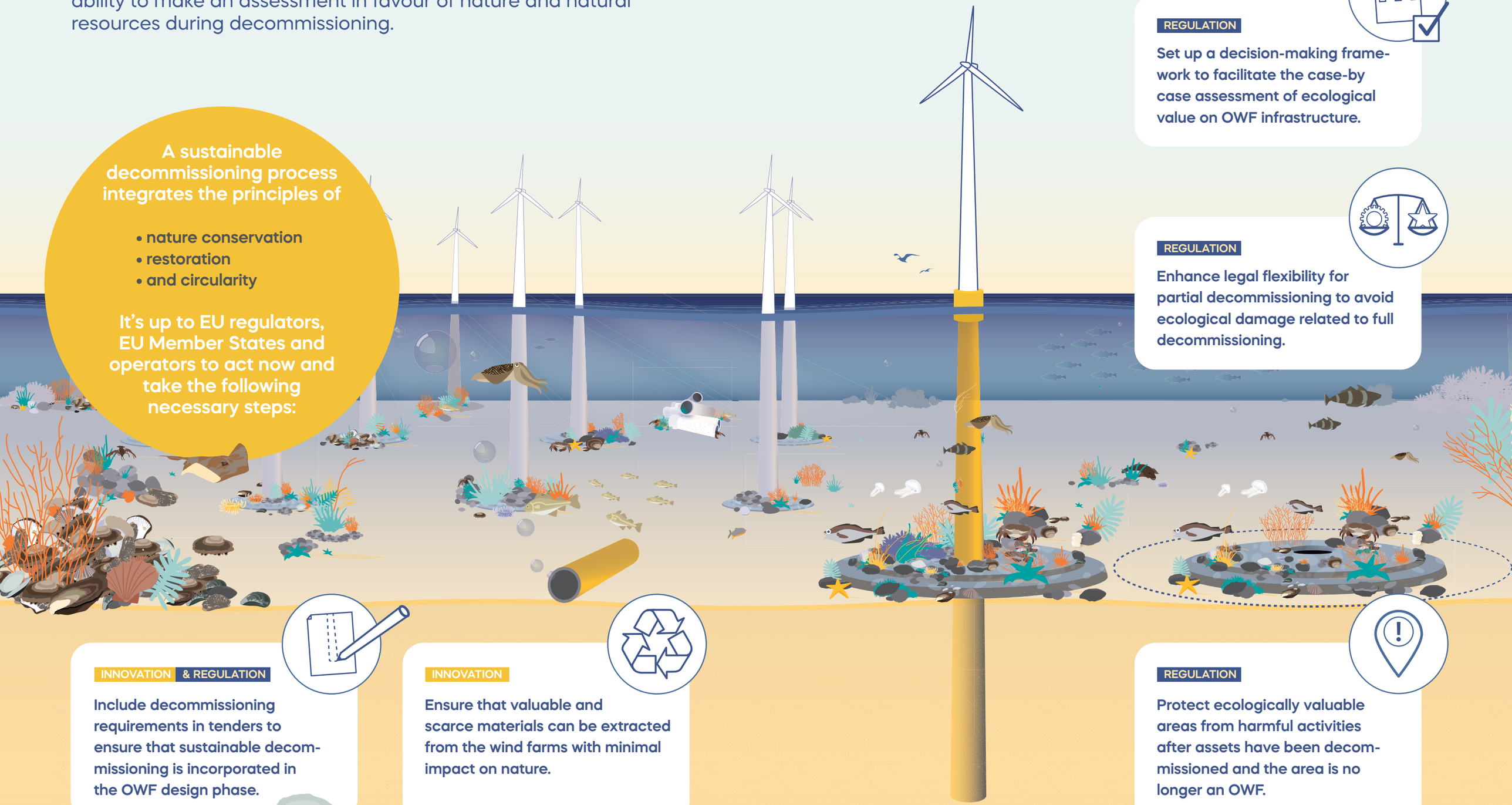
Offshore wind energy is developing rapidly and is becoming one of the main focal points for the generation of renewable electricity in Europe. The spotlight has been primarily on new wind farm deployments. **Decommissioning of offshore wind farms (OWFs) at the end of their lifecycle has been relatively overlooked.** That poses challenges for nature conservation and circularity.

Current challenges include a lack of practical decommissioning experience, the potential impact on local biodiversity and material use. In addition, the current legal framework limits the ability to make an assessment in favour of nature and natural resources during decommissioning.

A sustainable decommissioning process integrates the principles of

- **nature conservation**
- **restoration**
- **and circularity**

It's up to EU regulators, EU Member States and operators to act now and take the following necessary steps:



REGULATION

Set up a decision-making frame-work to facilitate the case-by case assessment of ecological value on OWF infrastructure.

REGULATION

Enhance legal flexibility for partial decommissioning to avoid ecological damage related to full decommissioning.

INNOVATION & REGULATION

Include decommissioning requirements in tenders to ensure that sustainable decom-missioning is incorporated in the OWF design phase.

INNOVATION

Ensure that valuable and scarce materials can be extracted from the wind farms with minimal impact on nature.

REGULATION

Protect ecologically valuable areas from harmful activities after assets have been decom-missioned and the area is no longer an OWF.