

World's First Large-Scale Tidal Energy Farm Launches in Scotland

Source: theguardian.com

Published: September 12, 2016



The Edinburgh-based Atlantis Resources hopes the project will eventually have 269 turbines and provide enough electricity to power 175,000 homes. Photograph: Mike Brookes Roper/PA

MeyGen tidal stream project leads the way in tackling climate change and providing jobs, says Nicola Sturgeon

Staff and agencies:

The launch of the world's first large-scale [tidal energy](#) farm in Scotland has been hailed as a significant moment for the renewable energy sector.

A turbine for the [MeyGen tidal stream project](#) in the Pentland Firth was unveiled outside Inverness in the Scottish Highlands.

After the ceremony, attended by [Nicola Sturgeon](#), the turbine, measuring about 15 metres tall (49ft), with blades 16 metres in diameter, and weighing in at almost 200 tonnes, will begin its journey to the project's site in the waters off the north coast of Scotland between Caithness and Orkney.

The turbine will be the first of four to be installed underwater, each with a capacity of 1.5 megawatts (MW), in the initial phase of the project.

But the Edinburgh-based developer Atlantis Resources hopes the project which has received £23m in Scottish government funding will eventually have 269 turbines, bringing its capacity to 398MW, which is enough electricity to power 175,000 homes.

Maf Smith, the deputy chief executive of the lobby group RenewableUK, said: “New technology like this will be powering our nation for decades to come.”

The first minister called on the UK government to end the uncertainty around subsidies for similar schemes, warning that a failure to do so risks causing irreparable damage to the marine power industry.

Sturgeon said: “I am incredibly proud of Scotland’s role in leading the way in tackling climate change and investment in marine renewables is a hugely important part of this.

“MeyGen is set to invigorate the marine renewables industry in Scotland and provide vital jobs for a skilled workforce, retaining valuable offshore expertise here in [Scotland](#) that would otherwise be lost overseas.”

Tim Cornelius, the chief executive of Atlantis Resources, said: “Today marks a historic milestone not just for Atlantis and our project partners, but for the entire global tidal power industry.

“It gives me enormous pride to have reached this juncture after 10 years of tireless work, preparation and planning by everyone associated with this project. This is the day the tidal power industry announced itself as the most exciting new asset class of renewable, sustainable generation in the UK’s future energy mix.

“This is an industry that is creating jobs and Scotland is the undisputed world leader of this high growth sector.”

Smith said the MeyGen project is a “major step forward in terms of scale” and provides “a great boost in maintaining Britain’s pole position” in the renewables sector.

“The fact that the first turbine was assembled at what was an oil and gas fabrication yard illustrates the opportunities offered by renewables,” he said.

“The official launch of the largest tidal stream energy project in the world marks a significant moment in the commercial development of marine power.”

Jenny Hogan, the policy director for the trade body Scottish Renewables, also highlighted the “potential of tidal generation to make a significant contribution to the UK’s growing need for clean electricity, and to deliver further investment and jobs to the UK”.

She added: “However, this is still an incredibly young technology, and future development is absolutely dependent on continued support from Holyrood, Westminster and Brussels, who have all played a vitally important part in the growth of the sector to date.”

Meanwhile Fabrice Leveque, the climate and energy policy officer at the environmental body WWF Scotland, said: “It’s great that Scotland is now home to the world’s first large-scale tidal

stream farm. It comes hot on the heels of [Shetland tidal devices](#) exporting power to the National Grid for the first time and the testing of the world's most powerful tidal turbine off Orkney.

“This underlines what we already know, that Scotland has 25% of the EU's offshore wind and tidal power potential.”
