

## **EMEC to take on new marine renewable development sites in Scotland**

The European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), in collaboration with local partners, has been awarded rights to areas of seabed in Harris, Islay and Orkney by The Crown Estate.

The Crown Estate has awarded EMEC the rights to manage two seabed zones: one for the development of tidal stream, and the other for wave. EMEC, the world leading test facility, already operates two wave test sites and two tidal test sites in Orkney, and will now begin consultations on how best to develop these new marine energy development zones.

Awarding rights to these zones will enable EMEC to manage the seabed in conjunction with its local partners and sub-let areas of seabed for developers to progress projects. EMEC has also been awarded seabed rights to progress a tidal stream project in the Stronsay Firth in Orkney.

The Crown Estate's latest wave and tidal leasing round saw developer organisations take on a total of six zones and five sites in UK waters to catalyse technology development in the emerging wave and tidal sectors.

To start the journey towards development in these areas, EMEC has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the West Harris Trust alongside Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and the Islay Energy Trust. The respective organisations will collaborate to manage the Harris Wave Demonstration Zone and Islay Tidal Demonstration Zone in consortia acting as 'Third Party Managers' for their individual sites.

Each consortium will now progress with a comprehensive consultation process to ensure that the needs of the industry, key stakeholders and the local communities are fully taken into account in the future development of the sites. Consortia will then submit applications to Marine Scotland to secure permission for energy devices to be installed.

The Islay and Harris development sites will complement EMEC's existing test sites, providing developers of wave and tidal energy devices additional options for demonstrating their technologies in real sea conditions. The sites will provide developers with a different set of marine characteristics, and may be used for single device testing and/or small array testing, with an overall site limit of up to 100MW.

The new Orkney demonstration site in the Stronsay Firth, south east of EMEC's existing tidal test site, will enable additional testing facilities for tidal energy devices, components, subsystems, arrays and array enabling technology.

Neil Kermode, EMEC's managing director said: "with more than 10 years of experience in wave and tidal testing at our existing sites in Orkney, we have seen 15 different companies learn from real sea experience, and feed that learning back into their next generation technologies. That in turn has created valuable momentum for the industry, but has also created a cluster of expertise and economic benefit in Orkney.

"There have been more marine energy deployments in Orkney than anywhere else in the world - growing the local supply chain as a result, and creating an estimated 300 jobs in work which is widely acknowledged to be world leading. Securing these Crown Estate agreements is an important step towards both expanding our facilities in Orkney, and

supporting developments in Islay and Harris. We think this will help pave the way for the development of these opportunities across coastal communities nationwide.”

The agreements will enable the consortia to explore and assess the potential of the zones for marine energy production over a 3 year period and to seek potential developers for the sites. If these early studies prove successful the consortia will aim to manage the area for up to 45 years, entering into long-term leases with suitable developers.

Philip Maxwell, Chairman of Islay Energy Trust said: “Local involvement in the development of local assets is critically important for island communities. We are very keen to be at the forefront of marine renewables development and the economic opportunities it offers. The consortium approach allows us to play a key role in developing the area sympathetically, taking account of other local interests through comprehensive local consultation.”

Councillor Angus Campbell, Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, also welcomed the news saying: “The production of electricity from wave energy has been an aspiration of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for many years now. While intransigence over the provision of an essential grid upgrade to the Outer Hebrides has meant that wave energy on the commercial scale will not be possible in the short term, we recognise the need for a demonstration facility to accelerate wave energy technology and, particularly device survivability in the aggressive maritime climate West of Hebrides. The Comhairle is therefore delighted to partner EMEC and West Harris Trust in this ambitious project and is particularly pleased at the level of community involvement achieved through the participation of West Harris Trust. As joint Demonstration Zone Managers, we will create the conditions which enable the testing and developing of wave energy converters so that, when our Grid upgrade finally arrives, we are well placed to contribute to Scottish, UK and European carbon reduction targets through the deployment of robust and efficient wave energy converters in the seas around these islands”.

Speaking on behalf of the West Harris Trust Roddy MacLennan, Director of its renewables subsidiary added: “This is a welcome opportunity for the community to be engaged in marine-based renewables development. We look forward to seeing the consortium establish a local office and surveying the area in the short-term, which will hopefully then lead to long-term development of the zone and major benefits for the local community and economy”.

Calum Davidson, Director of Energy and Low Carbon, Highlands and Islands Enterprise said: “HIE is delighted that EMEC, working with local partners, has been successful in this latest round of seabed leasing awards from The Crown Estate and this is just another step forward in maintaining Scotland's leading role in the development of marine renewables.”

Rob Hastings, Director of Energy and Infrastructure at The Crown Estate said: “By providing these additional seabed rights we are pleased to be enabling further technology development and commercialisation, which will be critical if the UK is to unlock its significant natural resources for wave and tidal current energy.

“This innovative approach to leasing the seabed sees us responding to market demand and introducing managed demonstration zones to give other organisations the opportunity to lend tangible support in their local areas.”

EMEC will be consulting with the wave and tidal energy market and local stakeholders on how best all three of these sites can be developed and the role that EMEC can take in fostering continued development of a global ocean energy industry in Scotland.

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. Established in 2003, the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) Ltd provides internationally recognised and independently accredited purpose-built, open sea test facilities for wave and tidal energy converters in the world-class wave and tidal conditions of Orkney, Scotland. It is home to some of the most innovative marine energy devices currently in development. EMEC also provides scale testing facilities for smaller scale device, technique and/or component testing, offers a wide range of consultancy and research services, and is at the forefront in the development of industry standards. The Centre was established with around £30 million of funding from the Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Carbon Trust, the UK Government, Scottish Enterprise, the European Union and Orkney Islands Council. [www.emec.org.uk](http://www.emec.org.uk)
2. The West Harris Trust is a community charity responsible for managing 7225ha of land on the west side of Harris. <http://www.westharristrust.org/>
3. The Islay Energy Trust is a community owned charitable organisation that aims to develop renewable energy projects for the benefit of the community whilst reducing Islay's carbon footprint. <http://islayenergytrust.org.uk/>
4. The Crown Estate is an independent commercial business, established by Act of Parliament. As manager of the UK seabed, The Crown Estate grants rights to organisations to operate on the seabed. However, any projects must go through the planning process, including public consultation, gaining consent from relevant planning authorities before development can commence. [www.thecrownestate.co.uk](http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk)