

Cornwall and Plymouth investing in their marine renewables future

The South West has announced a further investment of around £535,000 into its marine renewables industry, following the confirmation of funding for a number of projects to drive forward the sector. The funds will target marine renewable projects over the next two years aiming to assist the industry in innovation and commercialisation, as well as supporting the development of the local supply chain.

Newly funded projects include:

Offshore Renewables Delivery Programme (ORDP) is a £360,000 partnership, between Cornwall Council and Plymouth University, and managed by Cornwall Development Company. The funding includes a £50,000 investment from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership's Regional Growth Fund. It will create a marine renewables focused programme looking to de-risk and better resource the development pathway to commercialisation for developers. The programme also includes the creation of an industry-led forum, chaired by Mike Reynolds of Falmouth based A&P, which aims to develop the programme to offer support around deployment; technology development; supply chain and skills development; inward investment; industrialisation; access to funding and infrastructure – such as ports and grid.

Channel MOR project – A £103,895 project secured by Cornwall Marine Network via the Interreg IVA Programme (England-France) and funded by the European Regional Development Fund aiming to research, coordinate and grow supply chain and marketing opportunities for the marine renewables sectors of France and Cornwall. This project will initially provide a temporary full time coordinator for the Marine Offshore Renewables (MOR) Group which is based in Cornwall and covers the South West, and lead the development of the Channel MOR Group working with its French counterparts.

ESF Skills Support for the Workforce – A £72,000 project secured by Cornwall Marine Network which aims to carry out research to map the skills gaps, capacity and future requirements of the growing marine renewable energy sector in Cornwall.

And more investment is likely to follow with the recent securing of the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal, which could see £296 million pumped into the region over the next 15 years, and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly set to receive more than £500m of EU structural funds from 2014 to 2020. Both of these programmes have stated a commitment to developing growth in the marine renewables sector, along with other key economic priority areas.

Cornwall and Plymouth already have a globally competitive offer in marine renewables, as a result of the world-class test facilities available; including the Plymouth based COAST Lab, and Cornwall based FaBTest and Wave Hub. In addition, these facilities are supported by world leading researchers from the University of Exeter and Plymouth University.

Chris Pomfret, Chairman of the Cornwall Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership said: “Marine renewable energy is a global market opportunity for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and this latest suite of investments will support the sector’s growth ambitions and build on the considerable assets we already have in the region.

“These include world-class test facilities spanning tank testing to full scale array deployment, backed by a depth of research and an established supply chain that is already exporting its expertise to other regions and around the world.

“Our aim is to smooth the path to commercialisation for marine renewable energy developers and ensure that we maintain a significant competitive advantage in a sector that has enormous potential for our region.”

In addition to the funding announced today, and as further demonstration of the region’s commitment to this developing sector, existing South West Marine Energy Park (SWMEP) partners have committed additional funding over the next

two years to enable this strategic body to continue to work with the industry across the South West, and nationally, to create the right investment environment to make commercialisation of marine energy a reality.

Peter Mitchell, managing director of leading wave energy company Seatricity, which recently announced plans to build a 10MW array at Wave Hub off the north coast of Cornwall over the next two years, added: “We have been impressed by the South West’s focus and support for the marine renewable sector. It was one of the key factors for us when deciding to move our operation to Cornwall and look to operate off Wave Hub this year. The technology pathway presents developers with a number of different challenges and I hope initiatives such as those being set up in the South West are going to help smooth the transition from early stage development through to the commercialisation stage that we are approaching.”

Ian McFadzen, Plymouth University added: “Cornwall and Plymouth are a natural fit in the delivery of marine renewables resources. The region provides exceptional test facilities and research capabilities which we believe will result in commercial wave or floating wind devices being developed in the South West.”

A number of jobs are being created to work on these projects. In mid January, the ORDP will be advertising for its programme Manager based with Cornwall Development Company. Cornwall Marine Network requires a Supply Chain Development Officer for the Channel MOR project and a Researcher to undertake skills research in the Marine offshore renewables industry.

For further information please go to www.cornwalldevelopmentcompany.co.uk or visit our twitter account @invest_cornwall.

South West Marine Energy Park partners will be exhibiting and speaking at the Renewable UK Wave and Tidal show in Belfast in February 2014.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Regional Growth Fund

The Regional Growth Fund is a £3.2 billion fund designed to help companies in England to grow. So far £2.6 billion of funding has been allocated to support projects and programmes committed to deliver sustainable jobs and economic growth. Round 5 closed on 9 December and selected bidders will be announced in the spring 2014. For more information, please go to www.bis.gov.uk/rgf .

Cornwall Development Company

Cornwall Development Company is the arms length economic development company of Cornwall Council. www.cornwalldevelopmentcompany.co.uk

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