

Archived News

:: Wave tank tests lay groundwork for world energy first 14/01/04

Engineers are re-creating the awesome power of the North Atlantic at an Inverness research facility.

They are using a huge wave tank to model sea conditions at the Faroe Islands, mid-way between Iceland and Norway.

The work marks the beginning of studies which, over the next 12-18 months, will provide the groundwork for what is set to become the world's first large-scale, commercially viable power station powered by wave energy.

The Inverness study is being carried out by Wavegen, world leaders in harnessing wave power to generate electricity.

Earlier this year Wavegen announced a joint venture with Faroese electricity company SEV to develop wave power. The two firms have now set up a new company, SeWave, to take the project forward.

Chairman of the new company, George Lane, said: "The outcome of the work that's now under way will confirm the viability of bringing the two technologies together."

The work involves gathering data and information on every aspect of the project, which involves housing Wavegen's wave energy conversion technology in cliffs by using Faroese tunnelling expertise.

It includes sophisticated computer modelling and physical wave tank testing using data collected by re-creating sea conditions off the Faroes at Wavegen's

"The World Energy Council estimates that twice as much energy can be harvested from wave power as is currently used to supply the entire world's electricity demand. But, unlike coal, oil and gas, wave energy is sustainable.

"On the island of Islay, Wavegen already operates the world's first commercial-scale wave energy device that exports power to the electricity grid.

"Our joint venture with the Faroese is helping to make wave energy a commercial reality on a world scale."

The new power plant, using technology similar to that pioneered by Wavegen on Islay, could be generating power as early as 2006.

END

Notes to Editors:

The Faroe Islands are a self-governing region of the Kingdom of Denmark situated north west of Scotland.

In July 2003 the Boards of Wavegen and SEV agreed to form a joint venture company to oversee the initial design and engineering phase of the project with a value of £600,000.

The overall project, using a series of Wavegen's air turbine power generation modules, will be worth up to £7m and will form the blueprint for wave power stations in similar locations both in the Faroes and other parts of the world.

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state-of-the-art wave testing facility in Inverness.

The test facility includes a wave tank – 20 metres long by six metres wide by 1.5 metres deep – designed to re-create sea conditions suited to wave energy converters, which harness wave energy. The facility consists of a large tank holding 120,000 cubic litres of water, with wave paddles at one end and an artificial beach at the other.

Mr Lane, who is also Managing Director of Wavegen, said the outcome of the investigations now in progress would determine the specifications for the power station.

“This is one of the most exciting projects in the development of wave energy technology,” said Mr Lane.

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