

Crown Estate awards Four Demo Sites for Wind Farms

The Crown Estate has announced that four companies have been awarded offshore wind demonstration sites – and one of these is in the Forth estuary.

The awards follow an application process conducted in response to the UK offshore wind industry's need to demonstrate new offshore wind turbines and other technologies in the marine environment. These demonstration projects will play a key part in addressing both technical and cost challenges, to facilitate construction further from shore and in increasing water depths.

An agreement for lease has been awarded for each of two sites in England to:

- * Gunfleet Sands extension – DONG Energy Gunfleet Sands Demo (UK) Ltd, whole owned subsidiary of DONG Energy, for testing up to two next generation offshore wind turbines

- * Blyth Offshore Wind Demonstration site – National renewable energy centre Ltd (Narec) for a 100 MW grid connected site to test and demonstrate up to 20 next generation offshore wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

Exclusivity agreements have been awarded for two sites in Scotland to:

- * Methil Offshore Wind Farm – 2-B Energy to demonstrate 2B-Energy's two offshore wind turbines

- * European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre – Aberdeen Offshore Wind Ltd, a company owned 75 per cent by Vattenfall and 25 per cent by Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG) to test and demonstrate up to 11 next generation offshore wind turbines

and other technology in Aberdeen Bay.

The agreements for lease or exclusivity agreements enable the companies to take their proposals through the planning and consenting phases. Exclusivity agreements have been used in Scotland to allow the companies to begin initial survey and consultation processes for their sites while the Scottish Government conducts a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for offshore wind within Scottish territorial waters.

Rob Hastings, director of marine estate at The Crown Estate said: "Technical innovation is essential to cutting offshore wind costs. Awarding the four demonstration sites supports the growing UK offshore wind industry's efforts to demonstrate new offshore wind turbines and other technologies in the marine environment. We are pleased that this is another positive step to help further grow the UK's capacity for secure offshore wind energy."

In May 2009 The Crown Estate launched a process of engagement with industry on offshore wind technology demonstration site needs. Applications for sites were received in early December 2009. Due to the demonstration nature of the projects they are each limited to less than 100 MW.

Turbine manufactures and other technology companies wishing to demonstrate at these sites should contact the companies directly for more information.