

Floating windfarms....

First Minister Alex Salmond today met Statoil, a Norwegian based oil company, to discuss the possibility of developing the world's first floating wind farm in Scotland.

The company has identified two potential sites, one off the coast of Lewis and one off Aberdeenshire that could be suitable for a pilot park, testing the concept of their Hywind floating turbines further.

Statoil has already constructed a full scale prototype Hywind unit, anchored 10 kilometres offshore at Karmøy in Norway. The floating wind turbine is performing beyond expectations and has delivered power to the grid since September 2009.

The next stage of the project could involve constructing between three and five Hywind units to document the commercial potential of the concept.

Scottish Development International and Marine Scotland have been working closely with Statoil to support the current feasibility studies for such a project in Scotland, which could open the doors to the development of full-scale floating wind farms in deep water.

Statoil will be visiting Scotland again next month to investigate the potential of these possible sites further.

The First Minister is currently in Norway, undertaking a series of high profile Ministerial and industry engagements to strengthen economic and energy links with Scotland's North Sea neighbours

First Minister Alex Salmond said:

"Scotland has unrivalled marine resources and, with massive offshore wind potential, we are leading the way in the generation of clean, green energy from the sea.

“Our waters are estimated to have as much as a quarter of Europe’s potential offshore wind energy and we are perfectly positioned to develop the technology that will power this remarkable renewables revolution.

“We are working to maximise the huge benefits that offshore wind can bring to Scotland – estimated to be around £30 billion worth of investment and up to 20,000 Scottish jobs, while cutting emissions and delivering energy security.

“It is critical that we exploit every opportunity – a recent study suggests that harnessing just a third of our practical resource off our coast by 2050 would generate enough electricity to power Scotland seven times over.

“Scotland has is already pioneered the development of deepwater offshore wind with the highly successful Beatrice Offshore Wind Demonstrator in the Moray Firth which enabled the UK Round Three and Scottish Territorial Waters offshore wind sites to be offered in water depths up to 60 metres.

“The Hywind II wind farm project would see a Scotland-Norway collaboration push the boundaries of deepwater offshore wind beyond the 100m mark and open up vast areas of the world ‘s oceans to the development of wind energy for the first time.

“Today’s meeting with Statoil was very positive, building on Scottish Development International’s ongoing engagement with the company. This is exciting technology and I was extremely interested to hear more about the ongoing success of Hywind, and about Statoil’s future plans for the project.

“I also highlighted with Statoil the wider opportunities in marine energy through our #10 million Saltire Prize, one of the largest innovation prizes ever, which has been designed to stimulate global interest and advance the international development of wave and tidal energy generation.”

Scottish Development International interim Chief Executive,

David Smith, said:

“Scottish Development International is pleased to be working to secure further investment from Statoil into Scotland in the shape of their Hywind II floating turbine array project. The future global market for this technology will be enormous and this project offers the opportunity for Scottish and Norwegian companies to work together to develop a cutting edge system capable of lowering the cost of offshore wind development and delivering clean sustainable energy worldwide.”

A major international conference focused on maximising the multi-billion pound opportunities presented by renewable energy and other low carbon developments will be held in Scotland on September 28 and 29. Organised by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, with the support of the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise, the conference will provide a unique forum for Government, international finance, utilities and developers to engage directly on investment opportunities.