

Funding for turbines

A BRISTOL company has been awarded £4.27 million to test out an eco-friendly electricity production turbine system.

The Government has cleared Marine Current Turbines, experts in tidal stream energy, to test the experimental tidal turbine system in the mouth of the fast-flowing Strangford Lough in County Down.

The 1,000kw SeaGen tidal energy turbine has the capacity to generate clean and sustainable electricity for about 800 homes.

The project, which has been given a £4.27 million grant from the

by Paul McLennan
p.mclennan@bepp.co.uk

Department of Trade and Industry's technology programme, will be installed in the Strangford Narrows and connected to the national grid during the autumn of 2006.

MCT managing director Martin Wright said: "This is a tremendous step forward for tidal energy technology.

"Given the support of the DTI and Northern Ireland ministers for the SeaGen project, we now have a unique opportunity to

comprehensively assess the environmental impact of our technology, as well as showcase the commercial potential of tidal stream energy.

"The great advantage with tidal power is its predictability, certainty of 'fuel' supply and zero carbon emissions."

Northern Ireland Energy Minister Angela Smith said the initiative provided a unique opportunity to investigate the potential to generate significant amounts of clean, renewable electricity.

She said it was very important to

Northern Ireland and could make the province a world leader in such technology.

"Tidal turbine technology is one of the key renewable technologies that will help the UK achieve the carbon dioxide emission reduction targets and is a clean, sustainable replacement for ever more expensive fossil fuels."

The turbine installation is the second phase of a research project.

SeaGen was developed by MCT's engineering team from the smaller 300kw SeaFlow – also supported by the DTI – which has been running at Lymouth for the past two years.