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South West Regional Development Agency

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Round 3 offshore wind is good news for the South West

08 January 2010

The South West RDA and Regen SW have welcomed today's announcement by Gordon Brown and the Crown Estate, of the winning companies selected as development partners for the Round 3 Offshore Wind farms.

This development marks a step-change in the deployment of renewable energy in the UK and represents a great opportunity for the south west.

Two offshore wind farm zones have been awarded in the south west out of a total of nine nationally.

Swindon-based RWE npower renewables was the successful bidder for the 1500 MW capacity "Atlantic Array" in the Bristol Channel zone. This wind farm will be located 14 km off the coast of North Devon.

The smaller West of Wight zone, which is located off the coast of Dorset, has been awarded to the Dutch energy company Eneco.

By any measure these projects are huge. Together the south west zones are expected to require capital investment in excess of £5 billion. To win these leases both companies had to convince the Crown Estate that they had the capability and financial backing to deliver their projects within a given timeframe.

Both companies will now begin the development process, including stakeholder consultation and the environmental impact assessments needed to obtain planning permission.

Together the nine Round 3 leases are expected to add 25 GW of renewable energy capacity to the grid by 2020 and are a vital part of the UK's commitment to meet its renewable energy targets. Overall, the Round 3 programme is

expected to cost between £75 billion and £100 billion and, according to estimates made by the British Wind Energy Association and Crown Estate, could create up to 60,000 jobs in the UK.

The levels of investment and potential job creation are comparable with the expansion of offshore gas in the 1990s.

Claire Gibson, Director of Sustainable Resources at the South West RDA, said: "Congratulations to the winning companies. We look forward to working closely with them over the coming years. When complete these projects will provide electricity sufficient to meet the demand of over 1 million south west homes. This is fantastic news for the region and will help to consolidate south west England's position at the forefront of renewable energy production."

With construction expected to commence in 2014 and last over 5 years, offshore wind has the potential to create thousands of onshore and offshore jobs.

Johnny Gowdy, Head of Business Support at Regen SW, said: "In some previous offshore developments the amount of local economic benefit has been disappointing. But the South West, with its heritage of marine and engineering industries, is in a very strong position to reap the economic benefits of offshore renewables. We now need to work closely with RWE npower renewables and Eneco, and our south west businesses to ensure we have the capabilities, people and infrastructure to support these projects."

As part of this effort the South West RDA, Regen SW and the Crown Estate will be holding a Offshore Wind Supply Chain conference in Bristol on 9th March

For more details see:

http://regensw.eventhq.co.uk/uk_offshore_wind_supply_chain_conference

Notes to editors:

1. Planning and Consent. The award of the offshore leases does not mean that the wind farm developers have been given planning consent. The award of the

Zone Development Agreement allows the developer to begin the process of obtaining planning permission and the necessary consents to build a wind farm.

2. The attached [briefing note](#) provides more details about the two south west round three zones.

3. The South West RDA leads the development of a sustainable economy, investing to unlock the region's business potential. It is helping companies respond to the economic crisis and charts a course for recovery. More information can be found at www.southwestrda.org.uk.

4. Regen SW is the sustainable energy agency for south west England, receiving core funding from the South West RDA. Its mission is to speed up the transition to a low-carbon economy in South West England, by: unlocking sustainable-energy business opportunities; accelerating the uptake of the region's renewable energy resources; and championing effective energy-demand-reduction initiatives in the region.

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