



Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the NERC Marine Knowledge Exchange Programme's (MREKEP) newsletter. In case you do not know anything about the programme, we are assisting the growth of a sustainable future for the marine renewable energy sector, by developing stronger partnerships between the academic, public, private and third sectors. Over our first year we have facilitated a variety of activities including workshops and technology demonstrations with the overall objective of streamlining consenting and driving down costs for the sector. We are looking forward to sharing a whole host of interesting projects and activities that we are involved in through this newsletter that will be published three times a year. We will aim to inform the community of relevant marine environmental activities and opportunities within the sector. If you have any news or suggestions to add to our newsletter, please let us know!

Hot topics

Plans unveiled for Swansea Bay tidal lagoon

The reality of the world's first man made Tidal Lagoon took a step further with the release of plans for a power plant in Swansea Bay. The purpose built facility is a £650 million investment that will be capable of supplying Swansea's total domestic consumption. It will provide a predictable source of electricity, using both the ebb and flood tides, supplying energy 16 hours of the day. The tidal lagoon will be approximately 10Km sq and will be a "land attached" impoundment. It is planned that the tidal lagoon will be power ready and connected to the National Grid by 2017. The development company behind the project, Tidal Lagoon Plc, believes that it would be a significant opportunity for Wales to take the lead in the tidal industry in the UK.

Windfarm syndrome: it's all in the mind

A study at Sydney University has looked into the syndrome referred to as "windfarm sickness" which is currently linked with onshore windfarms. Sleepless nights and high blood pressure are two of the commonly reported symptoms of the illness. Public health scientists completed a succession of statistical analysis to determine if there was any correlation between health complaints and negative attitudes towards windfarms. Results showed that it was in fact a communicated disease that spread by claim that a person was sick due to the turbine blades. It was determined that the sickness was a placebo effect, where by believing in the syndrome would lead to an illness created by the individuals perception.



Holder: BMT Nigel Gee, Complete Offshore Transit for Turbine Access System (UK)

Stepping up safety

The current methods of boat transfer for maintenance of offshore wind farms are designed for optimal sea conditions. This means that during poor weather conditions time and money are lost when transfers become impossible. A joint venture from BTM and Houlder has developed a Turbine Access System (TAS) that allows safer transfer for crews between workboats and offshore wind turbines. The TAS allows crew to transfer safely from the vessel to the turbine via a lightweight, motion-compensated gangway, rather than traditional lock-on methods, which allows the vessel a degree of vertical movement. Safety is a number one priority for windfarm operators and if a problem occurs, the system and boat are free to move away immediately. The TAS allows for transfers to take place with increased safety even in rougher seas, which enables access in extended weather windows. The system has completed successful sea trials and is now in operation. For more information on the system please visit the BMT website.

Programme Priorities

The MREKEP programme currently has five science priority areas and we have been funding activities into these subjects over the past year. The current topics are:

- Uncertainty and risk
- Underwater noise
- Data access and management
- Cumulative impact assessment
- Cost effective monitoring

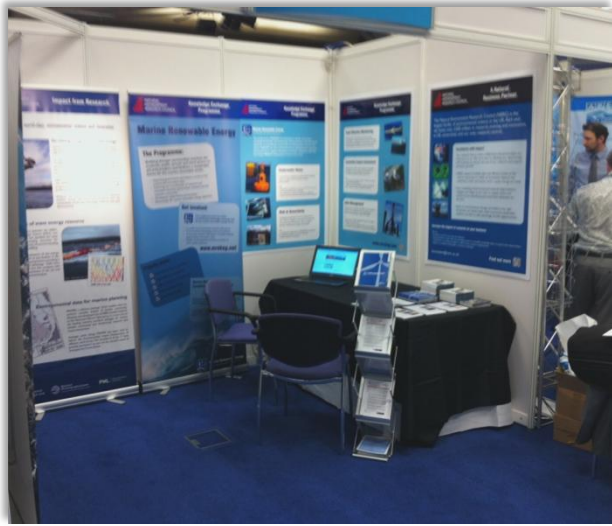
These priorities will be reviewed annually in the light of sector wide and MREKEP progress. For more information on the work we have completed in these areas please visit our website. We would like to get your ideas and thoughts on our current priorities. Do you agree that these are the presently the critical environmental topics for the sector to address? Do you have any particular views on the best route to address any of these subjects? We would love to hear from you. Please email your thoughts to

mrekep@nerc.ac.uk



For more articles of interest check out our monthly horizon scans available on our website! www.mrekep.net

Photo: Hoyle Windfarm Owen Ashton



Events

In February the team exhibited at RenewableUK's Wave and Tidal Conference in London. It was great to talk with others across the sector about the programme and opportunities for engagement. Dr. Annie Linley presented at the same event during the session "Environmental Research: Ensuring Knowledge Fits with Needs". She presented an update on the NERC-DEFRA Renewable Energy research projects, as well as, the current relevant MREKEP activities.

Next stop, Scotland.. you can catch us at All Energy exhibition, Aberdeen on 22nd and 23rd May. We will be at stand L57 throughout, please come and visit us to learn more about the programme and our activities. In partnership with the ESG KTN the programme will also be hosting a Remote sensing and Marine Renewables afternoon on the 21st May. For more information on the event please visit the All Energy website.

Current Funding Opportunities

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)

Open Deadline

A (KTP) is a three-way project between an academic, a business and a recently qualified person (known as the Associate). KTP works with over 100 universities, further education (FE) colleges, and research and technology organisations (RTO) across the UK, which covers a wide range of academic disciplines – including engineering, computer sciences, physics and mathematics, management, social sciences and the arts. For more information about KTPs please visit: <http://www.ktponline.org.uk/>.

Open call for NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows and NERC Policy Placement Fellows

Deadline: 10 June 2013, Interview dates: 16-18 July 2013

NERC wishes to award a number of part-time Knowledge Exchange Fellows (KE Fellows) and Policy Placement Fellows, whose objective will be to increase the impact of NERC-funded science through a programme of work of their own choosing. Applications for KE Fellowships and Policy Placement Fellowships should focus on accelerating and amplifying economic impact and improvements in the quality of life from NERC-funded research through working with business, NGOs or government bodies. For more information please visit:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/schemes/kefellows.asp>

Podcasters

MREKEP's communication associate, Kelvin Boot, attends various events throughout the year to produce podcasts and audio interviews. We have just uploaded the audio interviews that took place at the Low Carbon Research Institute (LCRI) in Cardiff. They include the outlooks of Dr. Ian Masters of LCRI and Prof. Jim Skea of RCUK.

NERC's Planet Earth podcast team paid a visit to the National Oceanography Centre in Liverpool to interview Judith Wolf and Nick Yates with regards to the current research they are working on, the full potential of tidal energy in the UK. This podcast, along with other relevant item, are available on the MREKEP website.



Richard Hollingham recording Nick Yates and Judith Wolf by the Albert Docks, Liverpool



MREKEP on the web

Visit www.mrekep.net to seek out literature, signposting to data, look up projects underway, find information on testing centres, technologies and much more. The site also allows you to find out about upcoming events, and access expertly horizon-scanned news from across the sector. We also hold information on funding opportunities. You can even sign up to receive updates and funding news. We'd love to know your thoughts about the site and its content. Please email mrekep@nerc.ac.uk to tell us whether you found what you were looking for.

