Marine Current Turbines™
Running with the tide of renewable energy

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World's first commercial-scale tidal power system feeds electricity to the National Grid

1.2MW SeaGen generates power from the tides of Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland

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The world's first commercial-scale tidal turbine, located in Northern Ireland's Strangford Lough and developed by British tidal energy company, Marine Current Turbines (MCT) Ltd, has delivered electricity onto the grid for the first time.

The tidal current turbine, known as SeaGen, has briefly generated 150kW of power onto the grid as part of its commissioning work, ahead of it achieving full capacity in a few weeks time. SeaGen's power is being intentionally constrained to 300kW during the commissioning phase, but once fully operational, it will generate 1.2MW of power, supplying clean and green electricity to the equivalent of 1000 homes.

Martin Wright, Managing Director of Marine Current Turbines said: "This is an important milestone for the company and indeed the development of the marine renewable energy sector as a whole. SeaGen, Marine Current Turbines Ltd, tidal power and the UK Government's push for marine renewables all now have real momentum. The marine environment poses a number of unique technical challenges, not least installing SeaGen in an extremely aggressive tide race, so we are delighted that Marine Current Turbines Ltd has delivered yet another *world-first* in this sector. It's a major technical break-through. Our engineering team have done a fantastic job."

Secretary of State for Energy, John Hutton said: "This kind of world first technology and innovation is key to helping the UK reduce its dependency on fossil fuels and secure its future energy supplies. Marine power has the potential to play an important role in helping us meet our challenging targets for a massive increase in the amount of energy generated from renewables.

"My department has supported SeaGen from the start, granting £5.2 million in funds to take it from the drawing board and into the waters of Strangford Lough. This, and our plans to double the financial support for marine technologies, is further evidence of our commitment to making the UK one of the most attractive places to invest in green energy."

SeaGen was installed in Strangford Lough in May of this year and commissioning work has been taking place since then, including the vital grid connection undertaken in partnership with Northern Ireland Electricity.

Martin Wright added: "SeaGen is the world's first commercial-scale tidal stream by a large margin. It is more than four times as powerful as any other tidal current system, including our own 300kW SeaFlow, the world's first offshore tidal device installed off Lynmouth on the north Devon coast in 2003."

Marine Current Turbines Ltd expect that the current testing and commissioning phase will be completed by the end of the summer and an official "switch on" will take place. Irish energy company, ESB Independent Energy, is purchasing the power generated by SeaGen for its customers in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Courtesy of Dr. I.J. Stevenson

Liam Molloy of ESB Independent Energy said: "We are on course to be the first company in Ireland and Britain to provide customers with electricity powered by tidal energy. This is a very significant breakthrough which underlines ESB Independent Energy's ongoing commitment to providing our customers with a range of renewable energy options**."**

Marine Current Turbines' next project, announced in February 2008, is a joint initiative with npower renewables to take forward a 10.5MW project using several SeaGen devices off the coast of Anglesey, north Wales. It is hoped the tidal farm will be commissioned around 2011/2012.

The company is also investigating the potential for tidal energy schemes in other parts of the UK, and in North America.

Notes to Editors

1. Marine Current Turbines Ltd (www.marineturbines.com) is based in Bristol, England. The company was established in 2000 and its principal corporate shareholders include BankInvest, ESB International, EDF Energy, Guernsey Electricity and Triodos Bank. With SeaFlow, the word's first offshore tidal stream device and SeaGen, the world's only commercial-scale grid-connected tidal stream system, MCT is the "first mover" in the development of tidal turbines and has a significant global technical lead in this field.

2. SeaGen works in principle much like an "underwater windmill" with the rotors driven by the power of the tidal currents rather than the wind. Strangford Lough has a highly energetic tide race and so is recognised as one of the main tidal "hotspots" in UK and Irish waters. Other areas are the waters off Anglesey, the Pentland Firth and the Channel Islands.

3. As a renewable energy company, Marine Current Turbines takes its responsibilities to protect the environment seriously. It has established a £2million programme to closely monitor the environmental impact of SeaGen, involving scientists from the Queen's University Belfast and from

the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) at St Andrew's University. The programme includes the presence of a Marine Mammal Observer on SeaGen at all times during the commissioning phase, when SeaGen will only operate during daylight hours, to observe how the Lough's marine life interacts with the turbine. There is also a sonar system monitoring seal movements, operated by SMRU, which has been partly paid for by the Npower juice fund.

4. The results of the environmental programme and other scientific, maritime and engineering studies will be utilised in MCT's future tidal projects in the UK and other parts of the world.

5. Northern Ireland Electricity has provided funding of £500,000 for the project as part of NIE Smart. NIE Smart (Sustainable Management of Assets and Renewable Technologies) encourages the development of renewable energy and energy efficient alternatives throughout Northern Ireland.

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