

Funding boost announced for South Pembrokeshire Demonstration Zone – the largest wave energy seabed lease in the world.

Speaking at today's Marine Energy Wales conference in Swansea, Economy Secretary Ken Skates said £324,000 of EU and Welsh Government funding has been approved for a technical and commercial feasibility study – a vital next step for developing the zone.

The news comes just a week after the £1.3b Swansea Bay City Region deal was signed which includes a £76m project to establish a marine energy centre around the Port of Milford Haven for marine energy development, fabrication, testing and deployment.

Leased from the Crown Estate, the South Pembrokeshire Demonstration Zone will enable technology developers to deploy and test multi-device arrays of wave energy converters, to generate up to 100MW of green electricity from the sea and act as a catalyst in the establishment of a centre for marine energy production in Wales.

The two phased study will be led by Wave Hub Ltd who are managing the site. The Zone, one of two in Wales, covers 90 sq km area of seabed located between 13-21 kms off the South Pembrokeshire coast near the Milford Haven Waterway.

Ken Skates said:

“The marine sector presents a very real and exciting opportunity for the Welsh economy and developers from around the world are showing an active interest in developing projects in Welsh waters. They recognise that Wales has one of the best marine energy resources and support structures to be found anywhere and the demonstrator zones will play a key role in attracting development and investment.

“The funding boost announced today also coincides with the latest report on the sector in Wales that has seen direct investment in marine energy in Wales increase from £45.5m in 2015 to £68.3m in 2017.

“To date €100m of EU funding has been secured to develop marine energy in Wales and increase the number of wave and tidal energy devices being tested in Welsh waters.

“This growing sector is already supporting supply chain diversity, creating low carbon jobs closer to home and playing a key role in creating sustainable regional economies in Pembrokeshire and

Anglesey that are based on developing their own prioritised and specialised sectors.”

He told delegates that Wales’ profile as a location for marine energy has increased dramatically in recent years with Marine Energy Wales hosting visits to the Port of Milford Haven from world leading marine energy companies from the USA, Singapore, Australia, Sweden, Holland, Ireland, Italy and Scotland.

He concluded by saying that supporting the development of more renewable energy projects, including tidal lagoons, is a Welsh Government priority.