

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Who is Menter Môn and what is Morlais?

Established in 1996, Menter Môn is a not for profit social enterprise which manages projects across north west Wales with the aim of adding value to local resources for the benefit of the community. Over the last 24 years, Menter Môn has developed relationships with communities, funders and partners which have resulted in the delivery of projects across a range of sectors with a combined value of £70 million from sources including European funding and Welsh Government. Further information on Menter Môn can be found [here](#).

Morlais is Menter Môn's tidal stream energy project. It aims to develop the Crown Estate's designated 'West Anglesey Demonstration Zone' located off the west coast of Holy Island.

Morlais has the potential to make Anglesey a world leader in terms of clean, renewable electricity generation, it's also an opportunity to ensure Anglesey can play a part in meeting future energy needs and tackle climate change.

### What is the West Anglesey Demonstration Zone?

Menter Môn secured a 45-year lease from the Crown Estate for the "West Anglesey Demonstration Zone" in 2014. Morlais was set up by Menter Môn to manage this lease and to secure the maximum local benefit for Anglesey.

The Zone is one of several around the United Kingdom which have been leased out by The Crown Estate in a bid to encourage and accelerate the development of technology in the tidal sector. Each of the zones were identified because they offer appropriate wave and tidal energy potential and access to necessary infrastructure. The Anglesey Zone was selected for its strong tidal resource. Menter Môn will manage and sub-let areas within the Zone to developers of tidal stream technology.

### What is the proposal?

The proposal is to develop the necessary infrastructure to enable tidal stream turbines to be deployed in the zone to generate electricity. It will provide a consented tidal technology demonstration zone specifically designed for the installation and commercial demonstration of tidal energy devices as well as providing a route to the distribution network. Morlais has the potential to scale-up over time to a generating capacity of 240MW of electricity – this is estimated to be enough for around 180,000 typical Welsh households. The project is phased and it will take several years to reach full capacity.



Morlais will own and manage the infrastructure including cables, grid connection and landfall substation, whilst developers will become tenants of Morlais, and pay for the right to use the site and equipment.

### **How will any potential environmental risks be monitored?**

Morlais will take a phased adaptive management approach to the deployment of tidal devices which will allow any environmental risks to be monitored and mitigated. This type of approach means installing a small number of turbines initially – so that they can be closely monitored for any impacts on marine wildlife and the environment. If monitoring confirms, as our assessments have shown that the impact is minimal, **only** then will further turbines be installed. However, if monitoring shows that this is not the case and that turbines are having a negative effect then no further devices will be installed until that was no longer the case.

By adopting an approach like this Morlais can monitor the impacts in a live environment and manage the development accordingly, providing an effective mitigation.

An Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan has also been submitted with our application which outlines the processes and safeguards that will be put in place to ensure the phased process can be managed by Natural Resources Wales.

In our assessments we have used extremely precautionary methods of assessments as per the SNH guidance (2016).

### **What type of devices will be used as part of Morlais?**

The project is about deploying different devices within the demonstration zone. This includes devices anchored to the seabed, in mid-water, as well as floating on the surface. As marine energy technology develops so will the type of tidal stream energy device that are implemented as part of Morlais.

We are working with developers of different types of technologies. For a full list of the partners we are currently working with please visit our website [www.morlaisenergy.com](http://www.morlaisenergy.com).

### **What are the likely community benefits?**

Menter Môn is committed to ensuring that the community will benefit from the Morlais project and believes that it represents a sustainable source of revenue that it can reinvest in local initiatives. Other community and wider benefits include:

- Morlais has the potential to create around 100 well paid jobs in the first ten years
- Help tackle climate change by generating clean electricity from renewable energy
- Improve local skills with apprenticeships and training opportunities



- Work with developers for guaranteed maximum local spend
- Create new supply chain opportunities for local business during construction and operation
- Menter Môn will support local businesses to secure contracts
- All profits will be reinvested locally through a new community benefit fund and through Menter Môn environmental and community projects

### **What will the visual impact be?**

Menter Môn is very aware of the importance of the landscape and seascape of Holy Island and the Isle of Anglesey to local communities and visitors. It has been fully recognised from the beginning that local seascape and landscape is sensitive and highly valued.

Proposals for Morlais have evolved as a result of consultation with statutory consultees such as Natural Resources Wales and Isle of Anglesey County Council. Our Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) identifies some potential impacts across certain parts of the development. However, we think that the tidal energy devices would not become a defining feature of seascape or landscape and would only affect a small aspect of open views of the Irish Sea.

We acknowledge that the visual impact of the project is likely to be a focus for discussion moving forwards, including the decision of limiting the majority of potentially visible parts to the southern portion of the Morlais Demonstration Zone.

### **What consents are required to develop the project?**

In order to get consent to develop and operate the Morlais demonstration zone, Menter Môn has applied to Welsh Government under the Transport and Works Act. An application has also been made to Natural Resources Wales Marine Licensing Team for a marine licence under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The consent application was submitted in September 2019. Both processes will run in parallel with each other. A decision is expected from Welsh Government later in 2021. No timescale has been noted as part of the marine licence process by Natural Resources Wales.

### **What is the project [timeline](#)?**

Having submitted the consent application during the autumn of 2019, a pre-inquiry meeting was held by the Planning Inspectorate on the 22 of November 2019. The event was to help them prepare for an inquiry by discussing procedural and other arrangements.

A public inquiry was held recently and due to COVID19 restrictions this was done entirely on-line. The inquiry came to an end mid March 2021 and forms part of the planning consent process.



To learn more about the timeline please click on the link above.

### **Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been prepared?**

Since securing the Crown Estates lease, the team has been working with experts and in consultation with Natural Resources Wales, the community and other interest groups in order to strike a balance between realising the site as a tidal energy zone and addressing any concerns early on.

As part of the process an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared, based on a scope of work agreed with Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government and informed by statutory consultees. Independent experts have also been commissioned to conduct detailed studies to understand the potential impacts of the project during all stages.

- Marine sediment and water quality
- Natural heritage, benthic ecology, marine mammals, fish and shellfish, ornithology, terrestrial and coastal ecology
- Seascape and landscape
- Shipping and navigation
- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Tourism and recreation

Subject to receiving consent the focus will shift to what's needed to implement the development. This includes looking at what needs to be done before the work starts, for example getting approval for construction methods and environmental management and monitoring.

### **What is tidal stream energy?**

Tidal streams (or flows) are created by the constantly changing gravitational pull of the moon and sun on the world's oceans. By placing tidal energy devices in the sea, it is possible to capture the energy of the currents to generate electricity.

Due to the predictability of the tides, generating energy in this way provides a reliable and dependable low carbon, renewable energy source.

Wales, and Anglesey in particular has some of the best tidal current resources in Europe.

Tidal stream energy is an evolving sector and has not reached the maturity of wind energy sector. Developers are keen to be able to deploy their devices on a commercial scale in zones such as Morlais.



Elsewhere Tidal stream devices are being tested and demonstrated individually e.g. in Orkney at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC). There are also other sites in Wales where tidal stream energy is being developed e.g. Pembrokeshire and off the Llŷn peninsula coast. What makes Morlais unique is that it is run by a third sector social enterprise for local benefit.

### **How can I get involved?**

Engaging an ongoing basis with the community and stakeholders is central to the way that Menter Môn approaches all projects. This has been particularly important for the Morlais project. An extensive programme of community consultation was implemented, the details of which were provided as part of the consent application. Through raising awareness, engaging in dialogue and sharing information about the project, there were opportunities for the public, stakeholders and interest groups to comment on proposals and to get involved.

Currently, as the consenting process is underway, the opportunities to formally comment are limited. However, if you have any questions, the Morlais team will be more than happy to respond.

You may also be interested in our Myth Buster available on our website or by clicking [here](#).