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Principle Power's 'floating turbine' gets new lift with U.S. help

Monday, 10 May 2010 08:19

By Jen Balboa

A Washington-based company developing offshore wind farm technology for deep waters is pushing forth with plans to build its demonstration project for floating wind turbines in Portugal.

The company, [Principle Power](#), said it has gained the support of important United States agencies as a consequence of a formal renewable energy cooperation agreement between the United States and Portugal in 2008.

Over the past months, these have included the Department of Energy and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

[Principle Power](#) has formed a joint venture with Energias de Portugal and A. Silva Matos to build a grid-connected prototype WindFloat off a Portuguese coast. The joint venture is called Windplus S.A.

This prototype represents the first phase of a three-phase project, which will result in a 150-MW commercial floating wind farm, Principle Power said.

The WindFloat technology is designed to be moored in previously inaccessible locations, where water depth exceeds 50 meters and the wind above the surface is at its strongest.

Unlike most offshore installations which need sea legs, the WindFloat system would be moored out to sea and left to float. The systems will be equipped with plates that will counteract ocean motion to minimize vertical and angular platform movement.

Currently, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory is working with Portugal's Wave Energy Center in examining WindFloat's hybrid wind and energy generation system, since the turbine design can also accommodate *wave energy*.

In October last year, Principle Power received \$750,000 in federal grants under the Energy Department's advanced water technologies program.

The United States-Portugal memorandum aims to raise the countries' cooperation in wave energy technologies. The memorandum was signed between the United States Energy Department and the Portuguese Ministry for Economy and Innovation.



In October last year, Principle Power received \$750,000 in federal grants under the Energy Department's advanced water technologies program. Photo by Principle Power

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