

## **COP26 President Alok Sharma declares full steam ahead for Eden's ground-breaking hot rocks project**

The President-Designate of COP26, Alok Sharma, visited the new Eden Geothermal site on Wednesday (19 May) to mark the start of drilling at the pioneering project.

Mr Sharma, who leads preparations for the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow this November, will see in place the 450-tonne capacity, 55-metre high rig drilling 4.5 kilometres into the Earth's crust.

His pre-G7 visit marks a major moment for the project, which is being delivered by Eden Geothermal Limited (EGL), a three-way partnership between Eden Project Limited, EGS Energy Limited, a leading geothermal development and consultancy group, and BESTEC (UK) Limited, affiliated with BESTEC GmbH, the specialist geothermal developer and drilling advisor.

The COP 26 President's visit comes ahead of the UK hosting a Climate and Environment Ministerial on 20-21 May as part of its G7 Presidency.

Ahead of his visit, Alok Sharma said: "The next decade is the most critical period for action to save our planet and the UK is leading by example as we build back better, and greener from the pandemic.

"Innovative technology, like that being used by Eden Geothermal to unlock sustainable, naturally occurring energy, is a fantastic example of being able to grow our economy through skilled jobs while cutting our emissions. I look forward to seeing this pioneering project moving full steam ahead."

Eden Project Co-Founder Sir Tim Smit said: "I am genuinely more excited today than ever before in my life. We stand at the gates of a Green Enlightenment, where technology, working with nature will enable us to live within the boundaries of our only planet home without discounting future generations.

"A clean energy future where energy drawn from the centre of the earth provides the baseload for that harvested from the sun and wind. A Future where Britain can become fully energy independent needs no longer be a dream. Brunel would be a quiver in excitement and Jules Verne would approve mightily."

Richard Day, Chairman of Eden Geothermal Ltd, said: "A lot of planning has gone into getting us to this stage on the project and it is thrilling to see the drill bit now turning in the ground. We are working with a range of parties, with public capital helping attract private capital, to provide tangible benefits for the whole community and clean, renewable energy for years to come."

The first phase of drilling is expected to take five months and when complete will then allow water to be injected down the borehole to be superheated by the hot rocks beneath.

The hot water will then be pumped back to the top up a pipe suspended in the same borehole, generating heat initially to warm Eden's world-famous Rainforest and Mediterranean Biomes, offices, kitchens and greenhouses. The same water will then be re-circulated to be superheated and used again.

Following the successful completion of this first phase the next crucial phase is to drill a second well close to the first to a similar depth of around 4.5 kilometres.

Once complete, the two well Eden Geothermal project has the potential to supply renewable heat to the Eden Project and neighbouring industries equivalent to the heat used by more than 35,000 homes, or renewable electricity to that consumed by around 14,000 homes.

Research has shown that when geothermal energy is developed, it will be capable of providing around 20 per cent of the UK's current electricity demand plus a vast amount of heating.

EGL has 12 full-time staff at present, eight of them engineers. It also employs around 60 drillers and 75 contractors from 24 companies from the oil and gas sector.

In Germany the geothermal industry has created more than 22,000 skilled jobs, and added €13.3 billion to the economy since 2000. The use of geothermal energy reduced the country's emissions by more than 1.7 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2017.

EGL is working with other experts and interested parties in the geothermal field to create a wider renewable and industry sector for Cornwall and for the UK.

To drill the first well, EGL secured £17 million funding from a combination of European Regional Development Fund, Cornwall Council and commercial funding from GCP Infrastructure Investments Limited, an investment trust advised by Gravis Capital Management Ltd.

The diggers arrived in autumn last year and despite some of the wettest weather seen in recent years the drilling apron, guide pipe, service roads, and water storage lagoon were made ready to take delivery of the drilling rig over the last few weeks.

A special viewing area has been established next to a public footpath to enable visitors to come and observe the project safely.

Ends

Caption: The Eden Geothermal drilling rig, with the Biomes in the distance.

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