Claims

1. A method of transporting a hydroelectric turbine system comprising the steps of:
locating a base of the system in a body of water such that at least a part of the base projects above the water;
advancing a vessel into a position above the base such that the vessel at least partially surrounds the part of the base projecting above the water; and
securing the base to the vessel for transport.

2. A method according to claim 1 in which the system comprises the base and a hydroelectric turbine connectable to the base, the method comprising the step of:
securing the turbine to the base prior to advancing the vessel into a position above the base.

3. A method according to claim 1 in which the system comprises the base and a hydroelectric turbine connectable to the base, the method comprising the step of:
securing the turbine to the base once the base has been secured to the vessel.

4. A method according to any of claims 1 to 3 comprising, in the step of securing the base to the vessel, raising the base against the vessel and securing the base to the vessel.

5. A method according to any preceding claim comprising the step of;
providing a structural portion of the vessel which is raised or raisable above the upwardly projecting part of the base or turbine.

6. A method according to claim 5 comprising the step of:
raising the structural portion from a first position, in which it forms an obstruction to the advancement of the vessel into position above the base, to a second position permitting the vessel to be advanced into position above the vessel;
advancing the vessel into position above the vessel; and
lowering the structural portion from the second position to the first position.

7. A method according to any preceding claim comprising the steps of:
locating the base in a dry dock;
flooding the dry dock such that the base is partially submerged before advancing the vessel into position above the base.

8. A method according to any of claims 2 to 7 comprising the steps of:
transporting the system to a deployment site;
releasing the base from beneath the vessel; and

allowing the turbine to pass downwardly through the portal.

9. A hydroelectric turbine system transport vessel comprising a body which defines a portal therein; and at least a portion of the body being raised or raisable above the waterline in order to permit the passage of a portion of a base or turbine of the turbine system beneath the body to be located within the portal.

10. A transport vessel according to claim 9 in which the body comprises a pair of hulls spaced apart from, and connected to, one another such as to define the portal therebetween, and at least one cross member extending between the hulls and defining the raised or raisable portion of the body.

11. A transport vessel according to claim 10 in which the at least one cross member is secured to one of the hulls via an articulated mounting which permits the cross member to be displaced between a first position, in which it extends across the portal and connects to the opposed hull, and a second raised position permitting access to the portal from the exterior of the vessel.

12. A transport vessel according to any of claims 9 to 11 in which the vessel is adapted to allow the base to be released and lowered away from, and/or raised under and connected to, the vessel.

13. A transport vessel according to any of claims 9 to 12 in which the base comprises a support which projects, when the base is connected beneath the vessel, upwardly through the portal.

14. A transport vessel according to any of claims 9 to 13 in which the portal is dimensioned to permit the support mounted turbine to pass downwardly therethrough.

Claims

1. A method of transporting a hydroelectric turbine system comprising the steps of:
locating a base of the system in a body of water such that at least a part of the base projects above the water;
advancing a vessel into a position above the base such that the vessel at least partially surrounds the part of the base projecting above the water;
securing the base to the vessel for transport by raising the base against the vessel and securing the base to the vessel;
transporting the system to a deployment site;
releasing the base from beneath the vessel; and
allowing the turbine to pass downwardly through the portal.

2. A method according to claim 1 in which the system comprises the base and a hydroelectric turbine connectable to the base, the method comprising the step of:
securing the turbine to the base prior to advancing the vessel into a position above the base.

3. A method according to claim 1 in which the system comprises the base and a hydroelectric turbine connectable to the base, the method comprising the step of:
securing the turbine to the base once the base has been secured to the vessel.

4. A method according to any preceding claim comprising the step of;
providing a structural portion of the vessel which is raised or raisable above the upwardly projecting part of the base or turbine.

5. A method according to claim 4 comprising the step of:
raising the structural portion from a first position, in which it forms an obstruction to the advancement of the vessel into position above the base, to a second position permitting the vessel to be advanced into position above the vessel;
advancing the vessel into position above the vessel; and
lowering the structural portion from the second position to the first position.

6. A method according to any preceding claim comprising the steps of:
locating the base in a dry dock;
flooding the dry dock such that the base is partially submerged before advancing the vessel into position above the base.

7. A hydroelectric turbine system transport vessel comprising a body which defines a portal therein; and at least a portion of the body being raised or raisable above the waterline in order to permit the passage of a portion of a base or turbine of the turbine system beneath the body to be located within the portal; wherein the body comprises a pair of hulls spaced apart from, and

connected to, one another such as to define the portal therebetween, and at least one cross member extending between the hulls and defining the raised or raisable portion of the body, and the at least one cross member is secured to one of the hulls via an articulated mounting which permits the cross member to be displaced between a first position, in which it extends across the portal and connects to the opposed hull, and a second raised position permitting access to the portal from the exterior of the vessel.

8. A transport vessel according to claim 7 in which the vessel is adapted to allow the base to be released and lowered away from, and/or raised under and connected to, the vessel.

9. A transport vessel according to any of claims 7 to 8 in which the base comprises a support which projects, when the base is connected beneath the vessel, upwardly through the portal.

10. A transport vessel according to any of claims 7 to 9 in which the portal is dimensioned to permit the support mounted turbine to pass downwardly therethrough.