

## Workshop 1 Marine Renewables and Environmental Risks – Current practices in pre and post consent monitoring

20<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Bilbao, Spain

### WORKSHOP CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

At a global level, there is an urgent need to develop competitive low carbon energy to meet increasing energy demand whilst reducing the impact of anthropogenic driven climate change. Offshore Renewable Energy (OER; defined as offshore wind, wave and tidal energy) has a key role to play as part of the overall energy mix of the European Union as Member States strive to meet their renewable targets. In order to ensure the timely exploitation of our oceans and future sustainable development of OER, the path from device demonstration through to commercialisation must be able to proceed as efficiently as possible.

Currently the environmental effects of OER on the marine environment are significant areas of uncertainty, while the scarcity of data on the environmental interactions of new technologies often means it is characterised as a threat. Subsequently project's deployment often requires extensive supporting environmental information which is costly both in financial terms and time taken to obtain consents. However, the environmental assessment based on risks evaluation has been recognised to help reducing costs and time taken to consent prototype and first iteration devices and arrays, considering the project scale, the environmental sensitivity of the site and the risk profile of the device(s).

RiCORE is a HORIZON 2020 funded project which aims to promote the successful development of the offshore renewable energy in the European Union by developing an environmental risk based approach to the consenting of marine renewable projects. This type of approach has been adopted in Scotland (the Survey, Deploy and Monitor approach – SDM) and its application/adaptation to other EU countries (France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) is under analysis during the course of the project activities. Whilst it is recognised that each of these countries have their own planning and development legislation, it is also important to realise that a number of elements of the consenting process are derived from EU legislation. This includes, for example, the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and Habitats Directive, which may result in regulators and developers having to conduct particular assessments and studies. Offshore wind, wave and tidal deployments will often require study of the same parameters to determine potential impacts but there can be variations in how these impacts are studied and monitored both before and after consent is granted. The adoption of a risk-based approach could ensure greater consistency in the application of EU legal requirements and, in the longer-term could have a positive impact on knowledge generated as well as costs.

The first step in understanding how a risk-based approach could be applied is to review the pre and post-consenting requirements which exist in those selected countries. Pre-consent



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requirements are interpreted here to include those conditions, information or requests needed to proceed with the licensing process, e.g. level and type of environmental baseline information and project description. Post-consent requirements are those conditions that are usually required as part of the consent granted, following project installation and construction, to operation and decommissioning, e.g. the level and characteristics of environmental monitoring and implementation of mitigation measures.

The objectives of this workshop are:

1. To identify the environmental requirements regarding pre (workshop Part I) and post (workshop Part II) consenting of marine renewable energy projects in EU countries to date;
2. To discuss suitable monitoring needs incorporating varying levels of environmental risk.

Part I of the workshop will focus on an analysis of pre-consent requirements (such as baseline surveys relating to EIA) in order to establish if monitoring needs are met and if certain methodologies are more appropriate than others. Post deployment monitoring will be addressed in Part II of the workshop where experience to date regarding post-consent monitoring requirements, monitoring and research techniques will be discussed. Information on costs and benefits from various stakeholder experiences will be debated and views on an appropriate level of environmental monitoring will be discussed. The outcomes of the workshop will be used by the RiCORE project team to report on the feasibility of adopting a risk-based management approach, using the Survey Deploy and Monitor (SDM) policy as an example.



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### AGENDA

#### Workshop PART I: Pre-consent requirements

**08h30 – 09h00:** Registration

**09h00 – 09h15:** Welcome and introduction to the RiCORE project. **David Gray** (Project Coordinator) – The Robert Gordon University, Scotland.

**09h15 – 09h35:** Evaluation of site sensitivity and information needed for baseline characterisation of a project site. Dr. **Ángel Borja** - Head of projects at AZTI-Tecnalia Spain.

**09h40 – 10h00:** Overview of pre-consenting environmental requirements across Europe. **Anne Marie O’Hagan and Teresa Simas** – University College Cork and WavEC Offshore Renewables.

**10h00 – 10h30:** *Coffee break and preparation for the first breakout session*

**10h30 – 11h30:** Breakout session: division of the participants into groups to consider relevant marine receptors such as marine mammals, birds, fish and shellfish, benthos/habitats, physical environment and other users (socio-economic receptors) to discuss and answer the following questions:

1. What are the current pre-consent monitoring requirements for site characterisation?
2. What effective methodologies and practices would meet the (recommended) one year site characterisation survey for pre-consenting?

**11h30 – 12h30:** Presentations of conclusions from each breakout group and open discussion among all participants (10 minutes per group).

**12h30 – 14h00:** *Lunch*

#### Workshop PART II: Post-consent requirements

**14h00 – 14h10:** Introduction to Part II. **David Gray** (Project Coordinator) – The Robert Gordon University, Scotland.

**14h10 – 14h30:** Survey Deploy and Monitor (SDM) approach developed in Scotland. **Finlay Bennet** – Marine Scotland.

**14h30 – 14h50:** Overview of existing post-consenting requirements across Europe: what is currently undertaken and/or planned? **Anne Marie O’Hagan and Teresa Simas** – University College Cork and WavEC Offshore Renewables.



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**14h50 – 15h10:** Breakout session: division of the participants into groups to consider relevant marine receptors such as marine mammals, birds, fish and shellfish, benthos/habitats, physical environment and other users (socio-economic receptors) to discuss and answer the following questions:

1. What are the current post-consent monitoring requirements for different receptors?
2. What post-consent methods / practices are likely to be more/less appropriate for the purpose of profiling risk under the application of environmental risk assessment approaches such as the SDM policy?

**15h10 – 15h30:** *Coffee break*

**15h30 – 16h30:** Breakout session continuation

**16h30 – 17h30:** Presentations of conclusions from each breakout group and open discussion among all participants (10 minutes per group).

**17h30:** Workshop summary, next steps and close.

