

## **Peter Strachan 7<sup>th</sup> May All Energy**

### **Slide 1 Title slide**

- Good afternoon
- Going to talk about the RiCORE project, which has recently been awarded funding from the EU Horizon 2020 program, and will run for 18 months starting back in January this year
- RiCORE is a collaboration between various project partners as I will go on to describe, but at Aberdeen Business School the project contributors are myself, Dr Ian Broadbent and Caroline Nixon, and the overall project is being coordinated by Professor David Gray

### **Slide 2 The Challenge**

- As we all know, the development of offshore renewable projects – wind, wave and tidal - can be extremely challenging
- In 2014 the European Commission published a Communication on Blue Energy and the action needed to deliver on the potential of ocean energy in European seas and oceans
- They identified 5 issues that require attention,
- [CLICK] Technology costs
- [CLICK] Transmission grid infrastructure
- [CLICK] Consenting procedures
- [CLICK] Environmental impacts
- [CLICK] And Grant and revenue support
- [CLICK] RiCORE project has been set up to look at two of these issues, namely consenting procedures and environmental impacts

### **Slide 3 An uncertain environment**

- And part of the issue at a national and EU level is the uncertainty created by a raft of directives and legislation surrounding consenting procedures and environmental impacts
- Relevant legislation includes:
- the Renewable Energy Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directives which govern the designation and protection of Natura 2000 sites
- [CLICK] This legislation aims to address climate change and promote low-carbon energy whilst maintaining biodiversity, protecting endangered species and habitats, minimising adverse impacts of development and protecting the marine resource base
- [CLICK] However, Uncertainty about the appropriate application of environmental legislation, can further prolong consenting processes
- [CLICK] Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) varies considerably in scope and intensity both within and across member states
- [CLICK] Different methodologies and timeframes are utilised
- [CLICK] And costly and time consuming surveys are required even for perceived lower risk technologies in sites which may not be of highest environmental sensitivity

#### **Slide 4 Project aims**

- So, in the face of these industry challenges, the aims of the RiCORE project are to ensure the successful development of ORE in the EU member states by reducing the cost and time taken to consent projects of low environmental risk, through the development of a **risk based approach to the consenting of projects**, which standardises the assessment of key components of environmental risk from offshore renewable energy deployment.

#### **Slide 5 Project partners**

- The project has brought together a number of partners from across the EU;
- [CLICK] RGU will be leading the project on behalf of the Offshore Renewables Institute, and
- [CLICK] Marine Scotland are also involved as project partners.
- [CLICK] From Ireland, we have colleagues at University College Cork's Beaufort Institute;
- [CLICK] in France we have E-CUBE strategy consultants;
- [CLICK] from Portugal we have Wavec, and
- [CLICK] from Spain we have members of the Azti Tecnalia foundation.

#### **Slide 6 Project work packages and leads**

- And each of the project partners will be leading different work packages to address topics such as:
  - Profiling consenting processes across different EU member states
  - Reconciling EU Legal Requirements
  - The application of Marine Scotland's Survey, Deploy and Monitor policy
  - Pre-consent survey optimisation
  - Post-consent and post-deployment monitoring standardisation
  - And RGU will be leading the overall project management as well as being responsible for the communication and dissemination of the project results

#### **Slide 7 Survey, Deploy and Monitor**

- I mentioned the Marine Scotland Survey, Deploy and Monitor policy and this is an example of the risk-based approach to consenting that RiCORE is to investigate and evaluate.
- The Marine Scotland Survey, Deploy and Monitor policy is based upon three main factors:
  - 1. The Environmental Sensitivity (of the proposed development location)
  - 2. The Scale of the Development; and
  - 3. The Device (or Technology) Risk.
  - [CLICK] Survey, Deploy and Monitor is a supplementary guidance document to the marine licencing manual

- [CLICK] And as I've already said, it's a Risk-based approach for taking forward wave and tidal energy proposals.
- [CLICK] It distinguishes between those proposed developments for which:
  - [CLICK] there are sufficient grounds to seek determination on a consent application based on a minimum of 1 year of wildlife survey effort and analysis to develop site characterisation preapplication,
  - [CLICK] and those where a greater level of site characterisation is required, such as larger scale projects, projects involving novel technologies or projects located in sites of greater potential environmental sensitivity

RiCORE intends to review the current practices and experiences of this policy in Scotland to date, and to evaluate the potential for adopting a similar approach for offshore renewable projects in other EU member states.

### **Slide 8 Project Objectives 1-5**

But this is just one of ten objectives that the RiCORE project aims to address, and the main project objectives are highlighted on the next two slides:

1. RiCORE will Compare and contrast the operational legal framework and its current application relating to ORE project consent across EU MS with ORE interests. This will include development of a set of metrics which will allow direct comparisons to be made between MS e.g. length of time to obtain a consent. These metrics can be applied to the outcomes of this project to allow a measure of effectiveness to be made compared with the known baseline.
2. RiCORE will Investigate the current application of risk based approaches (such as Survey, Deploy and Monitor) across EU member states with ORE interests, highlighting areas of better practice.
3. It will Investigate the costs and benefits of applying an EU wide risk based approach framework.
4. And will Develop a risk based approach framework, in collaboration with stakeholders that could be applied across EU member states with ORE interests.
5. The project will Develop implementation guidance for an EU risk based approach.

### **Slide 9 Project Objectives 6-10**

6. It will Follow a case study approach across EU MS to investigate the 'real life' application of a EU risk based approach framework under (4) applying the developed metrics under (1) to assess impacts and validate the approach.
7. It aims to improve the understanding of the environmental risks posed by novel technologies, and develop a standardised approach capable of being applied to various

technology types that will characterise the risk profiles of novel technologies in the offshore sector.

8. It will detail the potential impacts of all stages of ORE development on Natura 2000 designated sites under EU legislation and the implications this can have on development.
9. It will Develop data collection and data management principles with appropriate guidance to maximise the scientific knowledge produced from the application of the risk based approach 'Demonstration Projects' to support future research interests.
10. And finally it will promote the risk based approach and technology risk characterisation research through knowledge exchange activities in EU member states with ORE interests.

### **Slide 10 Workshop schedule**

The project is well under way, and after an inception meeting in Aberdeen in January we held the first expert workshop in Bilbao last month, with the next workshop due in Paris later this month. Further expert workshops will be held in Aberdeen and Portugal, with the final results and outcomes to be delivered in Brussels next summer.

### **Slide 11 Impacts**

We envisage a number of potential outcomes of the RiCORE project;

- Firstly, a commitment from EU member states with ORE interests to support the implementation of the risk based approach framework, providing conditions for viable procedural changes identified.
- The project will determine the legal and operational feasibility for an increased uptake of a risk-based approach in the consenting processes of selected EU member states.
- The project will propose a scientifically robust framework with clear data gathering and sharing principles to maximise the return from information generated by demonstration projects.
- As well as an increased understanding of the environmental risks associated with novel offshore renewables technologies.
- The RiCORE project will develop an effective and efficient risk based approach framework, produced in collaboration with stakeholders that allows the continued realisation of ORE potential in European waters.
- Ultimately leading to consenting processes that complement the aims of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of European seas and oceans.

### **Slide 12 Thanks and questions**

The project is now gathering data from the expert workshops, and if you would like further information or indeed would like to contribute towards the project please feel free to contact myself or Dr Ian Broadbent, and take a look at the project website for additional information

Thanks for listening