

Press release 1 (20/02/2019)

WESE project launch, addressing environmental concerns of emerging wave energy technologies

Funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and launched in November 2018, the WESE - Wave Energy in Southern Europe project aims to improve the current knowledge of the potential environmental impacts of ocean wave energy projects and consequently reduce the uncertainty about these impacts in order to better inform decision-makers and managers on environmental real risks and reduce environmental consenting across Spain and Portugal.

The WESE Consortium, led by the RD&I Basque center AZTI, includes a multidisciplinary team of partners bringing together technology device developers, Environmental Impact Assessment consultants, academic experts and data managers, aiming to involve the wider community of ocean energy key stakeholders from across Portugal and Spain. The project will run until October 2021 and specific details can be found in its recently launched website: <http://wese-project.eu/>.



WESE consortium, first meeting in Pasaia, Basque Country (Credit, AZTI) on the 26-27th November 2018.



The goal of the project will be achieved through different specific objectives:

- 1) Collection, processing, analysis and sharing of environmental data around wave energy devices currently operating at sea: Mutriku OWC plant, Marmok-A installed at Bimep and WaveRoller installed at Peniche, Portugal. These data collection and analysis aims to increase the knowledge on environmental effects of the priority research areas identified in the State of Science report, produced by the OES-IEA Annex IV team in 2016¹: risk to marine fauna from sound generated by wave devices, changes in physical systems (energy removal) and effects of Electromagnetic Fields (EMF). This strategic research that will be conducted during WESE to address knowledge gaps regarding these priority research areas will identify specific knowledge gaps and appropriate monitoring methodologies to prepare standardised monitoring plans that are going to be implemented on the sites under study.
- 2) Resulting data from above mentioned field works will be used to apply and improve existing modelling tools and contribute to the overall understanding of potential cumulative impacts of future larger scale wave energy deployments and to propose effective mitigation measures.
- 3) The development of country-specific licensing guidance will be carried out, including recommendations on good practices to streamline the procedures and identification of omissions and/or procedures that may require simplification to improve its management and integration. The application of an adaptive and risk-based approach to the consenting process of wave energy projects building on the findings of the EU funded RiCORE and SOWFIA project will be studied for both Portugal and Spain. Reports that could support authorities' decision making on impacts evaluation, monitoring plans and monitoring data analysis, will be produced in close collaboration with regulators and key stakeholders in each country and with the technology developers that are part of the project Consortium.
- 4) The WESE workplan also involves the development and implementation of Decision Support Tools (DSTs) for maritime spatial planning (MSP) for site selection, contributing to the identification and selection of suitable areas for wave energy development for promoters and investors; as well as to support decision makers during the licensing process through an integrated and evidence-based decision making as an essential process for sustainable, effective, and efficient maritime spatial planning (MSP).
- 5) All data, tools and guidance reports will be made available through a Data Platform to serve data providers, developers and regulators. The findings from this project will enhance awareness on relevant ocean energy environmental effects and increase knowledge on their evaluation and assessment to support consenting regimes.

¹ <https://tethys.pnnl.gov/publications/state-of-the-science-2016>

