

Portuguese group set to benefit from €9m EU marine renewables fund

‘MaRINET’ initiative opens access to marine testing sites across Europe

The Portuguese marine renewable energy sector is set to benefit from a new €9m EU-funded initiative to provide access to test facilities in specialist marine renewable energy centres across Europe. ‘MaRINET’ (Marine Renewables Infrastructure Network) offers periods of marine renewable energy testing at these centres at no cost to participants through funding from the European Commission. Wave Energy Centre is key partner in this initiative.

MaRINET supports testing of concepts and devices in areas such as wave energy, tidal energy, offshore-wind energy and the environment, to accelerate Europe-wide development of marine renewable energy. The funding seeks to remove financial barriers for the first time by enabling companies and research groups to access unique world-class European testing facilities outside their own country, which is generally not covered under national grant schemes.

The initiative, with at least four calls for applications, runs until 2015 and the first call for applications opened on the 1st of December. Potential users, who must work in Europe or a country associated to the European FP7 programme, are invited to apply to access this first call.



The network of research centres who are offering access to their facilities through MARINET

The network consists of 42 testing facilities at 28 research centres in 12 countries. By linking these marine renewable energy testing facilities and using an agreed testing framework, this initiative now provides a clear path to commercialisation by allowing users to seamlessly progress their device through each phase of testing. All participating centres will use common standards, conduct research to improve their own testing capability and provide training to enhance expertise in the field.

Wave Energy Centre is offering its Wave Energy Plant testing facilities at Pico Island. A significant number of European companies and research groups are expected to apply to use these facilities. António Sarmento of Wave Energy Centre, called on Portuguese companies and research groups to apply for funding to access European facilities through MaRINET:

“MaRINET offers a unique opportunity to access these world-class European test facilities in order to validate and progress concepts at any stage of development, and to ultimately harness the untapped renewable energy resources that are abundant around the European coastline. This is a great opportunity to advance marine renewable research testing and commercial development for both Portugal and European companies and research groups”, *he* said.

Interested groups should complete the online application form on www.fp7-marinet.eu. The closing date for applications is 29 February 2012.

Notes to Editors:

Pictures available.

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About Wave Energy Centre:

Brief Description of organisation

The Wave Energy Centre (WavEC) is a private non-profit association created in 2003 devoted to the development and promotion of offshore energy utilisation through technical and strategic support to companies and public bodies. Currently formed with 15 associated (industrial and public), willing to develop wave energy and recognizing the need for more cooperation both on National and International level. One of the major assets of WavEC is the 400 kW OWC Pico plant, in Azores. This plant was built in 1995-1998 with support from the European Commission. In 2004-2006 a set of relevant repair works were undertaken under the co-ordination of WavEC, in the scope of a national funding scheme. These tests accompanied the commissioning of the plant and since then WavEC has been responsible for its operation and maintenance. At present, the preparation of Pico OWC as modular real-sea air turbine test rig is envisaged.

Experience relevant to Tasks

Since the first presence of WavEC in the Pico OWC site within the PRIME-DEMTEC funded recovery project (June 2004), a series of significant improvements have been achieved, ultimately leading from a wreck to a functional OWC plant. WavEC has relevant experience on training exchange and Within the Wavetrain and wavetrain2 EU-funded networks, both coordinated by WavEC, two short courses were organised by WavEC team which included training on the OWC monitoring and performance evaluation. Further, WavEC is member of the Portuguese technical committee TC 114, Marine Energy – Wave and Tidal Energy Converters of the International Electrotechnical Commission.