

PRESS RELEASE

Atlantic Arc Blue-GIFT to support ocean energy demonstration

A €2.5 million project has been approved by Interreg Atlantic Area which will support ocean energy demonstration throughout the Atlantic Arc.

The 36-month Blue-GIFT (Blue Growth and Innovation Fast Tracked) project will implement a coordinated ocean energy technology demonstration programme that encourages longer term demonstration and technology de-risking across the Atlantic Arc regions.

Blue-GIFT will leverage the skills, processes and expertise developed in the Interreg NWE FORESEA programme to drive forward the marine energy sector in the Atlantic Arc.

Located in the coastal regions of Spain, France, Portugal, Ireland and Scotland, the Atlantic Arc region represents the areas of highest ocean energy resource in Europe. The development of ocean energy in these regions will help stimulate economic development whilst developing a domestic sustainable energy source to reduce carbon emissions.

The project aims to support a minimum of eight floating wind, wave or tidal demonstration related projects across the Atlantic Arc region.

The European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), based in Orkney, Scotland, will lead a consortium of four ocean energy test centres to maximise the use of existing infrastructure across the Atlantic Arc region.

A series of test site access vouchers will be offered to support testing of devices and subsystems at the following test centres:

- **BiMEP** (wave and floating wind test centre) in the Basque Country, Spain;
- **PLOCAN** (wave and floating wind test centre) in Gran Canaria, Spain;
- **SENEOH** (tidal and run of river test centre) in Bordeaux, France; and
- **WavEC** (wave and floating wind test centre) in Lisbon, Portugal.

Three FORESEA project partners are included in the consortium to take advantage of the technical expertise gained from the Interreg NWE programme to provide a game changing offering to push the sector forward across Europe:

- **EMEC** (wave and tidal test centre) will implement proven Interreg project management procedures to ensure smooth delivery while also leading on the test plan and verification activities in the project.
- **SmartBay Ireland** (marine and renewable test site) in Galway, will lead on the development of a series of open calls to select projects to be tested at the Atlantic Arc test site.
- **Centrale Nantes, SEM-REV** (wave and floating wind test centre) on the west coast of France, will lead on technology optimisation, helping to identify and resolve technology gaps through numerical and small-scale modelling.

The Blue-GIFT project is supported by a number of associated partners, comprising regional development agencies and energy agencies, who will sit on a steering group: Ente Vasco de la Energía (EVE), Spain; Cluster Marítimo de Canarias (CMC), Spain; In2sea, Portugal; Region Nouvelle Aquitaine, France; Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scotland; and Agence régionale des Pays de la Loire Territoires d'innovation, France.

Matthew Finn, Senior Business Development Manager, EMEC said:

“The FORESEA project has been a resounding success for the ocean energy industry in the North-West Europe region; this project is building on the learning from that project and spreading that success across the Atlantic Area.

“The cost of pre-commercial testing and demonstration for MRE is high and investors are reluctant to invest until the technology has been proven in the sea at scale. Blue-GIFT will enable both in-country and cross-border access, ensuring that MRE technology developers are helped to select the most relevant test facility to suit their specific test requirements.”

Ana Brito e Melo, Executive Director at WavEC said:

“The vast energy potential of the open Atlantic coastline can only be unlocked by extensive testing, which is the essential step for technology validation. Blue-Gift can give a substantial boost to our sea testing expertise in Portugal. Due to direct collaboration with the most recognised test centres in Europe, we will ensure state-of-the art procedures and explore the most appropriate focus areas for our test facilities.”

Marlène Kiersnowski, Tidal Test Site Manager at SEENEOH said:

“We are particularly happy to integrate such a high-level consortium where technology developers would benefit from the best expertise for getting their product closer to the market.

“Blue-GIFT will be particularly relevant in a context where EU governments are planning their renewable energy targets for the years to come. Marine renewables must be included in these plans to promote investments from the industry.”

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Editors notes:

About Interreg Atlantic Area

As part of the European Union’s Cohesion Policy, Interreg Atlantic Area supports transnational cooperation projects in 36 Atlantic regions of five countries: France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, contributing to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. The Programme’s overall objective is to implement solutions to answer to regional challenges in the fields of innovation, resource efficiency, environment and cultural assets, supporting regional development and sustainable growth.

With a total budget of EUR 185 million, which comprises a fund allocation above EUR 140 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Programme focuses on four main priorities axes and specific objectives.

For further information, visit: www.atlanticarea.eu