

# Acceleration Development of Innovative Artificial Reef System



ARC Marine, the company that invented a pioneering system for building artificial reefs, has received a Rapid Innovation Grant from Marine-i to enable it to progress to the next stage of the project. Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Marine-i is designed to help the marine tech sector in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, UK, grow through harnessing the full potential of research and innovation.

ARC Marine's unique system for building artificial reefs is called Reef Cubes. This patented invention is a robust and simple interlocking modular system that is ideal for restoring complex marine environments. It has a wide range of applications, but one of its most important roles is to help protect vulnerable fish stocks and other marine species whose habitats are at risk.

## Fisheries are now overexploited

Tom Birbeck, Director of ARC Marine, explains: "Much of our world's fisheries are now overexploited. Unless the current situation improves, there is a real danger that stocks of all the species that we rely on for food could collapse within 30 years. Our reefs can protect the aquaculture which many of these precious species rely on. These include scallops, crabs, lobsters and shoal fish – all very important commercial species."

Professor Lars Johanning of the University of Exeter, who leads the Marine-i team, says: "ARC Marine have developed an excellent strategy and business plan for their technology. This is a product that has applications around the world and is rich in opportunity. ARC Marine's Rapid Innovation Grant of £2,000 will enable them to purchase the diving equipment they need to carry out extended mooring and installation trials in preparation for a full commercial launch."

Tom Birbeck adds: "With the help and support of the Marine-i team, we have ambitions to become the industry leaders in marine eco-engineering and conservation projects, operating from our base at Penryn in Cornwall. In addition to the grant support, we have received outstanding advice and insights from the Marine-i experts and their associates."

## About Marine-i

Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Marine-i is a £9.3 million collaboration between the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, The Cornwall College Group, Cornwall Marine Network, Cornwall Development Company, and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult. It brings together key infrastructure and expertise to enable technology innovation in the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly's marine sector, which has been identified as an area of high growth potential by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership. Full details can be seen at [www.marine-i.co.uk](http://www.marine-i.co.uk).

## About The Marine Challenge Fund

This is a delegated marine grant scheme that has been specifically designed to drive marine sector research, development and innovation and help bring new marine products, processes, and services to market. Subject to eligibility, reimbursable grants of £2,000 to £150,000 are available for projects with growth potential.

Businesses can also now access Rapid Innovation Grants. These are 100% grants of up to £2000 to help accelerate their innovation. The money can be used to purchase services or equipment to help take their ideas or innovation to the next level. For more information see [www.marine-i.co.uk/services#grants](http://www.marine-i.co.uk/services#grants).

## About ARC Marine

In 2015, James Doddrell and Tom Birbeck set up ARC Marine, the first eco-engineering company in the UK specializing in artificial reefs. Tom says: "The only other companies operating in this field in the UK were using old technology and standard concrete. We wanted to create an innovative flexible artificial reef that broke the mold. Initially, we wanted to create an artificial reef that divers could enjoy in Torbay and that would enhance marine conservation zones in the UK. However, as we developed our Reef Cubes product, we quickly saw the global potential. There are only a handful of companies delivering comparable products anywhere in the world, so this really is an exciting area, rich in opportunity." Reef Cubes are the patented invention created by ARC Marine. It is a robust and simple interlocking modular system that is ideal for restoring complex marine environments. [www.arcmarine.co.uk](http://www.arcmarine.co.uk)

