â‚¬12.8M Awarded to Demonstrate Ocean Energy Farms

A new Interreg NWE project, Ocean DEMO, has been officially launched on 22 January. Ocean DEMO will provide funding to developers of marine renewable technologies to test their products or services in real sea environments, specifically targeting multi-machine ocean energy installations. This will allow developers to move closer to the market by demonstrating their technologies at full commercial scale. Ocean DEMO will release the first call for applications this year and devices will be installed from 2020 to 2022.

The transition from single machine to pilot farm scale is critical for the future of the ocean energy sector. Scaling up to multi-device farms will improve the competitiveness of the technology by bringing down costs across the supply chain. This transition comes with higher capital requirements and investors require a proven business case before they get further involved.

Ocean DEMO will ease the transition towards pilot farms by providing free access to Europe's world-leading network of open sea test centres:

- EMEC - European Marine Energy Centre, UK – Project leader
- DMEC - Dutch Marine Energy Centre, Netherlands
- SEM REV, France
- SmartBay Ireland

Open sea test centres

Ocean DEMO follows on from the highly successful FORESEA project, which provides free access to open sea test centres for single machine testing. FORESEA has helped prove the tremendous potential of ocean energy, with 19 technologies deployed and more to come this year. Examples like Orbital Marine Power, who generated over 3GWh of electricity in a year, proved that the technology works and can be part of a renewable energy mix in Europe.

Industry group Ocean Energy Europe will channel the project’s achievements and learnings to its international network of ocean energy professionals, ensuring broad dissemination across the sector.

"We’re delighted to be able to continue the work we started with FORESEA. We were able to demonstrate a wide range of technologies throughout the ocean energy supply chain thanks to Interreg’s support and the efforts of all the project partners," said Oliver Wragg, commercial director at EMEC. "With Ocean DEMO, we will be able to scale up technologies to pilot farm scale. This will reduce technical risks, minimise environmental impacts and improve the economic competitiveness of ocean energy production."

Ocean energy industry jobs

“We are very happy about Interreg’s steady support for ocean energy development in Europe. The ocean energy industry can provide jobs to 400,000 Europeans as well as 10% of Europe’s electricity by 2050. Ocean DEMO will be another significant step towards those objectives. Multi-device demonstration will strengthen the technology’s business case and attract investors, which will in turn allow the industry to scale up and bring down costs," said Rémi Gruet, CEO of Ocean Energy Europe. “A revenue support system, feed-in tariff, Contract for Difference or similar, is the only thing we’re missing to unlock the full potential of ocean energy in Europe. It is now up to Member States to create the right conditions for this industry to thrive.”