

Grant Scheme Making Waves in Marine Technology Innovation



In the UK, the new Rapid Innovation Grant scheme is now available through Marine-i and is attracting considerable interest from innovative marine technology businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, the new scheme is a stream of the Marine Challenge Fund. It offers 100% grants of up to £2,000 to businesses in order move their idea or innovation to the next level. The grant can be used to purchase services or equipment.

Matt Hodson, Marine Hub Operations Director at Cornwall Development Company, says: "We have launched the Rapid Innovation Grants to offer a straightforward way of unleashing the potential of business innovation and helping projects move to the next stage rapidly. They are designed to help

businesses make their first steps towards new product development and Intellectual Property creation, as they find inventive ways to meet market challenges."

Ocean Hydraulics in Redruth is the first business to receive grant funding through the scheme. Freelance engineer Mike Curnow has traded as Ocean Hydraulics since 2003. He has engineered a wide number of innovative products for the offshore sub-seabed site investigation and construction industries, both in the UK and overseas.

Alternative drilling method

Curnow has now identified an opportunity in the global offshore renewables market – a new way of anchoring sea bed foundation piles – which has received grant funding via the Rapid Innovation Grants scheme. This alternative drilling method is expected to bring benefits in safety and stability as well as be more cost-effective to implement.

In order to take his project to the next level, Curnow needed to produce an animated video to present the concept. Curnow says: "The £2,000 Rapid Innovation Grant from the Marine Challenge Fund was a significant contribution towards the costs and has allowed me to kickstart the project. The animation we produced has enabled me to sell the concept and get development underway."

As a result, Ocean Hydraulics is now working in partnership with Armada Engineering and a five-man design team is drawing up detailed designs for the product. Mike Curnow adds: "We now expect to have a working prototype ready to go to sea within a year and full commercialisation within two years. The support has been invaluable in helping us accelerate our innovation. I would urge other marine businesses to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity."

About Marine-i

Part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, [Marine-i](#) is a £9.3m collaboration between the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, The Cornwall College Group, Cornwall Marine Network, Cornwall Development Company and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult. (Falmouth Marine School is part of Cornwall College Group.) 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.