

Ocean power: EU funding promotes environmental monitoring of wave energy in Southern Europe



[1]

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The Atlantic ocean offers plenty of renewable resources, like offshore wind, wave and tidal energy. The benefits of using those resources are significant, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions to stimulating and diversifying the economies of coastal communities. The marine renewable energy (MRE) industrial sector has emerged to take advantage of the energy from the sea, and most of its early developments are wave and tidal energy generation.

The waves of the sea are a clean, predictable, indigenous and reliable source of energy. As a consequence, the European Commission supports the marine renewable industry not least with its [Strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy](#) [2] presented on 19 November 2020. Yet there are some challenges still hindering its full development, including uncertainty around potential environmental pressures and impacts.

The WESE (Wave Energy in Southern Europe) project, funded by the EU's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), aims at overcoming those challenges. The WESE Consortium involves key MRE stakeholders from across Portugal and Spain and is led by the Research Development & Innovation Center AZTI.

Mr Juan Bald, Head of Marine and Coastal Environmental Management of AZTI, explains WESE's objectives as improving the "*knowledge of the environmental impacts of these emerging technologies [...] reducing the uncertainty and facilitating the consenting procedures of future commercial deployments*".



WESE is processing and analysing environmental data collected around wave energy devices currently operating in real sea conditions to assess their environmental risk and impact. It is also developing guidance to ocean energy developers and to public authorities on licensing and planning of wave energy projects, including finding the most suitable deployment areas. They also help overcome the potential interference with other marine users.

When completed in October 2021, the project will have accumulated knowledge useful to overcome some of the key challenges of the European strategies on clean energy in the wave energy field, and delivered an important contribution to the furthering of the [European Ocean Energy Strategic Roadmap](#) [3].

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