

## ETIP Ocean Workshop: Facilitating consenting of ocean energy projects Main findings

### *Case Study 1 – Test site*

- Documents should be available to everyone
  - Because this will avoid confidentiality problems, a minimum of information is defined to be public
  - Most of that research is being funded by public funds as European Commission funding programs
- Test site managers have an important role in data transferability since they have access to the information that is being produced and archived.
- Test site managers could also have their own monitoring programs or support, together with other ONG support, developers on finding funding to support the development of monitoring programmes.
- Sharing of experiences can be supported by providing funding for environmental monitoring and investing in long-term monitoring to assess real impacts and trends that can support several developers.
- Regular contact with developers and relevant parties active in the test site could support knowledge-sharing.
- Data platforms are useful and there are several available for data sharing. However, raw data is not always useful and might not serve the purpose. For example, it would be more beneficial for regulators to have a report with conclusions or some explanation of the meaning of the results. Moreover, there is a need to harmonise the language that can be very complex.
- Although data platforms are available and accessible for all stakeholders, they are not regularly consulted (regulator perspective). For learning and sharing knowledge, advisory/working groups could be more productive. For example, developers could organise meetings to share data and experiences at regional level.
- Raw data should be stored in a central database (EU, national) and not scattered in different EIAs. They should also be formally adopted so that data could be transferred from one project to another. However, it is difficult to have a common platform due to the legal bounds that each country faces.
- SeaWave project was looking into the tools that are available for data sharing and how they can be used. The project will publish a report on the topic.



## *Case Study 2 – Pilot project*

### *How to make the process clear:*

- Right from the beginning, promote an open channel for communication between regulators and developers.
  - This will facilitate on the common understanding about the project timeline and the expected timelines to the consenting and with that address as soon as possible any constraint that may arise.
- Have regular meetings between regulators and project developers.
  - This could be intensified during critical moments of the process or when there are issues.
- It is important to clarify from the beginning:
  - What will be required by the regulators and other entities that are involved in the consenting process.
  - The developer has a clear picture of the project, the objective of the project and they make it clear to the authorities.
- To support all the points above, the existence of guidance notes or templates on requirements for each country are a key in the process. There are several being produced, OES Environmental is doing that to Wales and USA, WESE and SafeWave are working on that for other European countries.
- EU regulations could streamline national processes.
- Timelines for permits should be coordinated in order to avoid delays. One-stop-shop for all licences would facilitate the process for the developer.
- There are regulatory bounds that cannot be overcome or sped-up. An alternative solution could be to develop a legal framework for demonstration projects with very clear rules:
  - Emphasis on monitoring.
  - With a preliminary assessment of environmental impacts and a reassessment during and at the end.
  - Need to look at the EIA regulatory framework as it has specific conditions.

### *How to reduce environmental concerns:*

- It is important to identify and consult statutory and environmental bodies as early as possible in the process in order to address any concerns.
- The importance of monitoring should be clear to developers.
- Learn as much as possible from the demonstration projects that are being installed:
  - Build opportunities around the projects. Even if the environment monitoring request is only for specific descriptors, try to look for other funding opportunities that could complement the work to get more and additional information.
- Decommissioning should be considered already during the consenting process (Scotland case).



- Adaptive management approach would allow deployment while reducing concerns during the process.
- Developers should incorporate sustainability aspects already in device design (e.g. materials).
- Models could provide some support, however:
  - They are site specific, and data is still needed to validate them.
  - It is important to have acknowledgement from the authorities.
  - Define how to use them and the conditions that should be considered.