



## Project MERIKA Information Sheet

MERIKA (**M**arine **E**nergy **R**esearch **I**nnovation and **K**nowledge **A**ccelerator) is an ambitious initiative by University of the Highlands and the Islands, located in Scotland and the UK's outermost region. The project revolves around the concept of turning the University of the Highlands and Islands Faculty of Science, Health and Engineering into a reference research and innovation hub for all of Europe on the theme of marine energy.

The region is endowed with a unique environment that enables research to take place "where the resource is" for ocean wave, tidal and offshore wind power. Marine energy has the potential to meet a growing share of Europe's energy demands in the years to come.

Research is needed to improve predictability, forecast techniques and to provide understanding of equipment and instruments' interactions with the nature to better manage development processes within a well preserved environment.

The University of the Highlands and Islands already has a consolidated position within the international research community and MERIKA represents the opportunity for a leap forward to acquire and reinforce its status of "reference centre" in Europe.

The project will involve four of the University of the Highlands and Islands' s partners, the university's **Enterprise Directorate in Inverness**, the **Environmental Research Institute at North Highlands Collage UHI (ERI) in Thurso**, **Lews Castle College UHI (LCC) in Stornoway**, the Isle of Lewis and the **Scottish Association of Marine Science UHI (SAMS) in Oban**.

The project relies on cooperation with seven high profile scientific institutions\* in Europe and is centred on two main blocks of activities. One intervenes on capital (human and physical) and one builds capacity, especially in areas related to innovation and protection or exploitation of knowledge.

The first block consists of: a comprehensive mobility programme with partnering organisations, a recruitment plan responding to precise needs for multidisciplinary competences to efficiently link different research strands, and a crucial upgrade in infrastructure, to enable The University of the Highlands and Islands to function as the reference European hub for marine energy research.

The capacity building component is geared towards a better use of complementary funds, the reinforcement of international collaboration and the definition of a coherent innovation policy to enhance the University of the Highlands and Islands' s potential in its cooperation with industry and other stakeholders.

The project will also have components that focus on business and industry interaction and dissemination. It will provide the team with the necessary expertise and networks to make a valuable contribution to the development of marine energy, both in the United Kingdom, and potentially further afield.

The University of the Highlands and Islands plans to work with the following partners in this project:

Technical University Hamburg (TUH -- Germany), National University Galway (NUI - Ireland), Wave Energy Centre (WAVEC – Portugal), Imares Wageningen UR (Imares – The Netherlands), SINTEF (Norway), Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (HZG – Germany), University of Nordland (UON – Norway)

The project team has twelve posts. There are ten research and technical posts, three in ERI, three in LCC and four in SAMS. There is also a part-time project management and part-time knowledge exchange post combined in one full-time role, and a post for an administrative officer, both based in UHI's Enterprise Directorate in Inverness.

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