

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Department of the Environment continues to investigate marine renewable energy in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters**

The Gibraltar Parliament unanimously declared a climate emergency in March 2019. Echoing the Paris Agreement's priority to limit global warming to 1.5°C, Gibraltar's climate emergency declares ambitious targets that include a pledge to make Gibraltar carbon neutral by 2030. In keeping with this requirement, the Department of the Environment, Sustainability, Heritage and Climate Change (DESHCC) has continued to explore opportunities for marine renewables in Gibraltar particularly wave, tidal and current energy.

A collaboration between the DESHCC and the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) was initiated in July 2019 to continue investigating the potential for marine renewable energy solutions in Gibraltar. As part of this collaboration, representatives of the UHI together with the DESHCC deployed oceanographic equipment in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW) last week. This consisted of a wave monitoring buoy and current monitoring devices. These instruments will remain at sea for a minimum period of six months allowing data to be collected on waves as well as tidal and ocean currents. The instrument combination allows measurement of flow speeds and wave height, to inform the development of a computational model of the ocean currents surrounding Gibraltar. This will allow the Government to decide on whether we may be able to generate significant amounts of our electricity requirements at sea.

Dr Benjamin Williamson is the Lead Scientist for the 'Renewable Energy and the Environment' research theme at the Environmental Research Institute, North Highland College, a partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and the UHI Energy Knowledge Exchange Chair. Dr Williamson's research interests include marine renewable energy, environmental interactions, novel sensor platforms and marine resource assessment. Together with Dr Jason McIlvenny and DESHCC scientists and technicians, they have begun the initial stages of data collection towards a marine resource assessment for the Government of Gibraltar.

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Prof John Cortes said "COVID-19 is rightly taking almost all our attention at this point in time. But we mustn't forget that long term climate change is at least as big a problem for humanity. I am glad to see our collaboration with UHI continuing as we try and play our part in this. If these investigations are successful, they will be very helpful in reducing our emissions and improving air quality in Gibraltar".