



Press Release

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“MERS”, first Carnot institute for ocean research

The MERS Carnot Institute (Marine Engineering Research for sustainable, safe and smart Seas) was one of 37 Carnot Institutes to be granted official certification on 7 February for a period of 4 years. Its ambition is to boost collaboration between companies and research laboratories to develop sustainable and ocean-friendly maritime activities.

The marine environment harbours considerable natural resources and solutions to many societal, economic and environmental challenges. The MERS Carnot Institute will contribute to the development of maritime activities and the blue economy while focusing on their sustainability and the preservation of a healthy and living ocean.

Ifremer and Centrale Nantes head up the MERS Carnot institute with support from the CNRS and the Universities of Nantes, UBO and UBS. It brings together 13 internationally-recognised units and laboratories, present on all of France's coastlines.

The MERS Carnot Institute aims to support companies in the maritime sector (355,000 jobs for a turnover of €91 billion) seeking to play a role in ecological transition, by co-developing innovative technological solutions that respect the marine environment. One third of MERS activity is focused on providing industry with the cutting-edge knowledge and innovation needed to better understand and better preserve marine ecosystems.

Other skills are also on offer at the MERS Carnot institute, for example in geology, geophysics and geochemistry, biology and ecology, physical and hydrodynamic oceanography, offshore structural engineering and maritime transport engineering, serving different sectors in the maritime sector: the naval industry, the nautical industry, offshore, marine renewable energies (MRE), fishing, aquaculture and the seafood sector.

Collaboration between industry and public research will focus on:

- the performance of offshore structures, from sea surface (MRE devices, ships, aquaculture, offshore habitats, marine platforms, etc.) to deep sea (exploration devices, systems for the exploitation of mineral resources, etc.);

- minimising the impact of these constructions on marine ecosystems and their biodiversity, in particular with regard to projects concerning the environment and coastal development;
- the impacts of the marine environment on these constructions, in terms of resistance and durability as well as safety and risks in difficult, even extreme conditions (meteorological, geological phenomena, etc.);
- the emergence of new sectors dealing with ocean development: integrated activities (MRE-aquaculture), floating cities, sustainable fishing etc.

François Houllier, Director General of Ifremer:

“With the new MERS Carnot institute, Ifremer, Centrale Nantes and our partners will deploy a scientific and technological strategy of excellence, focused on innovation and performance, both regionally and internationally. Rooted in strong research partnerships with industry, the MERS Carnot Institute will contribute to the development of the maritime economy with a constant focus on preserving the ocean, a common good at the heart of the challenges of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).”

Marc Renner, director of Centrale Nantes:

“For Centrale Nantes and its partners, this certification is a guarantee of excellence which underlines the quality of our teams and our research platforms in ocean engineering. The THEoREM infrastructure, a network of marine engineering test facilities for Centrale Nantes and Ifremer, is already on the national roadmap for Research Infrastructure and is aiming to acquire a European standing. THEoREM will be a strong asset for the Carnot MERS institute - following the example of Centrale Nantes' recognized research partnerships and start-up creation - to boost innovation in the marine industry sector.”

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