

OPTIMAL ENERGY PRODUCTION OF INTERACTING WAVE POWER DEVICES

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The need for renewable energy is rising at light-speed. The increasing energy demand, the greenhouse effect and the approaching exhaustion of conventional energy resources, forces humanity to use energy more economically and to develop alternative energy supplies, a.o. wave energy. A Wave Energy Converter (WEC) converts the kinetic and potential energy in ocean waves into electricity. A single WEC, with a capacity comparable to a classic power plant (e.g. 400MW), is technologically impossible. Therefore arrays of smaller devices, placed in a geometric configuration or 'farm', are needed.

WECs in a farm interact and the overall power absorption is affected. An optimal pattern of WECs in order to maximise the power absorption is of major importance in the design of a wave farm.

At Ghent University, a mild-slope wave propagation model MildWAVE has been developed (Troch, 1998), e.g. to study diffraction patterns in a harbour (Geeraerts *et al.*, 2003) or to study the effect of short-crested waves on wave penetration (Caspeele, 2006). The phase-resolving model is able to generate linear water waves over a mildly varying bathymetry and to calculate instantaneous surface elevations (and velocity potential) throughout the domain. Wave transformation processes such as refraction, shoaling, reflection, transmission and diffraction are simulated intrinsically. The existing model is adapted by simulating the energy extraction and radiation of a WEC through sponge layers (Beels *et al.*, 2006).

The adapted numerical model MildWAVE, as presented in this poster, is used to study the optimal lay-out and electricity production of a farm.

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