

## Offshore multi-purpose platforms for a Blue Growth: a technological, environmental and socio-economic review

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### Abstract

“Blue Growth” and “Blue Economy” is defined by the World Bank as: “*the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem*”. Multi-purpose platforms (MPPs) can be defined as offshore platforms serving the needs of multiple offshore industries (energy and aquaculture), aim at exploiting the synergies and managing the tensions arising when closely co-locating systems from these industries.

Despite a number of previous projects aimed at assessing, from a multidisciplinary point of view, the feasibility of multipurpose platforms, it is here shown that the state-of-the-art has focused mainly on single-purpose devices, and adopting a single discipline (either economic, or social, or technological, or environmental) approaches. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to provide a multidisciplinary state of the art review on, whenever possible, multi-purpose platforms, complementing it with single-purpose and/or single discipline litera-

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March 28, 2020

ture reviews when not possible. Synoptic tables are provided, giving an overview of the multi-purpose platform concepts investigated, the numerical approaches adopted, and a comprehensive snapshot classifying the references discussed by industry (offshore renewables, aquaculture, both) and by aspect (technological, environmental, socio-economic). The majority of the multi-purpose platform concepts proposed are integrating only multiple offshore renewable energy devices (e.g. hybrid wind-wave), with only few integrating also aquaculture systems. MPPs have significant potential in economizing CAPEX and operational costs for the offshore energy and aquaculture industry by means of concerted spatial planning and sharing of infrastructure.

### **Highlights**

- A number of projects on multipurpose platforms, aiming to conduct multidisciplinary feasibility assessments, have been done.
- Despite them, there is a lack of multidisciplinary analyses for multipurpose platforms.
- This work therefore aims at reviewing state-of-the-art multidisciplinary analyses on MPPs, complementing them with the review of single-purpose, single discipline analyses when necessary.
- A review of technological, environmental, and socio-economic analyses of ORE devices and aquaculture systems is given.

*Keywords:* Multi purpose platform, multi use platform, marine renewable energy, offshore wind, wave, aquaculture, social science

*2010 MSC:* 00-01, 99-00

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Word Count: 8369

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Context

The marine environment represents a vast source of renewable energy. Energy is available in multiple forms - wind, wave, tides, currents, and temperature and pressure gradients. The successful commercial exploitation of these energy sources is perceived as a key target to be able to tackle the energy trilemma [1]: to provide secure, sustainable, and affordable energy. However, targeted installed capacities for 2050 (460 GW for offshore wind [2] and 188 GW for tidal and wave [3]) can be achieved only by lowering the cost of the energy produced, possibly through the combined extraction of more than one marine resource. In this regard, offshore wind farms and aquaculture have been proposed as suitable candidates for co-location/multiple use, in the recent past [4, 5, 6].

Of the various offshore renewable energy (ORE) systems, bottom fixed offshore wind turbines can be considered as commercially mature. On the other hand, floating offshore wind turbines (FOWTs) have been slowly evolving from concepts to reality [7], in recent decades. This upswing in the demand for FOWTs has been brought about by a combination of several factors - stronger and less turbulent offshore winds, reduced visual pollution and multi-use conflicts, for instance. However, other offshore renewable energy (ORE) systems, such as wave energy converters, still need to be further developed, in order to be considered commercially competitive.

In parallel with the energy trilemma, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that, by 2030, the demand for seafood will exceed the supply by 40 million metric tonnes [8]. With constraints limiting the possibilities for the expansion of inland and near-shore fisheries, offshore aquaculture has emerged as a viable alternative for increasing the global seafood production. Aquaculture is classified as offshore, if it takes place in the open sea, exposed to significant met-ocean conditions [9]. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by the open ocean, offshore farming offers several advantages - increased possibilities for expansion, reduced exposure to pollution from human sources and the potential of co-

31 locating infrastructure with ORE systems to reduce competition for operational  
32 space [10].

33 Thus, a proposed solution for a reliable energy extraction and aquaculture  
34 development, while addressing the questions of CAPEX, space limitation and  
35 operational safety could be the use of Multi-Purpose Platforms (MPPs). Ide-  
36 ally, an MPP is an offshore structure able to exploit the synergies between ORE  
37 systems and aquaculture systems, avoiding by design the conflicts arising from  
38 the close co-location of these systems. MPPs are expected to bring about sig-  
39 nificant cost reduction, by allowing multiple use of space and infrastructure,  
40 through co-located and shared technologies [11, 12]. MPPs would also pro-  
41 mote an optimization of the marine spatial planning, proposing an efficient,  
42 integrated, sustainable, and ecological use of oceanic resources through shared  
43 spaces and infrastructure [12, 13, 14].

44 Furthermore, for remote and island communities, not able to access the util-  
45 ities grids, an MPP may constitute the only secure, sustainable, and affordable  
46 source of energy [15, 16], food, and jobs.

## 47 *1.2. Aim, objectives, and structure of the review*

48 Despite a number of EU-funded projects aimed at assessing the feasibility of  
49 multipurpose platforms, also highlighting the importance of a multidisciplinary  
50 approach, it is here shown that the analyses available in the literature are (expect  
51 for very few cases) mainly focused on single-purpose devices, or at best hybrid  
52 wind-wave offshore renewable energy devices, and tackling the challenge only  
53 from a single discipline (either technological and/or economic, or social and/or  
54 economic, or environmental) point of view.

55 Therefore, the aim of the present study is to provide a state of the art review  
56 on, multidisciplinary technological, economic, and socio-environmental reviews  
57 on offshore multi-purpose platforms. This is to provide the ideal basement for a  
58 truly multi-purpose, multi-discipline analysis framework, for current and future  
59 projects looking at MPP systems. The scope of this review is limited to the  
60 most developed ORE resources - wind and wave.

61 While the terms MPP and multi-use of ocean space (MUS) are often used  
62 interchangeably, the distinction between the two has to be clearly understood.  
63 While MPP refers to a structure capable of exploiting the synergies between  
64 different ORE systems or aquaculture, MUS has a more general definition - ‘the  
65 joint use of resources in close geographic proximity by either a single user or  
66 multiple users’ [17] *i.e.*, not necessarily a single platform.

### 67 1.3. Overview of previous projects

68 Combining different ORE systems onto the same platform structure offers  
69 several benefits: increased, more consistent power production, thanks to the  
70 different patterns of different renewable energy sources, lower CAPEX-to-rated  
71 power ratio, shared balance-of-plant operations and maintenance (O&M) costs,  
72 positive dynamics interactions (e.g. wave energy converters (WECs) as addi-  
73 tional damping systems for the OWT with which are coupled, ensuring a lower  
74 response to waves), are some of the main technological advantages. Pérez-  
75 Collazo *et al.* [18] have also identified potential project and legislative syner-  
76 gies. During the past decade, several European projects have investigated the  
77 technical challenges of combined ORE extraction systems. The design concepts  
78 defined by these projects are explained in detail, in the following paragraphs.

79 The MARINA platform project [19] identified three designs of OWT-WEC  
80 combinations for further study - the spar torus combination (STC), the semi-  
81 submersible flap combination (SFC), and the ‘OWC’ array with a wind turbine.  
82 In the STC [19], the NREL 5-MW OWT [20] is supported on a spar, and the  
83 torus (an axisymmetric point absorber that operates mainly in heave) extracts  
84 wave energy by moving along the spar, by means of a hydraulic power take-  
85 off (PTO) system. The SFC [21] comprises a semi-submersible floater with  
86 four columns (one at the centre and three at the sides) connected by means of  
87 pontoons. The central column supports the turbine and rotating flaps hinged at  
88 the pontoons capture the wave energy, making use of a hydraulic PTO system to  
89 generate electricity. The OWC array consists of a large floater having multiple  
90 WECs and supporting a single wind turbine [22].

91 The ORECCA project [23] classified combined platforms into offshore hy-  
92 brids and energy islands. The former refers to a combination of wind and wave  
93 (or tide) energy devices, while the latter denotes large multi-purpose platforms  
94 capable of utilizing multiple sources of ocean energy, possibly in combination  
95 with an offshore harbour [24].

96 A modular approach for multi-purpose platforms, combining the attributes  
97 of transport, energy, aquaculture and leisure (TEAL) was proposed by the TRO-  
98 POS project [25]. Different TEAL modules can be accommodated around a  
99 central unit to cater to the local socio-economic and environmental conditions,  
100 thus affording flexibility to the concept.

101 The H2OCEAN [26] project proposed multi-purpose platforms aimed at the  
102 production of hydrogen, perceived as the future energy vector. A farm of hybrid  
103 floating wind-wave energy devices, coupling a 5MW H-type vertical axis wind  
104 turbine (VAWT) with a WEC, provides electricity to a central platform, where  
105 the energy is transformed into hydrogen, and to an aquaculture system.

106 The MERMAID project [27] explored the possibility of using innovative  
107 multi-purpose platforms for combining food (aquaculture) and energy produc-  
108 tion, on the basis of site-specific environmental challenges.

109 The W2Power concept supports two WT's on a triangular platform, with  
110 WEC's attached in arrays along the 3 sides [28]. Each platform has been en-  
111 visaged to reach a rated power around 10 MW. The WindWaveFloat intends  
112 to equip the WindFloat (a semi-submersible type FOWT structure with three  
113 columns) with different types of WECS, such as OWC's and point absorbers [29].  
114 The addition of the WEC's were observed to have minimal influence on the mo-  
115 tion of the support structure.

116 The Poseidon, developed by Floating Power Plant A/S, is a semi-submersible  
117 platform for combined wind-wave energy extraction, which can support 10 float-  
118 ing wave energy absorbers (3 kW) and 3 wind turbines (11 kW) [30]. The Wave  
119 Dragon, a multi-MW overtopping WEC, has been a pioneer in the field of wave  
120 energy generation [31]. The Wave Dragon is also capable of supporting two  
121 2.3 MW wind turbines, with significant savings in the levelized cost of energy

122 (LCoE) [32].

123 *1.3.1. MPP: comparison of functionality*

124 The functionality of the MPP concepts discussed above are compared in  
125 Table 1. It is noticeable how the majority of the platforms are hybrid wind-wave  
126 energy devices, with only a few including aquaculture systems. Furthermore, it  
127 may be noted that majority of the concepts are publicly funded and subsidized,  
128 thus highlighting the novelty of the platforms. Also, the rated power varies from  
129  $10^2$  to  $10^4$  W, reflecting the potential variety of applications and markets of the  
130 MPP concepts.

Table 1: MPP concepts - Comparison of functionality

No.	Platform	Wind	Wave	Aquaculture	Solar
1	Sea Star Spar [33]	✓		✓	
2	STC [19]	✓	✓		
3	W2Power [28]	✓	✓		
4	SFC [21]	✓	✓		
5	OWC Array [22]	✓	✓		
6	Poseidon [30]	✓	✓		
7	TROPOS [34]	✓		✓	✓
8	MERMAID [35]	✓	✓		
9	WT - feed barge[36]	✓		✓	✓
10	Ocean Farm1 [37]			✓	
11	Wave Dragon [31]	✓	✓		

131 Over 200 scientific articles have been accessed as part of the present re-  
132 view paper, with most of them ( $\sim 70\%$ ) published during or after 2010. The  
133 methodology to organise this multidisciplinary review has been the following the  
134 selected papers were initially classified on the basis of the discipline they rep-  
135 resent - technological (section 2), environmental (section 3) and socioeconomic  
136 (section 4). Further, the literature reviewed in each section has been subdivided  
137 with respect to the resource they exploit - ORE (wind, wave or combined) or  
138 aquaculture. As overarching topic, including aspects from different disciplines,

139 the studies related to MPPs and risk are reviewed in section 5. An overview and  
140 discussion of the literature reviewed is presented in section 6, with conclusions  
141 provided in section 7.

## 142 **2. Technological aspects**

### 143 *2.1. ORE*

144 The following subsections discuss the technological aspects of combined ORE  
145 systems, where the outcomes of the previous projects have been highlighted.  
146 While most concepts from these projects have been subjected to numerical mod-  
147 elling studies, a few of them have reached the stage of experimental testing as  
148 well. The approaches followed in numerical modelling and experimental testing  
149 have been mentioned in detail. Aquaculture systems (both standalone and in-  
150 tegrated with ORE devices) have also been discussed. A review of the control  
151 aspects of MPPs is also presented in this section.

#### 152 *2.1.1. Model of dynamics: numerical and experimental methods*

153 Several MPP systems described in Section 2.1 have been subjected to nu-  
154 merical modelling. The SFC and the STC have been numerically analyzed in  
155 the time domain [38, 39], by coupling the SIMO [40] and RIFLEX [41] software.  
156 SIMO is used to compute the hydrodynamic loads on rigid floating bodies.  
157 RIFLEX is a nonlinear program for modelling wave loads on slender struc-  
158 tures, like mooring lines using the Morison equation, and aerodynamic loads  
159 on wind turbine blades using blade element momentum (BEM) theory. The  
160 models were a combination of flexible and rigid bodies, and potential theory  
161 was used to estimate the wave loads. The same approach was adopted to model  
162 the WindWEC [42], a hybrid combination of the Hywind SPAR [43] and the  
163 Wavestar [44] WEC buoy.

164 Soulard *et al.* [45] used a wave to wire representation based on linear poten-  
165 tial theory to model the fluid-structure interaction of a 100 m diameter circular  
166 hybrid platform (C-HyP), supporting the NREL 5-MW OWT, and an array of



167 oscillating WECs. Aerodynamic loads were imposed at the nacelle, through a  
 168 simplified procedure [46] which makes use of the relative wind speed with respect  
 169 to the platform motion. The motion of a multi-use platform (MUP) developed  
 170 for the MERMAID project [47] was studied in the time domain, using the open  
 171 source boundary element method solver, NEMOH [48]. A coupled system of  
 172 21 DOF's were used to model the interactions between the platform, WECs  
 173 and the air pressure inside the chambers. Quasi-static approaches were used to  
 174 represent the influence of the wind loads on the turbine.

175 Li *et al.* [49] proposed the Hywind-Wavebob-NACA 638xx Combination  
 176 (HWNC) by integrating the Hywind SPAR [43] OWT with the Wavebob point  
 177 absorbers [19] and tidal turbines [50]. Hydrodynamic and aerodynamic consid-  
 178 erations were included by means of linear potential flow and blade element mo-  
 179 mentum theories, respectively. A multi-body dynamics approach was adopted  
 180 for simulating mechanical connections and the mooring lines were represented  
 181 using a lumped-mass approach.

Table 2: Comparison of numerical models for MPPs

No.	Platform	Aerodynamics	Hydrodynamics	Structural dyn.
1	SFC [38]	BEM	potential flow	multibody
2	STC [39]	wind drag force	potential flow	multibody
3	WindWEC [42]	BEM	potential flow	rigid body/FEM
4	C-HyP [45]	relative wind speed	potential flow	lumped mass
5	MERMAID [47]	relative wind speed	potential flow	rigid body
6	HWNC [49]	BEM	potential flow	multibody

182 A summary of the numerical modelling approaches discussed is presented in  
 183 Table 2. It can be observed that a variety of approaches have been adopted  
 184 for representing the aerodynamics aspects, ranging from a simple static wind  
 185 drag force (generated by a body that opposes the flow of wind), to the more  
 186 accurate blade element momentum (BEM) theory (where the blades are di-  
 187 vided into elements and the forces acting on them are summed up together).  
 188 As far as the hydrodynamics is concerned, all the models adopt a wave diffrac-

189 tion based potential flow approach, which is ideal for large structures. The  
190 structural dynamics aspects are modelled with different approaches and level of  
191 fidelity/accuracy. In a rigid body approach, the whole body is considered rigid  
192 and therefore there is no elastic deformation, while in a multibody approach, the  
193 system is comprised of several bodies linked by joints that control their relative  
194 motion.

195 The SFC and the STC mentioned above have been tested experimentally, at  
196 a scale of 1 : 50. The SFC consists of a semisubmersible floating wind turbine  
197 and three fully submerged rotating flap-type WECs. The PTO configuration  
198 of each of the WECs were physically modelled with the use of a shaft, two  
199 pulleys, a timing belt, two tensioners and a linear mechanical rotary damper  
200 with constant damping level during the execution of the tests [39]. The wind  
201 turbine was modelled with a redesigned small-scale rotor that rotates during  
202 the experiments. The quasi-static excitation, motion decay, response under  
203 regular and irregular waves, without and with wind were tested for and a good  
204 agreement was observed with numerical predictions.

205 The STC model was tested in two different basins to account for experimen-  
206 tal uncertainties. Two model tests were performed to investigate the perfor-  
207 mance of the STC under the two survival modes in extreme conditions: when  
208 the torus is fixed to the spar at the mean water level and when the torus is fixed  
209 to the spar at a submerged position. The focus of the model tests was wave-  
210 induced loads and responses, and wind was also included to model the mean  
211 wind thrust on the wind turbine rotor [51, 38, 52].

212 The above mentioned previous European projects investigated the perfor-  
213 mance of platforms suitable for large wind farms of the order of 0.5 to 1 GW.  
214 There, however, arises a need to study the response of small MPP's capable of  
215 catering to the power requirements of remote and island communities, which  
216 might be substantially different from those already investigated.

217 *2.2. Aquaculture*

218 Aquaculture refers to the cultivation of fish and other aquatic organisms  
219 in a controlled manner, for human consumption. Marine aquaculture systems  
220 employ a variety of designs, based on the type of seafood harvested. They can  
221 be moored to the seabed, tied to a structure or towed by vessels [53]. Cage  
222 type structures anchored to the sea floor are generally preferred for finfish [54].  
223 Shellfish cultivation is done either by bottom farming or by making use of lines  
224 suspended beneath floating bodies like buoys, rafts and longlines.

225 Aquaculture in more exposed, harsher conditions is perceived to be the next  
226 step, with a number of projects looking at suitable concepts, and a full scale  
227 pilot test facility represented by SalMar’s “Ocean Farm1” [37], already in op-  
228 eration. The Ocean Farm 1 is a semi-submersible rigid cage of 110 m diameter,  
229 capable of housing up to 1.5 million salmon. Vessel type rigid floating cages or  
230 Havfarms [55], capable of withstanding 10 m significant wave heights are also  
231 being planned for use in the near future.

232 *2.3. Combined ORE and Aquaculture*

233 The Sea Star Spar [33] proposed a combination of a spar floating wind tur-  
234 bine and floating structures with sufficient buoyancy for the cultivation of fin-  
235 fish, shellfish or algae. Goseberg *et al.* [56] investigated the interaction be-  
236 tween OWT structures and aquaculture systems by experimentally analysing  
237 the scaled model of a tripile supporting a 5 MW turbine, with a fish cage in-  
238 stalled between its legs. Variations in flow velocities and additional loads on  
239 the substructure, arising from the presence of the cages were detected. Under  
240 the MARIBE project [57], different combinations of offshore wind, wave and  
241 aquaculture systems were identified, considering multi-use of space (MUS) and  
242 MPP criteria.

243 Viúdez *et al.* [58] proposed the use of a spar-type OWT to create an artificial  
244 upwelling of the nutrient-laden waters from the deep to increase the surface  
245 fish production. An experimental study on wave energy systems at Lysekil on  
246 the Swedish coast concluded that structural modification of the foundations

247 (perforations, in this case) and other components could lead to enhancements  
248 in the fish population [59].

### 249 *2.3.1. Control Strategies*

250 Control systems form an integral part of any energy system. Coupling sev-  
251 eral ORE technologies and energy storage on a single MPP for aquaculture  
252 operations calls for a hybrid control system. This is due to the fact that while  
253 aquaculture requires a smooth, stable supply of power, ORE systems are highly  
254 dependent on their environmental source for power production. This can often  
255 result in periods of zero power production [60]. The existing scenario in control  
256 strategies for MPPs is reviewed in the following subsections.

#### 257 *2.3.1.1 Challenges of MPP control system*

258 For an MPP combining ORE and aquaculture, while the latter can smooth the  
259 influence of waves and currents on the platform [61], it also has an impact on the  
260 layout of the power generation equipment [62]. Also, the interaction between  
261 the floating platform, wind turbine, WECs and energy storage (ES) devices,  
262 exists in many aspects such as the motion response, the dynamic loads and the  
263 control system, making the MPP a highly complex and coupled system.

264 The power supply of the MPP should be smooth and stable to meet the  
265 requirements of both the platform operations and the aquaculture system. The  
266 power transmission between land substation and the MPP also needs to be sta-  
267 ble. As a result, power generation, ES and electrical equipment on the MPP  
268 need an overall power control and capacity management system. No comprehen-  
269 sive review of control technologies for MPPs currently exists. However, reviews  
270 on control of wind and wave devices [63], and control of energy storage (ES)  
271 systems [64], are useful for the present purpose.

272 Control systems for each ORE technology aims to operate the devices at  
273 their rated values by following an operating strategy, whilst maintaining safe  
274 operating conditions. The power generated by each technology depends on the  
275 renewable source cycle, leading to periods of zero power production. In an MPP,

276 the combination of wind, wave and ES technologies can minimize the time of  
277 zero power production if shared control objectives are attained by means of a  
278 platform-level controller. These objectives can be classified as maximization of  
279 energy capture (wind and wave), regulation of generated power (wind, wave,  
280 ES), mitigation of structural loads for MPPs with large power capacity (wind,  
281 wave, platform), and reduction of unwanted platform swings and motions. For  
282 some types of ORE, estimation of the input can be of further benefit to the  
283 attainment of the control objectives, especially incident wave estimation for  
284 WECs [63].

285 The size of the MPP thus plays an important role in the definition of the  
286 control objectives. Promising wind/wave hybrid concepts estimate that the  
287 total installed capacity of around 10 - 20 MW would include 20 - 25% of wave  
288 energy, since energy efficiency of the WEC is much less than that of the wind  
289 turbine [65].

### 290 *2.3.1.2 Management of power network and ES system*

291 The control of the electrical system is often treated separately from the control  
292 of the mechanical systems. The MPP grid is different from a conventional grid as  
293 the former depends basically on a collection of inverters and synchronous and/or  
294 asynchronous generators. Each generator will have a control system to provide  
295 voltage and frequency regulation. A power network management strategy is  
296 therefore required to provide the operating states to the local electrical control  
297 systems and also to control power sharing and achieve network stabilization.  
298 The power network management is developed based on the MPP size and type  
299 of interconnection (*i.e.*, grid connected or isolated) [66]. Network stabilization  
300 and reactive power compensation can be further improved by the use of FACTS  
301 (flexible AC transmission systems) devices [67].

302 A detailed local electrical network (*i.e.*, including loads, cabling network,  
303 protection, switchgear, transformers and a power network management, oper-  
304 ation and control system) definition/identification is still required; as its opti-

305 mal sizing to meet load requirements with minimum investment and operating  
306 costs [68]. Conventional methods for resynchronizing the local network to the  
307 main grid and power flow control between the two grids can be used [69].

308 An ES device can be used to suppress fluctuations of ORE [70]. Cao *et*  
309 *al.* [71] proposed a battery energy management system (BEMS) strategy, and  
310 the point estimate method is used to solve the volatility of ORE generation.  
311 Osório *et al.* [72] studied battery pack modelling and health feature extraction  
312 methods for an ocean power station to reduce the number of battery charging  
313 and discharging cycles and dump load, and to improve the life of ES devices.  
314 Methods of multi-scale energy management have been proposed based on power  
315 generation/load forecasting, in which the multi-time scale energy management  
316 model is combined with daily scheduling [70] and real-time scheduling [73]. Fur-  
317 ther, physical constraints also need to be addressed for ES system.

#### 318 2.3.1.3 *Island/sea power integration*

319 The integration of island/sea area ORE power is mainly based on micro-grid  
320 technology including AC, DC and AC-DC hybrid micro-grids. The DC micro-  
321 grid avoids many problems such as the loop-current between multi-inverter,  
322 protection strategies of AC grids, which conforms better to systems with source  
323 diversity and load diversity [74, 75]. According to the availability of grid sup-  
324 port, micro-grid can be divided into the grid-connected island power supply  
325 system and the remote isolated power supply system. With the remote isolated  
326 power supply, several demonstration projects have been completed and put into  
327 operation, such as the Dongfushan and Nanji islands in China [76, 77].

#### 328 2.3.1.4 *Island/marine micro-grid control and management*

329 The micro-grid control system can be designed with different structures, *i.e.* the  
330 centralized control, the decentralized control and the hierarchical control. In the  
331 land-based and shore-based micro-grid demonstration projects, the centralized  
332 control is used more in Asia and the decentralized control mainly in Europe. The

333 hierarchical model combines advantages of centralized and decentralized control,  
334 allowing better flexibility and scalability [78]. For the MPP control system, the  
335 use of hierarchical model is likely to be a better choice [79]. One recent successful  
336 example is the three-tier hierarchical management model applied in the marine  
337 micro-grid of China's Zhai Ruo mountain [80].

338 Grid planning has evolved from the realization of the grid-connected/off-  
339 grid function and the smooth transition process in early time (through classical  
340 control and various intelligent control theories) to the economical, reliable, high-  
341 quality, environmentally power supply. The planning and design of the island  
342 micro grid can be realized from single-objective optimization to multi-objective  
343 optimization. Life cycle cost, power supply reliability, power supply quality and  
344 other indicators have been considered in the optimization [76, 81, 82, 83].

### 345 **3. Environmental Aspects**

#### 346 *3.1. Environmental Impact Assessment*

##### 347 *3.1.1. ORE*

348 Boehlert and Gill [84] have highlighted the major ecological and environ-  
349 mental concerns accompanying the development of various ORE systems. The  
350 different forms of ORE extraction were considered in isolation and impacts were  
351 studied on the basis of a stressor-receptor framework. Here, the former refers to  
352 environmental features susceptible to change from ORE development and the  
353 latter stands for elements of the ecosystem that may respond to the stressor.  
354 Among the potential hazards were habitat loss, bird hits (from moving turbine  
355 components), acoustic and electromagnetic emissions. Best practice measures  
356 for the mitigation of the effect of WTs on birds have also been mentioned [85].  
357 Some WTs were recently dismantled in China due to the severe impact on the  
358 bird migration [86], indicating the importance of site selection assessment for  
359 the construction of wind farms.

360 Several environmental impact assessment studies have been carried out on  
361 individual wind and wave energy concepts. The main concern for acoustically-

362 sensitive species such as marine mammals to date has been the construction  
363 phase of bottom fixed OWTs due to the widespread use of pile driving, with  
364 comparatively limited focus on sounds emitted by operational OWTs, let alone  
365 floating ones [87, 88, 89, 90]. Nonetheless, the ability of species such as harbour  
366 seals and porpoises to detect and react to the sound emitted by operational  
367 OWTs has been identified as a potential concern [91]. Marine fish and inver-  
368 tebrates may be similarly hampered in terms of communication masking and  
369 disturbance [92, 93], although there is presently no evidence of noise emitted by  
370 operational OWTs causing physiological damage in fish [94]. Offshore WECs  
371 might present a collision risk for diving species and can potentially change lo-  
372 cal oceanographic processes by extracting large amounts of incident wave en-  
373 ergy [95].

374 In addition to the adverse impacts, the potential benefits of ORE systems  
375 to biodiversity have also been suggested [96]. These include the potential for  
376 ORE structures to act as secondary artificial reefs to aid in the enhancement  
377 of fisheries and rehabilitation of marine habitats [97, 98, 99]. Floating ORE  
378 installations also have the capacity to act as local fish aggregation devices [97,  
379 100]. As fishing around ORE installations is often prohibited, such areas can  
380 serve as miniature impromptu Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) [101]. Potential  
381 effects on wild species, as well as associated commercial/recreational fisheries,  
382 of this inadvertent protection presently remain poorly understood.

### 383 3.1.2. Aquaculture

384 At-sea aquaculture, particularly those involving finfish, can have multiple  
385 impacts on the surrounding marine environment (summarized by Tett *et al.* [102]  
386 focusing on Atlantic salmon). These include, in no particular order:

- 387 • impacts on wild fish stocks through increased parasite and pathogen den-  
388 sities [103, 104, 105, 106], competition between wild and escaped fish for  
389 resources [107, 108, 109], and genetic dilution of local wild fish stocks  
390 through interbreeding with escaped fish (an acute problem for salmonids  
391 [110, 111])



- 392 • degradation of surrounding seafloor communities through deposition of  
393 organic waste [112, 113], reduction in dissolved oxygen [114], eutrophica-  
394 tion [115, 116, 117] and dispersal of various chemicals [118, 119]
- 395 • direct and indirect impacts on large mobile species such as marine mam-  
396 mals and seabirds, including shooting and exposure to loud underwater  
397 noises (to prevent depredation of cultured fish [120, 121]), accidental en-  
398 tanglement in nets and moorings [122], and displacement from potentially  
399 important habitats due to fish farm-associated activities [123, 124]

400 Some positive impacts on particular species include provision of food and  
401 shelter for wild fish, and foraging and resting opportunities for marine mam-  
402 mals and seabirds (although this increases the risk of further negative inter-  
403 actions outlined above). Some of these impacts are indirectly driven by the  
404 inshore, sheltered nature of the sites where finfish aquaculture has developed  
405 to date. There is pressure to expand the sector into more exposed, offshore lo-  
406 cations, which may reduce or modify some of the aforementioned impacts (*e.g.*  
407 eutrophication, attraction of wild fish) due to greater exposure and stronger  
408 water movements; however, the nature of these changes, if any, remains poorly  
409 understood and difficult to predict at present [125].

410 As for the considerable amount of biogenic waste such as organic wastes and  
411 inorganic nutrients that are generated in the fish farming process, trash fish  
412 (small fish of low commercial value) feeding showed more severe cumulative im-  
413 pact to the aquatic and sediment environment than pellet feed [126, 127, 128].  
414 Trash fish is still a popular traditional feed for marine carnivorous fish in China  
415 and many Asian countries, and this practice is likely to persist for some time  
416 despite farmers are encouraged to use pelleted feed to minimize the environ-  
417 mental impact. Field monitoring, lab tank experiment and bioenergetics mod-  
418 els were both applied to quantify the wastes generations and the environmental  
419 impact [128, 129, 130, 131, 132].

420 *3.1.3. Combined ORE and Aquaculture*

421 While ORE and aquaculture have matured as separate industries, the en-  
422 vironmental impacts when these sectors are combined within a single site are  
423 very poorly understood and almost entirely based on theoretical projection of  
424 the single industry impacts on to a multi-use site. Much of this understand-  
425 ing has come from the European funded projects mentioned in section 1.3 and  
426 through application of cumulative effects assessment methods [133, 134].

427 The TROPOS project made use of an impact assessment approach to study  
428 the effects of combining the two industries, as opposed to a single use sce-  
429 nario [135]. To allow a direct comparison, a semi-quantitative scale was used  
430 for each impact category. This methodology used the difference between the  
431 impacts of a single use platform compared to those of a multi-use platform, and  
432 combined the impacts either on an additive value of through the use of which  
433 ever value was highest, and this was conducted for both negative or positive  
434 attributes. It was concluded that while the impacts are similar for the single  
435 and multi-use approaches, the latter had the advantage of integrating diverse  
436 activities in a common location.

437 The H2OCEAN project was recognized that the impacts of different sectors  
438 may combine, and that the cumulative effects may reach thresholds of impacts,  
439 therefore recommending a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment [136].  
440 Understanding of the impacts from multiple sectors of the system was limited  
441 to recommendations on the location of the living quarters, and their outfalls, to  
442 prevent potential conflicts [137].

443 Within the framework of an expert opinion approach, the MERMAID project  
444 identified a number of scenarios involving different combinations of aquaculture  
445 and ORE systems. Common environmental benefits, such as structures provid-  
446 ing a refuge for wild fisheries species and operational constraints like increased  
447 bio-fouling, were also listed. A framework for risk analysis was also defined,  
448 including internal environmental interactions between the biota and different  
449 types of foundation and material [61].

450 *3.2. Ecological Modelling*

451 Modelling the effect of the installation of an MPP system in a marine ecosys-  
452 tem is challenging. On a large spatial scale, deployment of offshore structures  
453 for ORE generation will lead to exclusion zones, limiting the access to the area  
454 for several users such as shipping, fishing and tourism [138, 139, 140, 141].  
455 Such infrastructure can also underpin development of ‘artificial reefs’, supply-  
456 ing nursery areas and feeding grounds for fish species [142, 97]. Species larvae  
457 and juveniles can disperse to the surrounding areas leading to a ‘spill-over ef-  
458 fect’, enhancing local production [143, 144, 145]. These infrastructures can  
459 also create new substrates for benthic organisms [146, 99, 147]. The creation  
460 of new benthic habitats can lead to either displacement or attraction of ben-  
461 thic species in the local area, resulting in changes to local food-web dynamics  
462 with both positive and negative impacts on species distribution and abundances  
463 [148, 149, 150, 151].

464 Aquaculture associated with the MPP structure can increase the productiv-  
465 ity in the water column and on the surrounding sediment (detritus enrichment):  
466 depending on the characteristics of the surrounding environment, this increased  
467 productivity can lead to large-scale impact, attracting top-predators species  
468 [152], and small-scale impact, affecting benthic faunal communities, important  
469 food source for many species including those of commercial importance [83].

470 ‘Exclusion zones effect’ and ‘artificial reef effect’ can therefore lead to both  
471 synergies and conflicts with other marine users, notably the fishing industry  
472 [153, 154, 155]. Modelling small-scale impacts will require a high resolution of  
473 the model spatial grid with associated high computing power [141, 83].

474 Ecosystem-based approaches are necessary to investigate the cumulative ef-  
475 fects of human impacts on marine ecosystems [156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161,  
476 144, 162, 145, 163]. Ecosystem models have proved to be a powerful tool for  
477 monitoring natural variability, assessing impacts of natural and anthropogenic  
478 environmental changes and advising management measures [164, 165, 161, 166].

479 The Ecopath with Ecosim and Ecospace (EwE) modelling approach has been

480 considered one of the most suitable tools for evaluating the direct and indirect  
481 effects of anthropogenic pressures on large spatial scale ecosystem dynamics  
482 [167, 168, 161, 169]. EwE models have been successfully used to evaluate how  
483 these pressures cascade through the food-web. For example, changing in the  
484 spatial distribution of top predators (cetaceans, large fish and seabirds) will  
485 affect the entire marine ecosystem through top-down control pathways [170,  
486 152]. Similarly, changing of primary productivity can cascade through the food-  
487 web by means of bottom-up controls [144, 145] as well as environmental drivers  
488 [144, 171]. The use of Ecospace to assess cumulative impacts of these effects  
489 have been exponentially increased since the later development of this software  
490 [172, 169, 144, 173], with new capabilities of coupling the spatial model with  
491 external spatial data (e.g. spatial habitats and hydrodynamic drivers). The  
492 EwE model has also been applied in the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea and the East  
493 China Sea to describe the energy transformation between trophic levels [174],  
494 to demonstrate the fishery resources declining due to overfishing [175] and the  
495 predominant fish species variation in the past decades [176, 177, 178].

#### 496 **4. Socio-economic aspects**

497 *Socio-economic* is a term that defines the effect of a project - its development,  
498 operation and decommissioning, on the local population, or the society. There  
499 have been numerous studies on the socio-economic impacts of ORE and aqua-  
500 culture, mostly undertaken on the basis of stakeholder interviews and surveys.  
501 The main inferences are listed below.

##### 502 *4.1. ORE*

###### 503 *4.1.1. Offshore wind*

504 Despite the advantages that offshore wind offers, several socio-economic  
505 drawbacks have been identified. A particularly problematic factor hampering  
506 the development of onshore wind farms, is public opposition arising from social  
507 concerns, such as visual pollution and the impact of noise [179].

508 Even as offshore wind farms are considered to be less intrusive than those  
509 onshore [180], public perception of the visual impact, notably shadow flicker  
510 and the impact on seascapes, remains an important concern [181].

511 In addition, whilst the underwater noise caused by the operation of wind  
512 farms has recently been shown to be of very low level and probably insufficient  
513 to cause any significant environmental effects [182], the noise which is created  
514 by the impact piling required for the foundation installation of OWTs has been  
515 found to be of extremely high level [183, 184, 89]. Such issues represent a  
516 challenge for the industry, planners and regulators as they can influence public  
517 opinion, which studies have observed to be dependent on demographics [185],  
518 with for instance, older people being more concerned with visual pollution [186].

519 Opposition also arises from concern over the fate of the local fishery industry  
520 [187, 188]. On the other hand, support for OWT projects arise from the under-  
521 standing that they provide a non-polluting energy source, capable of generating  
522 jobs and contributing to the economy [189, 190].

#### 523 *4.1.2. Wave energy*

524 The emergent nature of WECs, and the lack of commercial-scale deploy-  
525 ments, results in uncertainties surrounding their potential positive and negative  
526 socio-economic effects and impacts. However, studies have highlighted a range  
527 of socio-economic impacts associated with WEC developments typically includ-  
528 ing demography, employment and regional income; sea and land use; aesthetics;  
529 infrastructure; socio-cultural systems and implications for other maritime ac-  
530 tivities such as fisheries, tourism and recreation [191, 192, 193, 194].

531 In addition to the benefit of providing a new source of electricity from a local,  
532 low carbon energy source, WEC developments will potentially bring economic  
533 benefits including the creation of jobs, the development of new supply chains and  
534 investment in infrastructure required to support such developments [194, 195].  
535 However, uncertainties regarding the delivery of such benefits, and the potential  
536 displacement of jobs in different sectors have been identified as concerns [194].  
537 Notably, WECs, like any other marine development activity, inevitably cause

538 a change in the use of the ocean space at the deployment site that is likely to  
539 disrupt or displace the activities of other users of the area. Of increasing concern  
540 are potential restrictions on the accessibility and use of the surrounding marine  
541 space, introducing the risk of conflicts with other marine resource users and  
542 stakeholders [194, 196, 197, 198].

543 As with environmental concerns, the socio-economic effects and impacts of  
544 WEC will vary with the stage (construction, operation and decommissioning)  
545 and scale of the project and will depend on the location, communities, econ-  
546 omy and environment in that area. For example, concerns regarding the ability  
547 of communities to adapt to changing demand for new services, skills through-  
548 out the WEC project lifecycle are emerging [194]. Furthermore, whilst some  
549 studies have argued that unlike wind energy, WEC developments do not cause  
550 visual pollution, as they are often located at great distances from the coasts  
551 and have mostly submerged configurations, this may not be true with differ-  
552 ing WEC designs, deployment sites and community perceptions of the marine  
553 environment [199].

554 A further concern is that WECs may also provide non-market benefits, such  
555 as providing coastal protection benefits, they may negatively impact upon the  
556 ecosystems services and provisioning services, such as fisheries and the cultural  
557 services provided by the marine and coastal environment [194, 200]. Such issues  
558 are of particular concern because WEC developments are proposed in rural  
559 coastal locations and islands, where strong cultural ties to the marine and coastal  
560 environment exist and may result in community opposition [194].

561 Indeed, emergent research investigating such issues has identified divergent  
562 views on the socio-economic benefits and appropriateness of wave energy de-  
563 velopment [194]. For example, studies have attributed public support to wave  
564 energy being perceived as a renewable source and its capability to boost the  
565 local economy, without affecting established activities like fishing [201, 191].  
566 Elsewhere, perceptions and support for WEC and ORE have been associated  
567 with place attachment, community pride and the ‘symbolic fit’ of place and  
568 technology [194, 202]. For example, Alexander *et al.* [141, 203] found broad

569 support for WEC amongst Scottish fishers. However, the nascent nature of  
570 WEC technologies and deployment means that many are yet to form their views  
571 and opinions [191].

572 With community buy-in and support being vital to WEC deployment, there  
573 is clearly a need to maximize community benefits [194]. For example, some com-  
574 munities have questioned the potential benefits of WEC developments, which  
575 may result in increased electricity prices or taxes if subsidized. Thus, calls  
576 for wealth distribution and community benefit schemes, similar to those as-  
577 sociated with other industries, have been made [194, 204]. These may range  
578 from community payments, to new forms of business models, including shared  
579 or community owned schemes [194]. The embryonic nature of WECs and the  
580 lack of commercial deployments also mean that there is a paucity of empirical  
581 research investigating their real world socio-economic impacts.

#### 582 *4.2. Aquaculture*

583 Based on the available literature, Krause and Mikkelsen [205] have attempted  
584 to capture the socio-economic aspects of aquaculture, in a multi-use perspective.  
585 Socio-economic analysis have always taken the back seat, with regard to the de-  
586 velopment of aquaculture activities, the focus being on technical and biological  
587 issues [206]. Further, existing studies concentrated on the influence of salmon,  
588 shrimp and seaweed farming [207]. Socio-economic studies for aquaculture have  
589 to be tailored to suit the local economic and geo-political settings and the out-  
590 comes cannot be generalized. For instance, in a study on risk perception and  
591 management in Norwegian aquaculture, fish farmers were more concerned about  
592 the future prices of their stock and potential disease outbreaks. On the other  
593 hand, they were least bothered about aesthetic considerations and repugnance  
594 to the public [208].

595 While food and jobs are the main direct socio-economic benefits from aqua-  
596 culture, it has to be noted that in many Asian countries like Vietnam and  
597 Bangladesh [209, 210], the fishermen community is struggling to survive with  
598 the generated income. Further, the negative effects of aquaculture have been

599 difficult to quantify, mainly due to the lack of knowledge and awareness among  
600 the consumers [211]. The recent decades have witnessed large degradation of the  
601 coastal marine environment and its resources in many areas, at least partly due  
602 to an unprecedented growth of the aquaculture industry, coupled with the ab-  
603 sence of proper national and international regulations, policies and management  
604 strategies [212, 213].

605 There are several studies on the sustainable development of offshore aqua-  
606 culture, wherein the society, economics and environment are given due consider-  
607 ation [214, 215]. Proposed aquaculture developments have been known to cause  
608 concern among local fishing communities [216]. Often, the concerns involve  
609 potential risks pertaining to the aquaculture development [217].

## 610 **5. MPPs and Risk**

611 The offshore environment is associated with high technical risks arising from  
612 the mechanical forces, corrosion, biofouling, extreme conditions and unreliable  
613 moorings [13].

614 Research investigating such risks is emerging, with the MARIBE project  
615 considering the technical and non-technical challenges associated with MPP  
616 including risk perceptions of new technologies and their combinations [14].

617 A simple methodology for assessing the risks associated with MPPs, con-  
618 sidering operation, economic, environmental, socio-economic, financial, political  
619 and health and safety risks across the different phases of a project was presented  
620 [14].

621 The MERMAID project utilized the Policy, Economic, Social, Technical,  
622 Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) approach (also known as PESTLE), along  
623 with stakeholder analysis to gain a clearer understanding of external factors  
624 affecting future MPP developments [11]. This identified legal and policy, social,  
625 environmental, technical and economic issues as presenting key obstacles to  
626 MPP.

627 Legal and policy obstacles identified included complicated bureaucracy, poor



628 dialogue between public institutions and difficulties identifying responsibilities  
629 for permits, and a lack of codes and standards [11]. Social obstacles refer to  
630 potential conflict with near-shore and offshore fisheries, tourism and shipping  
631 routes.

632 Further, activities that change the marine landscape were deemed socially  
633 unacceptable by stakeholders. However, some perceived social obstacles (*e.g.*  
634 anchoring issues) stem from a current lack of experience and understanding of  
635 ORE installations.

636 Other concerns are about insurance (costs may increase once the potential  
637 types of accidents insurers will have to cover become clearer) and the financial  
638 feasibility of combining some activities (*e.g.* mussel and seaweed farming with  
639 offshore wind farm (OWF)), due to the reluctance of OWF operators to share  
640 space due to potential risks arising from multiple uses.

641 While new jobs and revenue streams are obvious socio-economic benefits of  
642 MPP projects, there was also evidence of potential conflict with fishing com-  
643 munities and between wave energy production and energy suppliers, equipment  
644 and machinery, and marine transport. In particular, the offshore wind industry  
645 is concerned about potential risks (*e.g.* collision and corrosion) arising from  
646 MPP developments [218].

647 Such findings highlight the need for further research, investigating the po-  
648 tential socio-environmental-policy-technological risks, opportunities (*e.g.* new  
649 business models), challenges (*e.g.*, barriers, and enabling mechanisms), trade-  
650 offs associated with MPPs, and their governance. Given the complex and mul-  
651 tifaceted emergent properties, and trade-offs associated with the multiple ac-  
652 tivities that MPPs comprise, new trans-disciplinary methods, adopting systems  
653 approaches resilience-thinking, will be vital to overcome the limitations associ-  
654 ated with traditional single discipline approaches [194, 219].

655 This will require consideration of critical systems functions, interactions and  
656 inter-dependencies, and their uncertainties, together with levels of robustness  
657 and resilience of the MPP and its component systems, across its life-cycle, under  
658 a range of conditions including low-frequency high consequence extreme events

659 (e.g. typhoons and storm surges) [219]. Furthermore, greater consideration of  
660 cumulative effects, requiring new approaches to overcome recognized limitations  
661 in CEA practice are required [133, 134]. Such studies will support the identi-  
662 fication of priority risks and monitoring, management and mitigation measures  
663 to reduce MPP risks and vulnerabilities.

664 In parallel research assessing the socio-environmental impacts and benefits  
665 of MPP is urgently required. Critically this should include consideration of  
666 societal acceptability and values, potentially affecting MPP development, and  
667 strategies for optimizing their benefits and reducing the risk of conflict. For  
668 example, siting MPP further offshore may avoid nearshore conflicts with sectors  
669 such as tourism and navigation [12]. This in turn will require exploration of  
670 the governance challenges associated with MPP.

671 Here, it is argued that MPPs and co-location of activities could result in the  
672 development of a common regulatory framework, resulting in more co-ordinated  
673 marine spatial planning and simplified licensing procedures [13]. In parallel,  
674 with research highlighting a wide range of potential legal issues surrounding  
675 ORE [220], studies exploring the legal implications of MPP, notably liabilities  
676 and the potential need for new forms of business model, will be of importance  
677 to the sector.

## 678 **6. Overview and discussion**

679 As previously stated, due to the scarcity of references analyzing MPP sys-  
680 tems, the scope of the review has been expanded also to research works analyzing  
681 single energy source systems/single aquaculture systems.

682 In the synoptic Table 3, the references cited have been classified against the  
683 type of system analysed:

684 A ORE systems extracting energy only from one type of energy source (single  
685 purpose);

686 B Aquaculture (only) systems;

Table 3: System classification of references

System → Aspect ↓	A. ORE systems – single energy source	B. Aqua- -culture systems	C. MPP without aquaculture	D. MPP with aquaculture
Techno- -logical	[221, 222, 20, 63] [223, 224, 225]	[53, 54, 37]	[16, 12, 18] [19, 23, 25] [26, 27, 221] [222, 21, 24] [28, 29, 30] [38, 39, 42] [45, 47, 49] [227, 228, 67] [68, 225] [229, 230]	[13] [56, 58] [59, 33] [218] [10, 25] [27] Detailed [11, 57] [226, 61]
Environ- -mental	[84, 85, 91] [94, 95, 96] [97, 98, 99]	[53, 231] [232, 233, 234] [235, 236]	[135]	[135, 136] [137]
Socio- -economic	[15] (Wind) [7, 179] [180, 181, 185, 186] [190, 187, 188, 189] (Wave) [199] [201, 191] (Policy) [2, 3]	[9, 205, 206] [207, 208, 209] [210, 211] (Policy) [238]	[13, 135]	[12, 13] [237, 100] [135] (Policy) [239]

687 C MPP coupling offshore systems extracting renewable energy from two or more  
688 sources, but not coupled with aquaculture system/s;

689 D MPP coupling offshore systems extracting renewable energy from two or more  
690 sources, including aquaculture system/s;

691 and against the aspect/s considered, i.e. if mainly concentrating on the  
692 technological (engineering) aspects, the environmental impact aspects, the socio-

693 economic aspects, or all of them.

### 694 6.1. Main considerations on the literature reviewed

695 Most of the research has been focused on the technological aspects of the  
696 MPP systems, followed by the socio-economic aspects, and then the environ-  
697 mental impact aspects. This can be explained by the Technology Readiness  
698 Level (TRL) of the research conducted in this area, which in most cases can be  
699 assessed as between TRL 2 and TRL 6, if the TRL scale used by Horizon 2020  
700 EU funding scheme is adopted, reported in Table 4. As it can be seen, even if it  
701 is not the only aspect, from TRL 1 to TRL 6 the focus is on the technological  
702 aspects.

Table 4: Technology Readiness Level [240]

TRL 1	Basic principle observed
TRL 2	Technology concept formulated
TRL 3	Experimental proof of concept
TRL 4	Technology validated in lab
TRL 5	Technology validated in relevant environment
TRL 6	Technology demonstrated in relevant environment
TRL 7	System prototype demonstration in operational environment
TRL 8	System complete and qualified
TRL 9	Actual system proven in operational environment

703 An important first consideration following up from this one is indeed that,  
704 despite the substantial advantages obtained if both the environmental and the  
705 socio-economic aspects are considered from the early stage of the technology  
706 development, the need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach is still not com-  
707 mon practice even for commercially mature systems, with only few noticeable  
708 examples [11, 14, 57, 61, 226].

709 The second consideration is that the research done on MPP has been much  
710 more focused on the so called ‘hybrid’ ORE systems, i.e. coupling wind, wave,  
711 and tidal systems, but considering the direct coupling or the close co-location of

712 aquaculture systems in very few cases, especially when considering the techno-  
713 logical aspects. The Blue Growth EU-funded projects have started to address  
714 this gap in knowledge, and MERMAID [27]), but have also highlighted the  
715 several multidisciplinary challenges to be tackled.

716 The third observation is that these European projects had been focusing  
717 on large commercial scale installations, MPP farms, consisting in installed ca-  
718 pacities of the order of hundreds of MW to GW, connected to the grid and,  
719 whenever considered, aquaculture systems of commercial scale. Nonetheless,  
720 as demonstrated by some pilot projects in China (Daguan [221], Dawanshan  
721 [222], and Sehngshan [222]), there is a strong potential for small scale MPP  
722 to serve remote, isolated communities, providing not only a sustainable, safe,  
723 affordable source of energy, but also socio-economic benefits such as food and  
724 jobs.

725 Furthermore, also in the EU there is a growing research interest in coupling  
726 sustainable source of energy to offshore aquaculture facilities [36, 241]. The  
727 research on small scale MPP can certainly learn and build upon the ones done for  
728 large scale MPP farms, but it is likely that there will be some specific challenges.  
729 For example, the scale of the environmental impact is completely different, the  
730 metocean conditions will have a higher impact on the dynamic response of the  
731 MPP, and the dynamics of the different systems (wind, wave, solar, aquaculture)  
732 may be more strongly coupled. There is certainly a need for further research.

## 733 **7. Conclusion**

734 An emerging interest in the development of multi-purpose platforms, exploit-  
735 ing the synergies among ORE and aquaculture industries, has been observed  
736 over the past decade.

737 Based on this analysis, the following main points can be derived, which also  
738 constitute a statement of the current gaps in knowledge:

- 739 • In general, there is a scarcity of literature specifically on MPP systems,  
740 probably due to this technology's low TRL level, and the lack of full scale,

741 but also small scale outdoor prototypes;

- 742 • Therefore, at the moment, this area of research has to rely on single-  
743 purpose, single discipline studies to develop a multidisciplinary analysis  
744 framework for MPP systems: the present article aims at providing an  
745 overview of the available material to develop such framework;
- 746 • If the number of sources on MPP can be considered proportional to the  
747 research effort, most of the effort so far has been allocated to the tech-  
748 nological aspects (again, probably due to the low TRL level), while the  
749 socio-economic and environmental aspects have been investigated to a  
750 lower extent;
- 751 • The adoption of a multidisciplinary approach is still not common prac-  
752 tice even for more mature, single-purpose offshore systems, with only few  
753 noticeable examples;
- 754 • The majority of the literature focuses on a small subset of MPP, coupling  
755 only different ORE devices, but not integrating or co-locating aquaculture  
756 systems, with only relatively few recent EU-funded projects that started  
757 to address this gap in knowledge;

## 758 **Acknowledgments**

759 This work is supported by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Re-  
760 search Council UK (EPSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council  
761 UK (NERC), through grant EP/R007497/1, and the Natural Science Founda-  
762 tion of China (NSFC) through grant 51761135013. The authors are also thank-  
763 ful to Walid M. H. Nassar, Ph.D student at the University of Strathclyde, for  
764 reviewing the section on ‘Control of MPP’s.’

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2020-05-15

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Abhinav KA, Collu M, Benjamins S, et al., (2020) Offshore multi-purpose platforms for a Blue Growth: a technological, environmental and socio-economic review. *Science of the Total Environment*, Volume 734, September 2020, Article number 138256

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138256>

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