



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
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PRESS RELEASE

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New Vessels for the Department of the Environment

HM Government of Gibraltar's Department of the Environment has expanded its assets to include two vessels, a ten metre cabin cruiser and a six metre RHIB. The cabin cruiser will bear the name of *Storm Petrel*, a small but resilient seabird found in the Strait, and the RHIB will bear the name of *Darwin*, after the well known British scientist. These assets will complement the Department of the Environment's existing team, which now includes Environmental Protection Officers as well as scientists and its own diving team.

The Government is committed to expanding its marine research and monitoring programmes within British Gibraltar Territorial Waters and the Department is now better resourced to undertake these tasks particularly, but not exclusively within the Southern Waters of Gibraltar Special Area of Conservation, an EU protected marine site. Coastal water sampling and habitat and species monitoring are some of the routine tasks currently undertaken by the Department's scientists in line with EU Directives and these additional Vessels will help the Department fulfil its role. Further research and monitoring will now be possible.

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes, who visited the vessels today, said: "The Government is working hard in developing its marine management strategy and so fulfilling our international environmental obligations. These vessels will now allow us to gather more information on our marine environment and therefore allow us better to look after these valuable natural assets."