



# HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,  
Energy and Climate Change

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Marine Ecosystem Restoration Programme progressing well

HM Government of Gibraltar's Department of the Environment and Climate Change continues to progress its marine ecosystem restoration programme. The interdisciplinary programme recently kicked off with the seagrass restoration project, which aims to re-establish what is a tremendously important source of food, oxygen, habitat and a carbon sink. The particular species of seagrass that is being planted is 'Neptune grass' *Cymodocea nodosa*. This species was known to be abundant within our waters, particularly towards the North of the Bay, although its presence diminished to extinction over the years due to such factors as pollution and raking of the seabed.

The Department has been working closely with the University of Algarve's Centre of Marine Sciences (CCMAR).

This included last week the transplanting of Neptune Grass from a donor site in Portugal. Professor Rui Santos from the CCMAR has commented that he is 'extremely pleased with the progress that has been made so far'. The marine survey conducted last week by the Department's Dive Team along with the CCMAR has shown that previously transplanted seagrass is actually sprouting indicating that the plants are adapting well to Gibraltar's marine environment.

The public is reminded that they are able to view the underwater surveys and the seagrass beds in real time by logging into the underwater camera website ([www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi/underwater-camera](http://www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi/underwater-camera)). The Department's Dive Team will continue to monitor the newly planted seagrass beds and will be providing further details on the next phase of the restoration programme very shortly.

Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Dr John Cortes, said: "This is a major initiative which, if successful in the long term, will very significantly improve the quality and diversity of marine life in our waters. Some of our older citizens still remember the variety of life that existed in the areas of Western Beach and the old Montagu Pavilion when we still had the sea grass meadows. These meadows are a well known breeding habitat for fish, cuttlefish, and many other types of marine life. The signs so far are very positive".

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