

GBP15 Million Investment into UK Marine Autonomous Systems

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has announced an investment of GBP15 million in marine autonomous systems (MASs) and sensors over a five-year development programme. The investment will be made through the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of global marine science and technology innovation.

The programme will develop a 1,500m depth-rated Autosub Long Range (ALR1500) and a 6,000m depth-rated autonomous underwater vehicle (Autosub6000 Mk2). These will support future under-ice and deep-ocean science, including a number of upcoming major marine research programmes such as the Changing Arctic Ocean programme. The programme will be carried out at the Marine Robotics Innovation Centre at NOC in Southampton.

Command and Control

NERC is also investing in command-and-control systems for efficient fleet management, and new equipment to support the NERC–EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in ‘Smart and Autonomous Observing Systems’, called NEXUSS – ‘NEXt generation Unmanned System Science’.

NERC will also invest up to GBP5m in an open call for novel sensor development suitable for deployment on various submarine and surface platforms including the new MAS platforms described above.

This investment will provide capability in ocean observing for all of the UK marine science community with persistent presence of hostile and previously inaccessible deployment of significant new capacity to tackle some fundamental ‘global environmental science’ questions. Further information will be announced later this year.

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/gbp15m-investment-into-uk-marine-autonomous-systems>
