

Seabed mapping and collaboration for climate change mitigation in the UK



Seabed mapping will play a crucial role in protecting the UK's climate, oceans and coastal communities, as highlighted by Sally-Ann Hart, Member of Parliament (MP). Speaking at the recent UK Centre of Seabed Mapping (UK CSM) showcase event in London, Hart emphasized the importance of building a community of maritime industry stakeholders that collaborate and share hydrographic data

to address climate change.

In our efforts to safeguard our climate, oceans and coastal communities, it is evident that seabed mapping is an essential component of the infrastructure we require, stated Hart, adding that the establishment of the [UK Centre for Seabed Mapping](#) represents an exciting advancement in effectively utilizing and coordinating the extensive expertise within the UK.

Climate change impacts on the United Kingdom

Launched in 2022, the UK CSM aims to foster collaboration among the UK government organizations involved in seabed mapping, facilitating data collection and sharing. This information is vital for maritime trade, informing sustainable environmental and resource management decisions and supporting national security and infrastructure.

Hart emphasized that climate change poses a significant threat to the UK's economy and well-being. If not properly managed, it could lead to devastating consequences such as rising sea levels, more frequent and severe storms and increased temperatures, compromising infrastructure, agriculture, health and security.

However, Hart also highlighted that effectively addressing climate change presents an untapped opportunity for economic growth in the UK: "The transition to a low-carbon economy can generate new employment opportunities, drive innovation and stimulate economic growth. For instance, investment in renewable energy technologies like wind and solar power can create jobs in manufacturing, construction and installation."

The role of the ocean in managing climate change

Hart, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Ocean (APPG), a group that supports and promotes ocean research and awareness, emphasized that the ocean plays a critical role in managing climate change and unlocking economic growth opportunities. During her speech, Hart shared findings from the APPG's report titled *The Ocean: Turning the Tide on Climate Change*, which calls for prioritizing and facilitating investment in blue carbon and ocean-based initiatives to combat climate change.

The report makes various recommendations, including carrying out blue carbon habitat mapping within the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone, restoring and re-aligning 20% of the UK's saltmarsh and seagrass habitats by 2030 (as more than 90% of seagrass meadows have been lost since the 1930s), establishing Highly Protected Marine Areas, banning harmful practices such as bottom trawling and dredging in all existing UK Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and including saltmarsh and seagrass in the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Additionally, the report proposes appointing a Minister for the Ocean to oversee all ocean-related matters under one direct and exclusive ministerial responsibility.

The UK CSM showcase, held at the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) headquarters, brought together stakeholders from across the UK maritime industry to explore the benefits of sharing and utilizing seabed mapping data.



Sally-Ann Hart speaking at the UK Centre of Seabed Mapping showcase event. (Image courtesy: UKHO)

