

New maritime security strategy to target latest physical and cyber threats

- new maritime security strategy sets out how the UK will enhance its capabilities in technology, innovation and cyber security
- the 5-year strategy will officially recognise environmental damage as a maritime security concern to address modern issues such as illegal fishing and polluting practices
- improving the quantity and quality of seabed mapping data available to expand our knowledge and help to identify emerging threats

The UK's position as a world-leading maritime nation is secured by a new strategy that will enhance capabilities in technology, innovation and cyber security.

Unveiling the 5-year strategy, the Secretary of State for Transport has today (Monday 15 August 2022) set out the guiding principles for the UK government's approach to managing threats and risks at home and around the world, including leveraging the UK's world-leading seabed mapping community and tackling illegal fishing and polluting activities at sea.

The new strategy redefines maritime security as upholding laws, regulations and norms to deliver a free, fair and open maritime domain. With this new approach, the government rightly recognises any illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and environmental damage to our seas as a maritime security concern.

In addition, to enhance the UK's maritime security knowledge, the government has established the UK Centre for Seabed Mapping (UK CSM), which seeks to enable the UK's world-leading seabed mapping sector to collaborate to collect more and better data.

Seabed mapping provides the foundation dataset that underpins almost every sector in the maritime domain, including maritime trade, environmental and resource management, shipping operations and national security and infrastructure within the industry.

The UK CSM has also been registered as a UK government voluntary commitment to the [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#).

By working with the newly established UK CSM, administered by the UK Hydrographic Office, government will have better quantity, quality and availability of seabed mapping data, which as a key component of our infrastructure, underpins the UK's maritime security, prosperity and environment objectives.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

Mankind has better maps of the surface of the moon and Mars than of our own ocean. To ensure the UK's maritime security is based on informed and evidence-based decisions, we must build our knowledge of this dynamic ocean frontier.

Our new maritime security strategy paves the way for both government and industry to provide the support needed to tackle new and emerging threats and further cement the UK's position as a world leader in maritime security.

Working with industry and academia, Secretaries of State from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Transport (DfT), the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) will focus on 5 strategic objectives:

- Protecting our homeland: delivering the world's most effective maritime security framework for our borders, ports and infrastructure.
- Responding to threats: taking a whole system approach to bring world-leading capabilities and expertise to bear to respond to new, emerging threats.
- Ensuring prosperity: ensuring the security of international shipping, the unimpeded transmission of goods, information and energy to support continued global development and our economic prosperity.
- Championing values: championing global maritime security underpinned by freedom of navigation and the international order.
- Supporting a secure, resilient ocean: tackling security threats and breaches of regulations that impact on a clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically-diverse maritime environment.

Offshore Plymouth – “Multibeam survey of the seabed off Plymouth”. Credit: UK Hydrographic Office

UK Chamber of Shipping CEO, Sarah Treseder said:

A proactive maritime security strategy is essential to keeping trade routes and energy supplies secure, especially for an island nation. Today's welcome commitments to improve collaboration, both with industry and governments across the world, will help deliver a more secure maritime environment and help provide confidence to the

shipping community.

Tim Edmunds, co-Director of the SafeSeas Network and Professor of International Security at the University of Bristol said:

The new national strategy for maritime security (NSMS) comes at a critical time for the UK maritime sector. Maritime security is key to delivering the UK's ambitions in foreign, security and defence policy, as well as for blue economic growth and environmental sustainability.

SafeSeas and the University of Bristol were privileged to be part of this effort. We are delighted that our research was able to inform the strategy process. We look forward to engaging with UK maritime security actors and assisting with the strategy implementation process in future.

Mark Simmonds, Director of Policy and External Affairs, British Ports Association said:

UK ports work closely with government and law enforcement to facilitate nearly half a billion tonnes of trade and tens of millions of passengers every year, whilst at the same time bearing down on threats to our collective safety and security. We look forward to strengthening that relationship as we help to deliver on these strategic objectives.

The new Centre for Seabed Mapping is a huge step forward for the maritime sector. It will help everyone better understand the UK seabed and be the foundation for numerous benefits, including more informed management of the marine environment.

The UK will continue to engage heavily with industry, academia, international partners and allies in the delivery of this outward-focussed strategy through increased information sharing partnerships, to increase visibility of threats to the global maritime domain.