

News story: UK Hydrographic Office welcomes publication of UK Government 'Future of the Sea' Report

Bathymetric data captured of Anguilla as part of the Overseas Territories Seabed Mapping Programme

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has welcomed the publication of the UK Government's Foresight 'Future of the Sea' report, which outlines a number of recommendations to help the UK utilise its current expertise and technological strengths to foster trade links, build marine capacity across the world and collaborate to tackle climate change.

Among these strengths, the report recognises the UK as a global leader in hydrography and highlights the UKHO's expertise in collecting and processing hydrographic and marine geospatial data. Employing over 120 software engineers, solutions architects and data scientists, they manage a wide range of data sets for a variety of maritime applications, specialising in bathymetry, cartography, marine data science, law of the sea and more. All support the vision that science and innovation – and, in particular, marine geospatial data – can help the UK strengthen its position as a leading maritime nation in the 21st Century.

The report also recognises that the sea plays a particularly significant role in the lives of UK Overseas Territories, including their dependence on fisheries for food security and economic growth and their exposure to marine climate change. Alongside its partners, the UKHO is working to build marine capacity in many of these countries through its Overseas Territories Seabed Mapping Programme, to help them to better manage their marine resources. By completing seabed mapping in the waters of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and Montserrat, this work will also support safer navigation to enable trade and cruise tourism, which in turn will bring significant economic benefits.

Samuel Gillchrest, UKHO Government Relations Lead, commented:

"The GO-Science report on the Future of the Seas sets out an exciting agenda that identifies the opportunities that are available through the responsible exploration, protection and sustainable development of our oceans. We certainly welcome the recommendations of the report and we share its ambitions.

"It is also an important moment for the UKHO. The report recognises the UKHO's world leading expertise and highlights the importance of seabed mapping. This recognition by GO-Science will help us to raise the profile of our work and support us in our aim of becoming a world-leading marine geospatial information agency and hydrographic office."