

New €2 million project launched to further research into links between oceans and human health

The European Union is investing €2 million in a new initiative designed to coordinate research into the complex links between the marine environment and human health and wellbeing.

Led by the University of Exeter Medical School and funded by the Horizons 2020 Framework, the **Seas, Oceans and Public Health in Europe (SOPHIE)** project launches in December 2017 and will run for 2.5 years.

The project will deliver a clear road map for the future direction of Oceans and Human Health research in Europe, and builds on the recommendations of the European Marine Board Position Paper on [“Linking Oceans and Human Health”](#) and the calls outlined in the [Message from Bedruthan](#). It also aims to build a diverse network of stakeholders across Europe involved in Oceans and Human Health, and to create a legacy that will advance this field across the world and beyond the end of the Project.

Professor Lora Fleming, Director of the European Centre for Environment & Human Health, will lead SOPHIE and believes the project’s launch is timely: “Over the last ten years we’ve contributed to a growing body of evidence which suggests both the marine environment and human health are inextricably linked. Yet we’ve lacked a consistent and coordinated approach to developing these findings further and using them to inform policies. SOPHIE will finally help us to do this, creating a platform for different communities to work together and achieve sustainable interactions with coastal environments.”

SOPHIE will explore the complex interplay between the health of the marine environment and that of humans, and through a series of forums and events, aims to build a network of researchers and practitioners from two traditionally distinct groups; marine and maritime specialists; and the medical and public health community. The project consortium includes members from academia, small and medium sized businesses, and government, with the team holding particular expertise in developing and implementing public health and environmental policies.

Dr Paula Kellett, Science Officer at the European Marine Board, said: “At a time when both our environments and healthcare systems are under renewed pressure, this project presents a fantastic opportunity to build and execute a future vision for ocean and health research across Europe. We are excited by the multidisciplinary team we have assembled and hope that we can push forward the integration of research into policy in ways which have positive outcomes for people’s health and wellbeing, as well as for the health of the ocean.”

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 774567. Further information will be available when the project begins.

The full list of partners is:

- [University of Exeter Medical School](#)
- [European Marine Board IVZW](#)
- [Deltares](#)
- [National University of Ireland, Galway](#)
- [Netherlands National Institute for Public Health and Environment](#)
- [Seascape](#)
- [SUBMON](#)
- [Travelecoology](#)