STATUS OF SOLAS ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Current status of SOLAS planning.

On 3 April 2003, the UK's Natural Environment Research Council [link to www.nerc.ac.uk] decided to fund a 5-year, £11m programme dedicated to SOLAS-type science (UKSOLAS; link to www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/thematics/solas/). This decision was based on a programme proposal [link to http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/thematics/solas/documents/solasproposal.pdf] developed jointly by the UK marine and atmospheric communities. Funds are available to commence programme planning in 2003.

In August 2002, NERC provided initial funding support for the International Project Office for SOLAS, at the University of East Anglia. The UKSOLAS programme award includes a contribution to continued support.

Future plans for national activities.

The UKSOLAS programme will be developed in close collaboration with existing UK initiatives in SOLAS-type science, including:

Atlantic Meridional Transect, a measurement programme along a north-south transect through the eastern Atlantic Ocean led by a consortium of UK marine and atmospheric scientists (~£2m, 2002-2006; http://www.pml.ac.uk/amt/)

A Centre of Excellence for the observation of air–sea interactions and fluxes (CASIX; ~£2m, 2002-2007). The aim of CASIX is to develop quantitative interpretations of the processes that determine the features seen by Earth Observation of the air-sea interface of the oceans and shelf-seas (http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/earthobs/Centresresult3.shtml).

Opportunities for national participation in international SOLAS activities.

The UK has considerable expertise in SOLAS-type science, such as in the cycling of biogenic gases between and in ocean and atmosphere (e.g. dimethyl sulphide, non-methane hydrocarbons, halocarbons and volatile nitrogen compounds), aerosol physics, the use of deliberate tracers for *in-situ* Lagrangian and perturbation studies, dust and nutrient deposition, the physics of air–sea exchange, carbon cycling, and atmospheric chemistry and climate modelling. It also has highly relevant recent infrastructure investments, including a new instrumented aircraft (http://faam.nerc.ac.uk), an autonomous long range, deep diving, underwater vehicle (http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/OED/Autosub/index.php), the mobile Laboratory for Global Marine and Atmospheric Chemistry (http://www.uea.ac.uk/env/lgmac/) and the UFAM chemical oceanography and trace gas laboratories (http://www.env.leeds.ac.uk/ufam/).

The Natural Environmental Research Council recognises the benefits of participation in international-scale science activities; the UKSOLAS Steering Committee, when established, will have responsibility for ensuring appropriate participation in planning and undertaking international SOLAS activities. UK scientists are already scheduled to take part in planned SOLAS activities, such as with Canada and Germany.

National contact person and address of the national website if available.

Research Council contact: Dr. P. P. Newton, NERC, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1EU, UK. ppn@nerc.ac.uk. http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/thematics/solas/

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