

SIN USA Contributes to Global Ocean Security

Together with the University of North Carolina Wilmington and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, SIN Boston convened a meeting of leading scientists from the UK and USA to develop a joint deep-sea coral research programme. This work, catalyzed in 2008, has evolved into the €9.3 million ATLAS project, which supports UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.”

The Transatlantic Deep Sea Coral Ecosystem

Cold-water coral ecosystems support high biodiversity, provide important paleo-climatic archives and are widespread on both sides of the North Atlantic Ocean. However, they have not yet been studied at a basin-scale. Most research to date has been relatively small-scale and focussed on specific sites or topics. Without basin-scale information, conservation strategies (including networks of marine protected areas) cannot be developed for cold-water coral ecosystems, as our knowledge of how these deep-water communities are connected is minimal.



Lasting Impact

SIN USA convened leading researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts. At the workshop, participants developed a science plan for a transatlantic deep sea coral research programme. After continued work, the programme has now been awarded €9.3 million EU Horizon 2020 grant. This international partnership will now be called ATLAS, and will work to expand research to include sponge grounds, seamount and hydrothermal ridge ecosystems.

ATLAS creates a dynamic new partnership between multinational industries, SMEs, governments, and academia to assess the Atlantic's deep-sea ecosystems and marine genetic resources. This SIN-generated project will provide the first coherent, integrated basin-scale assessment of Atlantic deep-water ecosystems and their Blue Growth potential. This is critically important in order to deepen our understanding of marine ecosystems so we are better able to sustainably manage and protect the biodiversity of the deep seas.

Contact: Patricia Gruver, Senior Science & Innovation Officer, Boston;
Patricia.Gruver@fco.gov.uk