

Arctic and Ocean databases for Sustainable management

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SUMMARY

Sustainable management of the ocean and value creation linked to the sea and arctic areas will play a vital role for the world's ability to realize the totality of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The SDG specifically addressing the ocean, SDG 14, stresses the urgent need to “conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.

Norway has a vast marine territory both in boreal and arctic areas and harvests great wealth from the sea. The fishing industry has been the heart of the Norwegian economy for centuries, and revenue from the oil and gas industry now contributes immensely. The last decades aquaculture has contributed with increased value. Despite this dependency on the sea, our knowledge of the seabed environment has remained poor. Discoveries over the last decade, such as the presence of numerous large coral reefs on the continental shelf off central Norway, highlight how much remain unknown. 20 years ago, the Government established a programme to fill the gaps in our knowledge of depth and topography, geology and sediment composition, biodiversity, habitats and biotopes as well as pollution in the seabed in Norwegian offshore areas.

MAREANO is a unique cross sectoral collaboration programme with participation from five ministries and ten directorates and research institutes. The Executive Group comprise of Institute of Marine Research, Geological Survey of Norway and Norwegian Mapping Authority, Hydrographic Service.

The paper will mainly address the value of the programme for managing Norwegian sea areas, through management plans. The purpose of these management plans is to facilitate value creation while preserving natural biodiversity. MAREANO also provides essential data for the development of new offshore industries, such as offshore wind energy and possibly seabed mineral extraction.

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The paper will also address the importance of data cooperation in the Arctic areas and transfer of knowledge.

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