



# ECEHH Research Insight: SOPHIE Project

A bite size summary of research <https://sophie2020.eu>

The Seas, Oceans and Public Health in Europe (SOPHIE) project developed a research road map for the next decade of oceans and human health science across Europe.



## Who is this relevant to?

Public health-medical professionals, business, policy makers, NGOs, health and marine research bodies.

## Background

Funded by European Horizon 2020, researchers from the University of Exeter Medical School led the interdisciplinary international SOPHIE project with 7 other European Institutions.

Humans have interacted with the Ocean since ancient times. We have used it as a means of transportation, recreation, a source of food and raw materials, and more recently to generate renewable energy.

Whilst the ocean can benefit human health and wellbeing, it can also pose risks to human health – through factors such as flooding and pollution.

The SOPHIE project gathered information from many different sources. SOPHIE looked to the future to develop a 'research road map', setting the course for scientists and communities to gather evidence and inform future policies to enhance and protect both human health and health of the oceans.

## Findings

Our team listened to people from across Europe to define future oceans and human health research priorities.

Working with experts, the SOPHIE Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) outlines the research needed to answer fundamental questions in the field of Oceans and Human Health.

Existing research into the links between the marine environment and health and wellbeing, was reviewed and a systematic map created. Analysis of current marine, ecosystem and health management plans identified how different policies can be brought together.

A 14 EU country survey explored European public's beliefs about how marine issues affect human health and wellbeing, with the public rating plastic pollution and marine biodiversity loss their top concerns/priorities. Future scenarios were imagined and Innovative actions with citizen science to enhance the interactions between oceans and human health (including in Blue Tourism) were identified and mapped.



## Recommendations

The SOPHIE SRA identified 3 ocean and human health action areas for future interdisciplinary international collaborations:

- *Marine biodiversity, biotechnology and medicine*
- *Sustainable seafood and healthy people*
- *Blue spaces, tourism, and wellbeing*

<https://sophie2020.eu/strategic-research-agenda/>



## Selected References/Resources

Davison S et al. *Concern about the human health implications of marine biodiversity loss is higher among less educated and poorer citizens.* Front Mar Sci 2023;10:949263. [0.3389/fmars.2023.949263](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.949263)

Pellens et al, *Innovative actions in oceans and human health for Europe*, Health Promo Int 2021:daab203, [10.1093/heapro/daab203](https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab203)

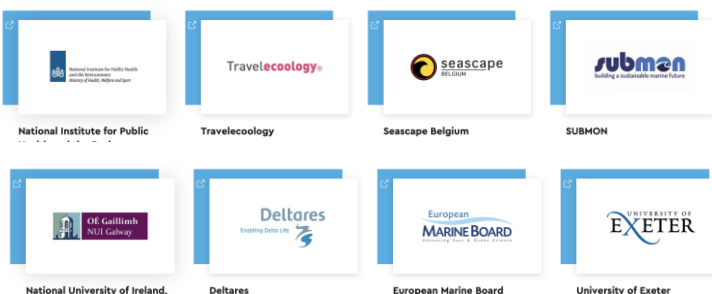
Davison, et al. *Public concern about, and desire for research into, the human health effects of marine plastic pollution.* Glob Env Chan, [102309.v10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102309](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102309)

Short R et al. *Review of the evidence for oceans and human health relationships in Europe: A systematic map.* Env Int, 2021;146:106275 [10.1016/j.envint.2020.106275](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2020.106275)

SOPHIE completed scoping reviews of relevant policies, innovation resources, and scientific evidence in oceans and human health. Full List of SOPHIE Resources: <https://sophie2020.eu/resources/>

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