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Press release from Göteborg University and Chalmers University of Technology

SEK 44 million for research on marine biofouling

Göteborg University, together with the Chalmers University of Technology, is undertaking a programme of research aimed at tackling the problem of marine biofouling of boats' and ships' hulls. The programme, known as New Marine Paint, has now been awarded funding of SEK 44 million from Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research.

The programme was launched four years ago, with the goal of developing effective and environment-friendly paints to prevent fouling of ships' hulls. Marine biofouling is a major problem, both for the environment and for boat owners. An untreated hull quickly acquires a growth of algae and marine animals, such as barnacles, bivalves and sea squirts. This fouling dramatically increases drag, and after six months at sea a vessel with an untreated hull can use as much as 40 per cent more fuel than would otherwise be the case. As well as adding to fuel bills, this increases pollutant emissions to the atmosphere. From an environmental point of view, it is also important that paints used to prevent fouling are not a cause of additional pollution of the sea.

New Marine Paint is an interdisciplinary programme bringing together researchers in biology and chemistry, who have built up a substantial knowledge base relating to marine biofouling and ways of controlling it. Among other things, they have developed a substance which, when added in very small amounts to a paint, can keep a surface entirely free from barnacles. Work is now continuing to develop a paint system for this substance, and to develop agents that will prevent all types of hull fouling.

For further information, please contact:

Björn Dahlbäck, Programme Director, Göteborg University, tel: +46 31 773 3740

Magnus Nydén, Chalmers, tel: +46 31 772 2973

Anna-Karin Engvall, Communications Manager at Mistra, tel: +46 8 791 1027

This press release can also be read in its entirety (in Swedish) at:

<http://www.science.gu.se/aktuellt/nyheter/Nyheter+Detalj/?contentId=639007>