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## Ocean Colour Satellite Station Established at HKUST

One of the first ground stations in Asia capable of receiving ocean colour information from a remote sensing satellite has been established by the Research Centre of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. This station will receive data from an ocean colour sensor -- the SeaWiFS (Sea-Viewing Wide Field-of-View Sensor) -- which will be onboard the SeaStar satellite scheduled for launching by NASA in May 1995.

This project is part of an ongoing interdisciplinary programme at HKUST aimed at developing a long-term environmental management scheme for the Pearl River Delta.

"Economic development along the Pearl River Delta has made a tremendous impact on the environment of the region," says Dr Ming Fang of the Research Centre. "By using remote sensing techniques, our ability to understand, monitor and tackle coastal marine pollution problems in the region will be highly enhanced."

Ocean colour data will be used to elucidate the magnitude and variability of primary production by marine phytoplankton and determine the distribution and timing of spring blooms. These observations will help scientists to visualize the dynamics of currents, eddies, and the physics of mixing -- that is, the relationship between ocean physics and large-scale productivity patterns -- as well as to quantify the ocean's role in the global carbon cycle and other biogeochemical cycles.

"The station started functioning at the end of November and has been receiving signals from three meteorological satellites. When the US\$100 million SeaStar satellite project is launched next May, more comprehensive data on ocean colour will be collected," says Dr Fang. "Scientists at HKUST and other academic institutions will make use of the data in their studies of marine pollution. Collaboration is already underway with the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Ocean University of Qingdao and National Taiwan University."

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