

17. SPECIFICATION FOR FUTURE REGIONAL SEA PROJECTS

454. The Pilot was required, following refinement of the marine nature conservation framework, and learning from experience gained during the Pilot, to set out a specification for the development of a nature conservation strategy for other Regional Seas. This chapter addresses this requirement. The specification set out here is intended to deliver the 'Regional Sea', 'Marine Landscapes', 'Nationally-Important Areas' and 'Nationally-Important Features' components of the framework to the stage where it is effectively complete as a wider nature conservation strategy, and can contribute to the development of a sustainable development strategy for the Regional Sea.
455. In terms of its geographical scope, the specification can be operated at either of two levels, namely:
- i. at the level of UK jurisdiction;
 - ii with the agreement of all the national jurisdictions within the Regional Sea, at the level of the entire Regional Sea.
456. Approximate costs at 2004 prices are provided on the basis of the experience gained in the Irish Sea Pilot at each of the two levels referred to above. Costs are based on those for a moderately complex area such as the southern North Sea. However, actual costs will depend upon the complexity of the Regional Sea selected for the project, and the scale of the project costs of the particular countries participating in the project, which may differ from UK costs. It is assumed that costs relating to sea areas outside UK jurisdiction would be borne by the other participating countries. This is fundamental to a strong partnership and would be an important consideration during the initial planning stages. The timescale for similar work in future should be extended to enable and facilitate dialogue and partnership working with stakeholders, a critical process for objective and target setting for the Regional Sea.
457. In the specification, the assumption is made that work has not been already undertaken to identify and map marine landscapes, nationally-important areas, or to apply the selection criteria to identify nationally-important features, as these relate to the Regional Sea under consideration. If elements of this work have been undertaken, then costs should be reduced accordingly.

Regional Sea specification

458. *Engagement of Regional Sea Governments*

At the outset, there should be discussions with other Governments and devolved administrations having jurisdiction within the Regional Sea area with the aim of developing the necessary partnership, participation and resourcing for implementing a framework.

Estimated cost: £15,000 (UK area only); £20,000 (Regional Sea)

459. *Develop and implement a communication strategy*

- i. in the early planning stages there should be an examination of stakeholder participation needs, to identify and agree with those stakeholders whose participation is essential how best to engage and support their participation and secure their input to, and ownership of, the outcomes. The need to involve or inform wider stakeholders and the general public should also be addressed;
- ii. these requirements should be developed into an agreed and appropriately resourced stakeholder communications strategy, which sets out the participatory and consultative mechanisms which will be employed. The length of time and other resources required to

establish effective partnerships and participatory mechanisms should not be underestimated. This should build-in face-to-face liaison with stakeholders. There will be a need to develop an up-to-date address and email contact list of Regional Sea stakeholders;

- iii. implement a communications strategy as outlined in Chapter 3 of this Report, adapting it to the requirements of the particular Regional Sea and taking account of the above.

Estimated cost: £100,000 (UK area only); £235,000 (Regional Sea)

460. *Data collation and mapping*

- i. with the guidance of experts and sectoral stakeholders, identify and investigate the occurrence, ownership, availability and format of essential datasets, using the guidance set out in Chapter 4 of this Report and Lumb *et al.* (2004a);
- ii. acquire, or gain access, to the available essential data; ensure that staff using the data receive sufficient GIS training and are supplied with sufficient technical support;
- iii. convert the data to GIS format and transfer the information to a dedicated high specification GIS workstation;
- iv. prepare a base map for the coastline and include relevant jurisdictional or other regulatory boundaries;
- v. prepare a map series of key physical, biological, natural resource and human activities as an aid to spatial planning, to assist consideration of further analysis, and for communicating ideas to others.

Estimated cost: £95,000 (UK area only); £200,000 (Regional Sea)

461. *Assess socio-economic context of the Regional Sea*

- i. identify the contributions which the main marine sectors make to the economy and employment of people in the adjacent coastal area to the Regional Sea and identify the likely trends and future prospects of those contributions;
- ii. identify the environmental, social and economic objectives of those sectors in terms of income generation, employment, protection of human health and safety, and protection of the environment;
- iii. identify the dependency of the various marine sectors on the maintenance of ecosystem services.

Estimated cost: £25,000 (UK area only); £60,000 (Regional Sea)

462. *Marine Landscapes*

- i. from the geophysical and hydrographical information, and using the approach set out in Chapter 7 of the Report and in Golding *et al.* (2004), identify a series of coastal (physiographic), seabed and water column marine landscapes for the Regional Sea;
- ii. map the marine landscapes identified, calculate the area of their occurrence within the Regional Sea, and assess their vulnerability to the principal human activities;

- iii. to the extent practical, characterise the marine landscapes biologically from existing information for the Regional Sea or for adjacent areas;
- iv. liaise with experts and sectoral stakeholders, and carry out new surveys where needed, to assess whether marine landscapes identified from geophysical information sufficiently reflect the real situation. To the extent practicable, co-ordinate these surveys with those undertaken to validate important marine areas (see below).

Estimated cost: £75,000 (UK area only); £120,000 (Regional Sea)

463. *Nationally-important marine areas*

- i. using available data, appropriate methods (adapting as necessary those reported in Chapters 9 and 10 of this Report and Lieberknecht *et al.* (2004b), expert and sectoral stakeholder advice, identify nationally-important areas in the following categories: representative examples of the main marine landscapes types; areas of exceptional habitat or species biodiversity; important aggregations of mobile species, nationally-important geological or geomorphological areas;
- ii. develop an ecologically-coherent network of nationally-important areas for the Regional Sea, having regard to the principles summarised in Chapter 9 of this Report, and map this network;
- iii. in the selection of areas and the development of the network, build upon the outcomes of partnership working with stakeholders on nature conservation and sectoral objectives and sustainable development needs.

Estimated cost: £35,000 (UK area only); £75,000 (Regional Sea)

464. *Nationally-important marine features*

- i. using the method reported in Chapter 8 of this Report and in Lieberknecht *et al.* (2004a), develop a provisional Regional Sea list of nationally-important marine features (including marine landscapes, habitats and species);
- ii. map the records of the occurrence of these provisional list features and identify biodiversity hotspots. Contribute this information to the identification of important marine areas as reported above;
- iii. consider whether any of the features on the provisional list would benefit from the development of individual or grouped Action Plans.

Estimated cost: £30,000 (UK area only); £65,000 (Regional Sea)

465. *Conservation objectives*

- i. the conservation objectives developed in Chapter 11 of this report are intended to be applied to UK waters as a whole, and in principle to any of the Regional Seas;
- ii. identify and agree with stakeholders appropriate targets for the conservation objectives relevant at the Regional Sea scale, or to parts of the Regional Sea, which are consistent with achieving sustainable development, meeting international and national commitments and strategic goals, and implementing the ecosystem approach;

- iii. in identifying and agreeing these targets, take account of the environmental, social and economic objectives of the various marine sectors and seek to integrate these objectives as far as possible.

Estimated cost: £30,000 (UK area only); £50,000 (Regional Sea)

466. *Integrating nature conservation with sustainable development*

- i. from consideration of the work on marine landscape vulnerability, the nationally-important areas network, and the information collated on the use of the Regional Sea, and impact upon it of human activities, develop a draft zoning plan for the Regional Sea;
- ii. carry out a consultation on the zoning plan and discuss its implications with the other marine sectors. Identify, jointly with stakeholders, the main constraints preventing the integration and achievement of environmental, social and economic objectives and opportunities. Consider and seek agreement between stakeholders on how these constraints might be overcome, for example, through greater integration of sectoral activities and objectives, increasing the sustainability of individual activities and identifying the levels of protection which may need to be applied to various parts of the Regional Sea, including nationally-important areas for conservation of marine biodiversity;
- iii. in the light of views received, revise the zoning plan and identify management measures needed to achieve the conservation objectives and the best fit with sustainable development;
- iv. interpret the zoning plan for each of the main marine sectors, having regard to the particular nature of the environmental impacts generated by the various sectors;
- v. promote the zoning plan and management measures with the European Commission, Governments, sector regulators and sector industries.

Estimated cost: £80,000 (UK area only); £165,000 (Regional Sea)

467. On this basis, the total cost is estimated at **£485,000 (€695,000)** for that part of the Regional Sea lying within the United Kingdom's designated area, and **£990,000 (€1,415,000)** for the whole of the Regional Sea including that part lying within the jurisdiction of neighbouring countries.

468. In practice, there may be benefit in seeking to achieve the agreement of countries in the north-east Atlantic area on the key standards (for example on the suite of marine landscapes, and on the criteria and methods for the identification of nationally-important features and areas) at an early stage of this work. In terms of the development of such standards and methods, there would be benefit in selecting, as a priority, a Regional Sea of quite different character from the Irish Sea for future work, for example one of the Regional Seas to the west or north of Scotland. However, other considerations, such as the need to engage other European countries actively in the process, or urgent conservation need, may dictate the timetable for future work.