

REVIEW OF MARINE NATURE CONSERVATION

Steering Group of the Regional Seas Pilot Scheme

Terms of Reference

Background

The Interim Report of the Review of Marine Nature Conservation (RMNC) Working Group was submitted to Ministers in March 2001. It recommended the promotion of a Regional Seas Pilot Scheme to demonstrate the application of the regional seas concept and examine how far the conservation management needed within the pilot area could be delivered through existing systems. This was agreed by Ministers. The Irish Sea was selected as the pilot area.

The aims of the pilot scheme as set out in its specification (attached as Annex 1) are to:

- Test ways of integrating nature conservation into key sectors¹ in order to make an effective contribution to sustainable development on a regional basis;
- Test the framework proposed by the paper “*An implementation framework for the conservation, protection and management of nationally important marine wildlife in the UK*”;
- Determine the potential of existing regulatory and other systems for delivering marine nature conservation, and identify any gaps;
- Recommend measures to fill the gaps identified.

Objectives

The Steering Group will:

- Oversee the management of the Project Team in accordance with the Work Programme set out in the specification for the Regional Seas Pilot Scheme;
- Ensure the implementation of, and adherence to, the Work Programme by the Project Team having due regard to the budget for the Pilot Scheme;

¹ See annex 2 for definition of key sectors.

- Ensure the work taken forward under the Pilot Scheme is compatible with and complimentary to existing and developing Government initiatives;
- Take account of other international, national, regional and local initiatives of relevance to the Pilot Scheme and enable integration with these where appropriate;
- Prepare and oversee the implementation of a communications strategy aimed at ensuring the engagement of stakeholders at all levels and assist in the dissemination of information to relevant international, national, regional or local stakeholder organisations and relevant other initiatives;
- Prepare reports on the progress of the Pilot Scheme for circulation to the RMNC Working Group prior to it meeting and at any other time as required by Defra;
- Raise issues of possible concern to the RMNC Working Group via the Secretariat as they arise;
- Consider representations from the Working Group, the Project Team or any other stakeholder;
- Appoint sub-groups to advise on particular issues (e.g. legal, sectoral or local community issues) as appropriate;
- Quality assure products prepared by the Project Team in advance of presentation to the Working Group;
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, its potential application to other regional seas, and the transferability of its findings to similar projects.

Constitution

The Steering Group will be chaired by Defra who will also provide its Secretariat. Representation on the Group will be determined by the Chair, taking account of the need to involve key Government Departments, devolved administrations, and sectoral interests, including representatives from the pilot area selected.

The Steering Group may invite persons or organisations to attend Steering Group meetings as it considers appropriate.

A list of organisations invited to sit as permanent representatives on the Steering Group is at Annex 3.

Representations

Representations may be made at any time to the Steering Group from the Working Group, the Project Team, or any other stakeholder.

Representations should be made to the Secretary of the Steering Group.

Timing of papers

Agendas for Steering Group meetings should be circulated at least two weeks in advance of meetings. Other papers should be circulated at least one week before.

Reporting arrangements

The Steering Group will report on the progress of the pilot scheme, via the Chair, to the RMNC Working Group.

Following consideration by the Steering Group, products delivered under the pilot scheme will be submitted to the Working Group for agreement. Subject to the agreement of the Working Group, products delivered will be finalised and disseminated by Defra, according to the wishes of Ministers.

Annex 2

Definition of “key sectors”

For the purpose of this pilot scheme “key sectors” shall be defined as:

1. Conservation (natural environment)
2. Conservation (built environment)
3. Fisheries
4. Mariculture
5. Coastal engineering
6. Shipping & navigation
7. Oil and gas
8. Wave, tide and wind power generation
9. Sand and gravel extraction
10. Coastal land use
11. Tourism and recreation
12. Inputs of contaminants
13. Submarine cables and pipelines
14. Military activities

Annex 3**STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The Steering Group will be chaired by the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)** who will also provide its Secretariat.

Representation on the Group is determined by the Chair, taking account of the need to involve key Government Departments, devolved administrations, and sectoral interests, including representatives of the pilot area selected.

Membership of the Steering Group will be made up as follows:

- **Associated British Ports (ABP)**
- **Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)**
- **Crown Estates (CE)**
- **Environment Agency (EA)**
- **Government of Ireland**
- **Isle of Man Government (IOM)**
- **Joint Links ²**
- **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)**
- **Local Government Association (LGA)**
- **North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (NW&NWSFC)**
- **National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)**
- **Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA)**
- **Scottish Executive (SE)**
- **Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)**
- **Welsh Assembly Government**
- **Welsh Partnership of Marine and Coastal Interests**

² Wildlife & Countryside Link, Wales Wildlife & Countryside Link, Scottish Environment Link and Northern Ireland Environment Link