

Pilot project – developing fisheries management measures for offshore European marine sites through the Common Fisheries Policy

Terms of Reference for Project Board

Purpose

The EMS fisheries management measures Project Board (the Board) is responsible for overseeing the delivery of a project to develop proposals for fisheries management measures on two SACs and provide strategic direction to the project. The Board will ensure the project is delivered on time to an agreed timetable working with partners in Marine Scotland, JNCC and MMO, a wide range of national and international stakeholders, closely linked to the MAIA project and linked to the FIMPAS project. The Board will ensure the proposals are suitable to be put forward to the European Commission.

Context

- Member states have a legal obligation to take appropriate steps to avoid, in European sites, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the Directives. Conservation of these sites will assist in the delivery of Defra's and the Scottish Government's aims to conserve and enhance the marine environment.
- Human activities can adversely affect the UK's marine environment and many of UK's marine habitats have been altered or damaged by activities such as fishing. The UK is committed to protecting the marine environment from damaging activities by developing an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas.
- Together, SAC and SPA sites form part of a network of Marine Protected Areas across the European Union (EU), called the Natura 2000 network. For site management purposes, Natura 2000 sites in the marine environment are known as European marine sites (EMS). The aim of this network is to maintain or restore natural habitats and species of wild flora and fauna at favourable conservation status across the European Union. Further sites will be added in the future as well as new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), to be designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act.

- The EMS fisheries management measures project has been set up to work through the process required to agree and put forward fisheries management measures to the European Commission. This is the first time measures will have been developed for UK offshore EMS (beyond 12 nm) and lessons learnt will be applied to other EMS and MCZs.
- Defra will have overall governance of the project working closely with Marine Scotland, JNCC and MMO.
- The Board will oversee delivery of the project aims and objectives as defined in the Project plan, and will receive guidance from technical experts within member's organisations.
- The Board will take direction from and report to Defra's Marine Protected Area Board. The Marine Scotland board will provide comment and direction on matters which relate to, or will have an impact upon, any aspect of the devolution agreement on marine nature conservation.

Board role and responsibilities

The general responsibilities of the Board include:

- Providing strategic direction for the management and delivery of the project within the current policy framework;
- Approving the Project plan including any stage plans;
- Authorising any major deviation from agreed Project plan;
- Signing-off the completion of milestones;
- Ensuring that the necessary resources are committed to the project;
- Authorising the implementation of any Contingency plans and funds;
- Resolving any conflicts within the project;
- Negotiating a solution to any problems between the project and external bodies;
- Ensuring that risks are being tracked and mitigated as effectively as possible;
- Provide direction on communicating the project and its outcomes.
- Ensure that cross-cutting issues are considered.
- Overseeing project assurance to ensure that the Project delivers quality assured products.
- Reviewing the project systematically and establishing successor arrangements once the objectives of the pilot project have been achieved.

Membership

Board membership will comprise the representatives from Defra, Marine Scotland, JNCC and MMO:

- Nigel Gooding, Deputy Director, Marine Biodiversity, Defra SRO, Project chair
- John Clorley, Marine Biodiversity, Defra, Joint Project Executive
- David Mallon, Marine Scotland, Joint Project Executive
- Mark Tasker, Marine Management Advice, JNCC lead
- Charlotte Johnston, JNCC Marine Natura sites manager
- Neil Wellum, Deputy Chief Inspector of Fisheries (Environment), Marine Management Organisation
- Michael McLeod, Marine Scotland project manager
- Richard Pullen, Defra Sea Fisheries Conservation
- Jane Goodwin, Marine Biodiversity, Defra Project Manager

Other persons may attend the meeting with the agreement of the Board, or of the Chair on behalf of the Board. Board Members must be notified in advance of other persons attending the meetings.

Secretariat

Defra, Marine Biodiversity, will provide the Secretariat for the Board, to include organising the meeting programme, collating and distributing papers and taking minutes of the meetings.

Papers must be approved by the project executives; and signed-off by the Senior Responsible Officer.

Papers need to be sent out one week before meetings.

The Project Progress Reports will follow the Defra standard project reporting structure for transmission to the Defra Boards.

Meeting schedule

Board will meet every month to six weeks. The Board may take papers inter-sessionally where there is a clear requirement for urgent action on matters judged to have a high risk to the overall achievement of the project objectives.