

## **Annex M Stakeholder engagement in the Impact Assessment process**

M.1 Stakeholders were engaged in a number of ways in the Impact Assessment (IA). These are summarised below. The Final Recommendations report for each regional Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) project provides more detail on the types of stakeholder engagement undertaken by each project. Annex H1 also provides more detail about how information was gathered from each sector for the purposes of the IA.

### **1 Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) meetings**

M.2 Meetings<sup>1</sup> were held in each regional MCZ project area for each RSG or regional hub<sup>2</sup> over the course of two years (2010 and 2011). The need for the IA was presented to each RSG at a workshop in 2010 by each Regional Project Economist (RPE). Information was gathered from members of each RSG with regard to what socio-economic activities people do where, and how these activities interact with the marine environment. This information contributed directly to the assessment of impacts, and also helped to inform the RPEs' understanding of potential impacts, from which further targeted stakeholder engagement was then carried out.

M.3 The RSGs varied in size from 30 to 45 members, who represented a range of activities and interests in each project area. In the Net Gain project area, there were 146 members as the RSG included regional hub groups and a stakeholder advisory panel.

### **2 Sub-regional stakeholder group meetings**

M.4 Information for the IA was also gathered from members of a range of sub-regional groups that acted in an advisory capacity to the RSGs. The number of sub-regional meetings varied in each regional MCZ project depending on the number of geographic sub-regions and reasons for holding the meetings. In general, the meetings aimed to engage local rather than regionally representative stakeholders, as well as to gather detailed information about socio-economic activities at the local level. This information contributed directly to the assessment of impacts, and also helped to inform the RPEs' understanding of potential impacts, from which further targeted stakeholder engagement was then carried out.

### **3 Liaison officer engagement**

M.5 Each regional MCZ project employed liaison officers to engage with the wider stakeholder community. The number of liaison officers varied in each regional MCZ project depending on the size of the region, and the number, breadth and depth of stakeholder interests to engage. The liaison officers mainly gathered information from fishers and recreational users, to identify what activities they do and where, and how often etc. The information informed the IA as well as the process to decide on recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs). The liaison officers also distributed each iteration of the RSG recommendations and drafts of the IA material through targeted meetings, particularly with disparate groups, who may otherwise have had difficulties in providing feedback.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term 'workshop' was used in the Irish Sea Conservation Zones (ISCZ) project area.

<sup>2</sup> The main decision-making groups in the Finding Sanctuary and Net Gain project areas.

#### **4 Direct engagement of stakeholders with the economist**

M.6 An RPE was employed in each regional MCZ project to lead and co-ordinate development of the material for the IA. From mid-2010 to the start of 2012, the RPEs engaged with various stakeholders in person, by phone and by email. Meetings were held to relay the purposes of the IA and to gather information on anticipated impacts upon sectors and local communities. Engagement initially sought to cover the full range of activities and sectors that could be impacted by MCZs. As the likely management scenarios were developed, engagement became more targeted to those sectors and communities that were more likely to be impacted by rMCZs.

#### **5 Feedback from the wider public**

M.7 In the Irish Sea project area, after each iteration of the rMCZ recommendation process, feedback forms were distributed to members of the public by the regional MCZ project. Completed and returned feedback forms provided information about the perceived impact of rMCZs by the general public. This information informed the understanding of impact presented in the IA, as well as the ongoing rMCZ recommendation process. In the other MCZ project areas, this was collected informally via liaison officer engagement with the wider community.

#### **6 Feedback on each iteration of the IA material**

M.8 Each iteration of the RSG recommendations was accompanied by a draft of material for the IA. This was provided to the RSG and named consultative stakeholders<sup>3</sup> via email along with feedback forms. In the Finding Sanctuary and Net Gain project areas, this information was also published on the regional MCZ project's website to allow access to members of the public. The RSG was asked to liaise with their wider sector in providing feedback.

M.9 The draft IA material for the final RSG recommendation was produced in three tranches between November 2011 and February 2012. It was not possible to quantify and cost the most likely impacts until November 2011 which was after the RSG recommendations had been made. This is because management scenarios could not be meaningfully estimated until mid to late 2011 (see paragraph M.10). Up until this point, it was not known how activities within rMCZs would most likely be managed.

#### **7 Engagement at the national level with government departments, statutory nature conservation bodies and regulatory bodies**

M.10 Information was gathered from government departments, statutory nature conservation bodies and regulatory bodies, to understand how their advice to operators seeking consent for spatially fixed licensed activities might change due to the designation of MCZs. While this advice could not be site-specific or pre-judge the outcome of any future licensing decision, it helped to steer the RPEs towards an understanding of what impacts upon licensed operators are most likely to occur. The statutory nature conservation bodies also provided site-specific advice regarding the possible management of fisheries in MCZs. All of this advice was critical for identifying appropriate management scenarios on which to base the assessment of impacts, and was provided to the

---

<sup>3</sup> There are no named consultative stakeholders in the ISCZ regional project.

RPEs in mid to late 2011. Other government departments and agencies with interests in MCZs were invited by Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to comment on the draft material for the IA that was submitted November 2011 – February 2012.

## **8 Engagement at the international level with stakeholders**

M.11 Joint Nature Conservation Committee liaison officers engaged with non-UK fishing representatives and stakeholder groups with interest in this (e.g. Regional Advisory Councils) to keep them up to date regarding MCZ recommendations and to gather information about non-UK fishing activities in rMCZs. Resource limitations restricted the opportunity to meet with individual non-UK fisheries representatives regularly; however, the liaison officers kept key industry representatives up to date by phone, email and attending key meetings. Specific qualitative information was collected during a series of meetings in autumn 2011 (six meetings in five countries) to help inform the IA. This information related to the scale of perceived impact which in most cases was for the highest cost management scenario for the MCZs of interest.