

Marine Spatial Planning Pilot Project

Project Management Group Meeting 14th April 2005 at 11:00 am, Room 213, Ergon House, London

Attendees

Robert Canning	MW/Defra (chair)	Carol O'Boyle	DOE NI
Matt Carden	MW/Defra	Kevin O'Carroll	DTI
Beth Greenaway	MW/Defra	Steve Atkins	JNCC
Jennifer Hauser	MW/Defra	Pippa Morrison	MoD
Sharon Thompson	MW/Defra	Richard Bowles	MoD
Sonia Gharyal	MW/Defra	Brian Marker	ODPM
Dave Bench	ML/Defra	Alayna Imlah	SE
Anthony Hynes	Fish/Defra	Ian Townend	ABPmer
Carolyn Heeps	Crown Estate	Stephen Hull	ABPmer
Colin Morris	DfT	Stephanie Massie	TOR
Leila Alkazwini	DCMS	Bob Asquith	TOR

Welcome, introduction and apologies

1. Robert Canning welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dominic Whitmee, EWD, Defra and Jim Claydon, TOR.

Literature Review

2. An overview of the literature review was provided by Stephen Hull. Three responses had been received so far from RSPB, JNCC and CEFAS. Comments were also posted on the web based discussion forum by EA and informal comments had been received from the aggregate sector.

The five main areas flagged up were:

- International MSP – suggestions for further material that should be considered. These comments generally replicated ABPmer's findings, although ABPmer will check them, as some further methods may be uncovered.
 - Land use planning process and how this can be transferred to the marine environment e.g. ownership processes etc.
 - Plan boundaries – no consensus of opinion on this topic. Suggestions included ecosystem boundaries and management dictated boundaries. Other issues include landward boundaries and how this will impact upon land based planning.
 - Data and information – 2 responses felt that the too much emphasis is being placed upon the lack of data but 2 further responses felt that it was crucial we highlighted gaps in current knowledge.
 - Priorities – ecological objectives verses management objectives. How will these be balanced with the overall aim of sustainable development?
3. *Comments from management group:*
- MoD commented that there is little focus on the military side of policy drivers/sectors. This needs to be addressed through data collection and the next stages of the pilot.

- DTI raised the need to find a balance between conservation interests and sustainable development, and not start with a set of nature conservation objectives and then try a fit other objectives around them.
- ODPM stated that land use planning system is governed by a series of national, regional and local frameworks, so conflict resolution is not just left to the local level.
- It was raised by DfT that there was a lack of literature covering where plans have failed, this may result in a bias in the literature. ABPmer responded that this could be due to the relative youth of the projects covered by current literature and also by the reluctance of this literature to report failure.
- Colleagues raised the question of what would be done with the completed report. ABPmer suggested that hard copies of the completed report should be sent to OSPAR and all stakeholders as well as being placed on the ABPmer website.
- DCMS agreed to provide comments by e-mail direct to ABPmer.
- It was agreed that comments on the literature review would be considered for a further 2 weeks.
- The group did not want to continue to exert substantial amounts of effort on the literature review, when this time could be better spent concentrating on the pilot project. ABPmer agreed that the literature review needed to be finalised quickly so that work on the pilot could proceed.
- The report would be a freestanding document and the final version would be put on the project website in about 3-4 weeks time. **Action: Final comments to ABPmer within 2 weeks. ABPmer to finalise report 2 weeks after that.**

Developing the Pilot

4. It was noted that the project website at www.abpmer.co.uk/mspp was now up and running.

5. 100 questionnaires have been sent out to a wide range of stakeholders seeking their commitment to participate in the Pilot. 24 responses had been received to date from stakeholders willing to participate, half of which were from Government departments. A number of these stakeholders stated they have data/information that can be used for the pilot project. A number of regional stakeholders have also been identified.

6. ABPmer said that there should be between 55 to 60 stakeholders at the afternoon's first advisory group workshop. It was agreed that the priority would be to try and get them actively engaged in the pilot project. Achieving this would be essential to the overall purpose of the workshop, which is to identify potential problems to the implementation of the MSP.

'Towards' paper

7. ABPmer and TOR provided a quick overview of the Pilot Project paper that had been circulated to the group for discussion and then asked for comments from members of the Project Management Group. Comments received were as follows:

MW/Defra

- Is the inclusion of pollution/oil spills in the plan practical? Yes for information stage.
- Some individual sectors need further fleshing out, to make them more explicit.
- Aggregate extraction – both sand and gravel have been tackled together but do they involve the same stakeholders or two separate groups?
- It would be useful to identify stakeholders and sponsoring departments and to seek to agree positions where possible.

- Information on discharges needs to be included but need to decide on how this information is interpreted into the plan, as this will have an impact on e.g. fishfarms/cocklebeds etc.
- Some of the lists are *states* of the sea and not activities e.g. marine litter, what will this add to the plan?
- We should be looking at a 3D plan rather than 2D for the marine environment. Ecosystem models are now beginning to demonstrate that they could be very useful for informing activities. We need to ensure that science is being used properly within the plan as this is not currently coming through. This needs to be made clearer in the 'Towards' paper.
- Plans will need to be flexible to allow coverage of new/novel activities.

DTI

- Using the *Seas of Change* objectives puts too much focus on nature conservation and needs to be focused on sustainable development and MSP.
- There are huge data gaps, which will be very costly and lengthy to fill.
- Forecasting seems very worthy but there will be some sectors that will not be able to do this e.g. fisheries, oil & gas and conservation of mobile species.
- Where do SEAs fit into MSP? If SEAs have to be done before a plan can be drawn up this could significantly delay the formation of a plan. Impact will be especially significant in areas where no or little information gathering has taken place.
- Questions were raised regarding how much industry would have to do before plans were put into place.

ODPM

- Land use planning revisions in policy have resulted in different levels of planning depending on activities within the area e.g. broad brush plans for areas with little activity and detailed area action plans for specific areas that have high activity.

MoD

- There needs to be more reference to International Conventions e.g. OSPAR and London Dumping Convention.
- Need to ensure that sea dump sites (munitions) are mentioned within the plans.

Fisheries/Defra

- Allocation of quotas on an annual basis takes away some of the predictability of fishing activity in most areas, making long term planning difficult. Changes in annual quotas could change the intensity of the activity. This issue applies equally to other member state's activities in UK waters, not within the control of the UK.
- Fisheries objectives should be made more explicit as a result of UK policy review conducted in response to the No 10 Strategy Unit report on a sustainable future for the fishing industry

ML/Defra

- The document needs to be more explicit on the current legislative framework and any new legislative framework that may be required.

DfT

- RIA should feature somewhere in the document as it was an important part of the project outcome. .

MoD/Crown Estate

- Need to look at scenarios where activities cross several boundaries and what impacts they could potentially cause, and whether activities can co-exist below and above the seabed e.g. carbon sequestration.

JNCC

- Testing of all activities could become very complex.
- We will need to take into consideration cumulative and combination effects as well as enforcement issues.

8. There was broad agreement that all these points were valuable. ABPmer would place the 'Forwards@' paper on the website and develop particular issues for further comment. **Action: ABPmer to reflect on these ahead of the more detailed stakeholder engagement.**

9. *Stakeholder engagement paper – Overview by Stephen Hull*

The next stakeholder workshop would be held in the third week of June. This has now been arranged and will be held in Liverpool on 22nd to 23rd June, starting at lunchtime on 22nd June and finishing 24 hours later. Some concerns were raised as to whether a draft plan will be available in time for discussions at the June workshop.

10. ABPmer reassured the group and explained that this workshop is likely to focus on the initial information for preparing the plan (i.e. packaged in a GIS system) with the later workshop looking in detail at plan policies. SE raised concerns that the pilot was not generating enough stakeholder interest and more should be done to sell the pilot to stakeholders. DfT stated that some stakeholders may see MSP as a threat but this could encourage them to buy-in to the pilot.

Arrangements for Advisory Group Workshop (14th April)

11. Robert Canning provided details/arrangements for this workshop (a separate note would be circulated). Due to election purdah, the meeting would now be chaired and run by ABPmer.

AOB

12. It was noted that the election manifestos included or referred to commitments to bring forward new marine legislation. In particular, the Labour Party manifesto referred to marine spatial planning: *"Through a Marine Act, we will introduce a new framework for the seas, based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs. To obtain best value from different uses of our valuable marine resources, we must maintain and protect the ecosystems on which they depend"*.

Next meeting

13. Next MSPP management Group meeting to take place on 5th July at 2pm in room G1, Whitehall Place West, London.

**Marine and Waterways Division, Defra
5 May 2005**