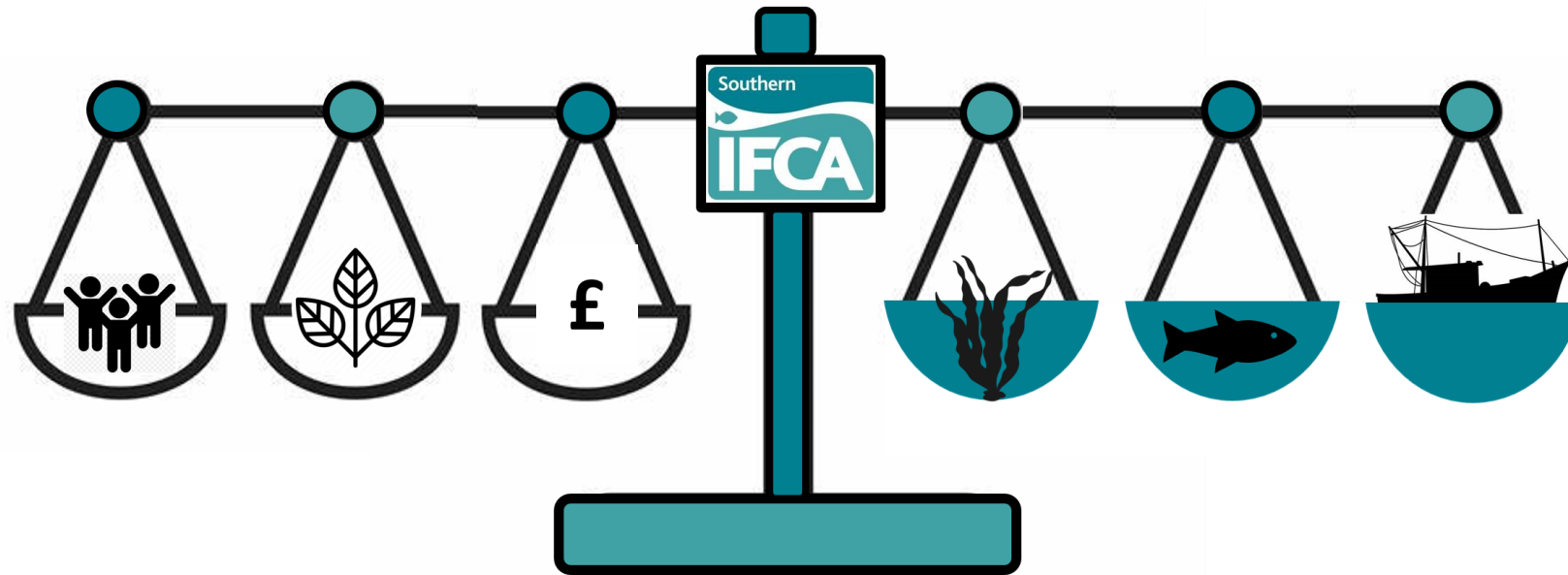


“ IFCAs will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment & inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental & economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries & a viable industry ”

IFCA National Vision



This overarching Strategy is to be read in conjunction with the 2026-2027 Operational Plans: [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan](#) & the [Research & Policy Team Plan](#).

This Annual Strategy demonstrates how **Southern IFCA will continue to shape inshore fisheries and conservation management** in accordance with our statutory core functions under the **Marine & Coastal Access Act, 2009**, in addition to our duties under the **Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017** (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019), **The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981** and the **Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015** and in doing so support the UK's Governments vision for '*clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas*' in accordance with the **UK Marine Policy Statement**.

Further, it will demonstrate how Southern IFCA's work aligns with the Government's shared ambition under the **Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)** '*...to continue delivering world class, sustainable management...*' for **sea fisheries, recreational sea fishing and aquaculture**, in accordance with achieving, or contributing to the achievement of the **eight fisheries objectives**, set out in the **Fisheries Act 2020**.

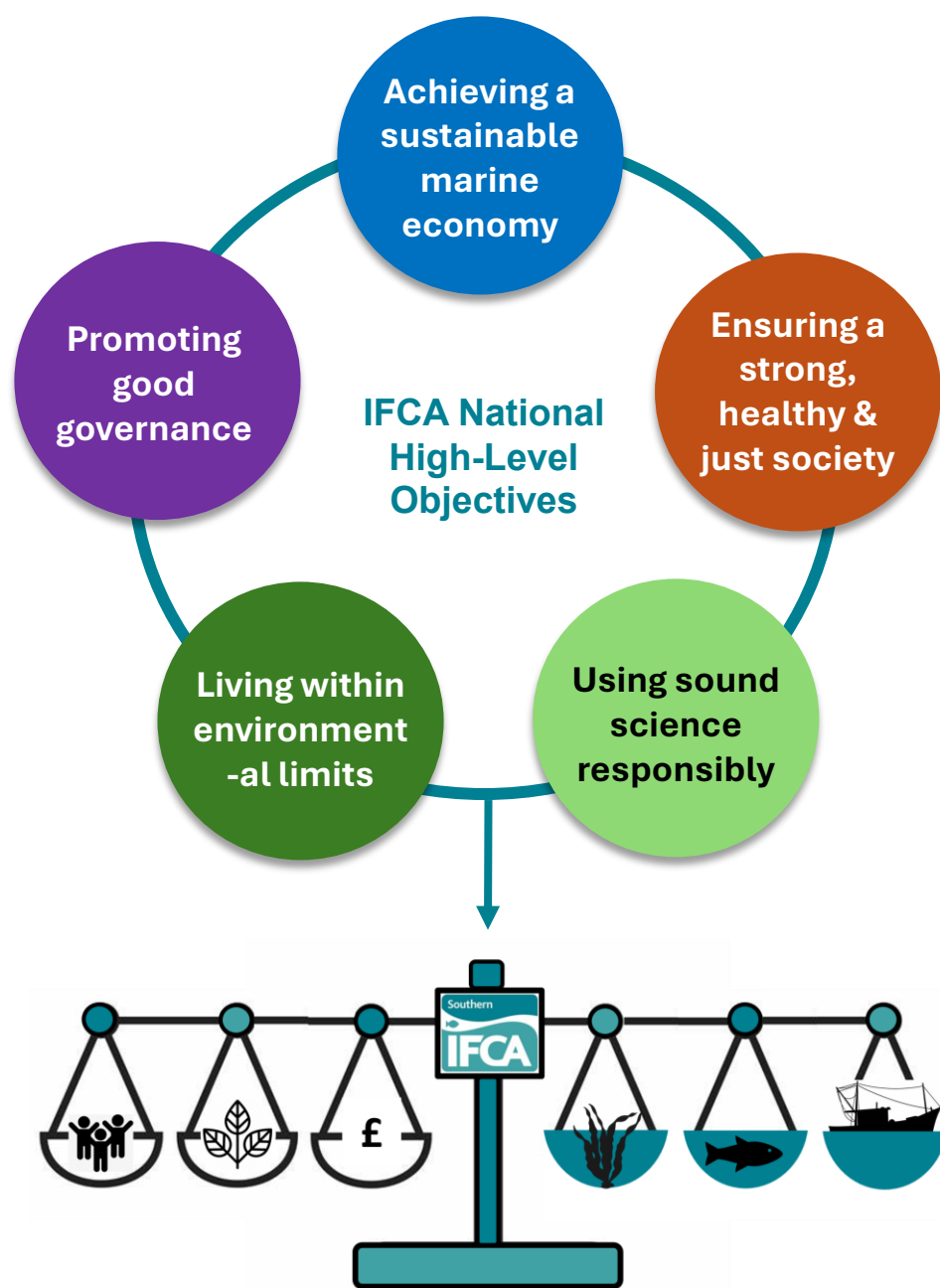
The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 require fishery bodies in the UK to take action to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in all UK waters. **The UK Marine Strategy** is a key pillar of marine policy in the UK and the JFS is a cross-cutting measure which will help to deliver GES for fisheries.

In accordance with the Government's **Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025** which builds upon the **25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP)** and key legislative frameworks to include the **Environment Act 2021** and the **Fisheries Act 2020**, Southern IFCA will endeavour to evidence our role in the collective delivery of the Government's vision, to '*...help the natural world regain and retain good health...*', following the commitment to '*...leave the environment in a better state for future generations...*' and '*...halt the decline of nature by 2030...*'

The Fisheries Act (2020) was introduced to make provisions in relation to **fisheries, fishing, aquaculture** and **marine conservation** following the departure of the UK from Europe. The Act enshrines in law the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing, supporting future generations of fishers, while allowing the marine environment to thrive. It provides a legally binding structure to protect and recover stocks, support a sustainable fishing industry and safeguard the environment. In accordance with the JFS, **IFCAs are required to have regard to the Fisheries Act**, the **Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)** and **Fisheries Management Plans (FMP)**, where required by guidance issued by the Secretary of State, or when undertaking a relevant function as delegated by the Marine Management Organisation.

The Environment Act (2021) sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, waste and water and includes a target to reverse the decline in species abundance by 2030. The Act designated the 25YEP as the first statutory **Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP)**, and IFCAs, as detached Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) to Defra, **play a crucial role in the delivery of the EIP**. Additionally, The Act places a requirement upon all public authorities to consider what they can do to conserve & enhance biodiversity. This **Biodiversity Duty** is intrinsically entwined into the work that Southern deliver and we will continue to align our work with the commitments captured in the **National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP)**.

In accordance with the **UK Net Zero Strategy** and with relation to ongoing works focusing on the harnessing of blue carbon habitats, Southern IFCA will endeavour to both identify and instigate operational changes to minimise emissions, as well as seek to support & champion blue carbon initiatives.



Ten **Strategic Anchors** will ensure that Southern IFCA's work at a local level, maintains alignment to wider contexts & directions at national and international level:



Economic growth: Supporting the UK Government's vision via development and maintenance of effective & adaptive novel fisheries management spanning wild (fish & shellfish) and farmed stocks (shellfish).



Food security: Facilitating thriving inshore fisheries & aquaculture via sound & informed governance for local, national & international gain.

Supporting **thriving & resilient communities:** Recognising how we can make a difference to our fishing communities, supporting opportunity, diversification and new ways of working.



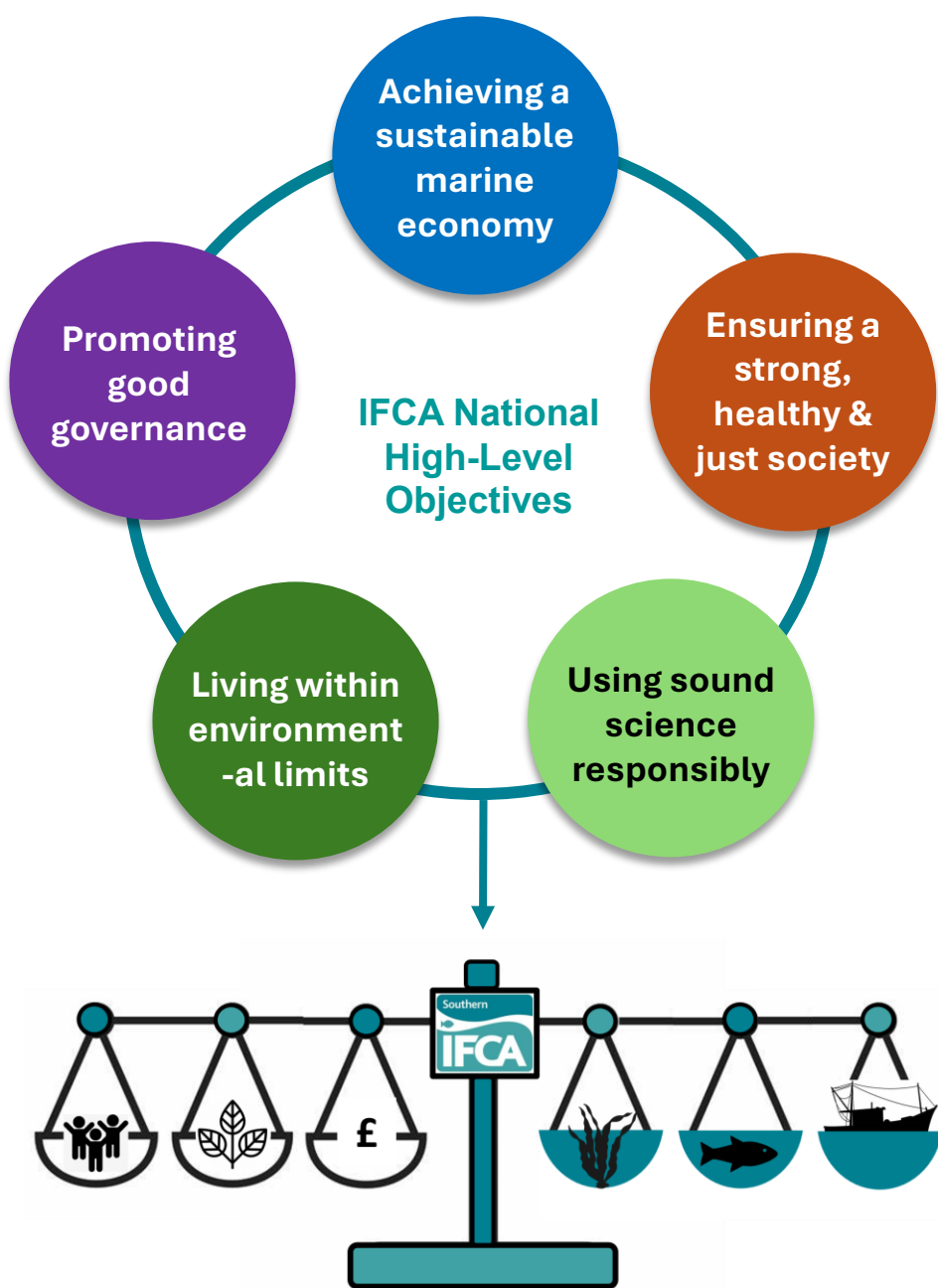
Championing the positive role that inshore fishers have as **custodians of a sustainable inshore marine environment.**



Evolving research methodologies in line with recognised standards to inform local objectives & national considerations.



Develop, implement & review local management interventions with **proportionality when employing best available evidence.**



Supporting Nature's Recovery: To continue to support the Government target of achieving 30% protections in the marine environment by 2030.

Build awareness of the implications of **Climate Change at a District level**, drawing from & informing national objectives.

Deliver well managed inshore **fisheries which co-exist & thrive alongside achievement of conservation protections.**

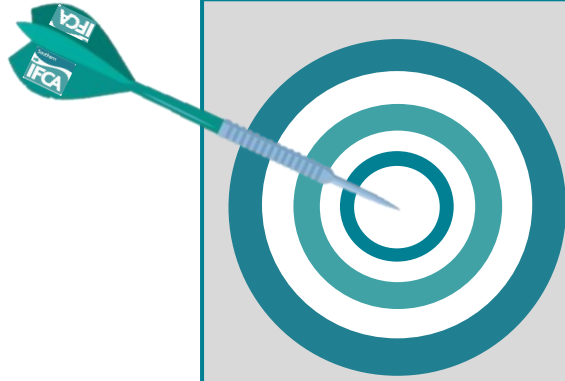
Inform national discussions on robust inshore fisheries management & conservation governance.



An **Organisational Anchor** recognises that our ability to deliver our statutory functions is directly related to the skills & expertise that we develop, nurture and maintain across the team:

Enable & resource a high performing team, investing in staff & their professional attainment, the work environment & the provision of suitable tools to **create an enabling and flourishing work culture.**





To foster empowered engagement that gives **[stakeholders]** a voice, builds confidence, drives meaningful actions & creates ownership

[Commercial Fisherman]

[Aquaculture Operators]

[Recreational Fishers]

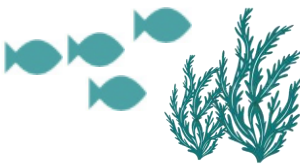
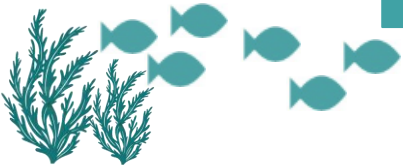
[Charter Boat Operators]

[Conservationists]

[Recreational Anglers]

[Merchants & Processors]

[Local Communities across Dorset, Hampshire & the IOW]



Give a voice



- To evolve the format of Community Drop-In Surgeries beyond fixed locations, **meeting stakeholders in their everyday environments** - from the shore to the sea.
- To **rejuvenate sector group meetings** and formats to increase stakeholder opportunities to raise community interests with the IFCA and other relevant regulators.

Build confidence



- To **address common themes** raised during 2025-2026 Community Drop-In Surgeries.
- To pilot an **Inshore Regulators Forum** relevant to the Southern IFCA District to increase stakeholders understanding of regulator functions in inshore waters.

Drive meaningful action



- To review relevant process documents to improve accessibility for stakeholders in both their understanding of decision-making processes and **where they can input into the process**, identifying clear pathways from problem profile → intervention.
- To improve **feedback loops** following changes in fisheries or conservation management.

Create ownership



- To demonstrate where **stakeholder engagement has shaped management decisions** and explain where this has not been reflected and why.
- Demonstrate how fishers are collectively **driving stewardship via shared accountability**.



Measuring Success

- % attendance
- % active participation
- % of stakeholders contributing ideas or feedback
- no. stakeholder engaged
- diversity of contributors (varying sectors)
- % of decisions that reference stakeholder input
- no. of stakeholder led initiatives active in district
- % compliance with existing measures

Black Seabream Implementation & Review: to fulfil our legal commitments in three Dorset Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) we will work with the community to introduce black seabream co-developed principles across the commercial, recreational and charter fleets operating in Dorset. In doing so we will seek to improve collective understandings of this data poor species, whilst supporting both local fishing interests and the wider Dorset community, as well as informing the ongoing development of the national Seabream Fisheries Management Plan (FMP). Working with the community, we will ensure that the co-developed principles remain fit for purpose, undertaking a collaborative review following the conclusion of the recognised breeding season (1st April – 31st July). Further details can be found on page 19 of the [Research & Policy Team Plan 2026-2027](#) and page 16 of the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan 2026-2027](#).
































Review of the Poole Harbour dredge fisheries: To undertake a review of the pump scoop fishery in Poole Harbour, as regulated under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw (PHDPB). This review will explore innovations in the fishery since the introduction of the PHDPB in 2015, seeking to support and showcase innovative fisheries practice and modernisation in the fishery, whilst maintaining ongoing compliance with marine conservation objectives relevant to the Poole Harbour MPA and ongoing stock sustainability. Further details can be found on page 12 of the [Research & Policy Team Plan 2026-2027](#).

Review of the Solent dredge fisheries: To undertake a review of dredge fishing in The Solent, as regulated under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw (SDPB). This review will consider changes in species composition and the evolution of the dredge fisheries since the introduction of the SDPB in 2021. As part of this review we will consider whether the current Category Permits remain fit for purpose, recognising that each species within the fishery may require a different management approach. Working with industry, we will continue to evolve understandings of the dredge fisheries, building upon the existing evidence base through heightened monitoring and engagement programmes, with the collective aim to enhance stock understandings and to strengthen stakeholder confidence, ensuring that the Solent dredge fisheries remain socio-economically viable and sustainable. Further details can be found on page 11 of the [Research & Policy Team Plan 2026-2027](#).

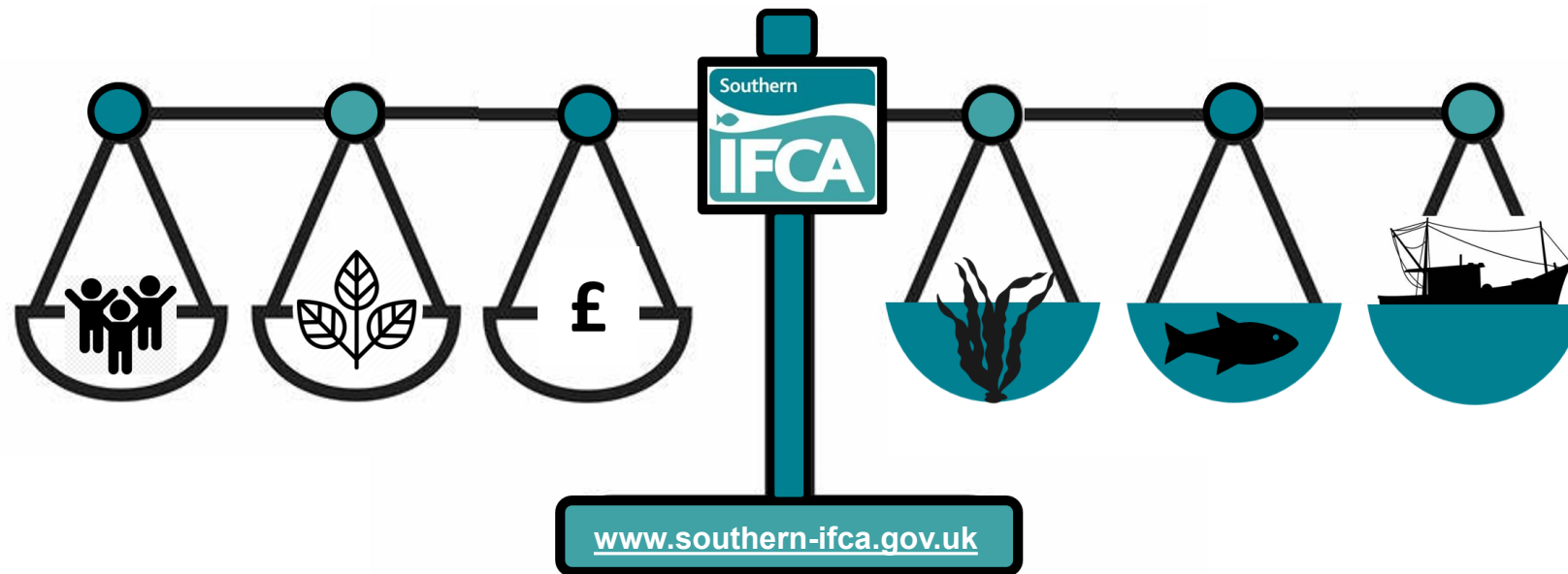
The application of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in inshore fisheries: Building upon ongoing work since 2024, we will continue to assess the feasibility of REM and AI technologies in small scale inshore fisheries. Applying lessons learnt in the application of this technology in trawl, net, and pot fisheries in Lyme Bay, we will explore the use of this technology in the Poole Harbour pump scoop fishery and the Solent dredge fishery, further enhancing our understandings of REM and AI application in bespoke inshore fisheries. Outcomes of this work will jointly inform national discussions on both Marine Protected Area (MPA) spatial management solutions and Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) objectives in accordance with the National IFCA REM Strategy; strengthening knowledge exchange and informing potential funding opportunities, as coordinated by the AIFCA led REM Advisory Group. Further details can be found on page 17 of the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan 2026-2027](#).

2026-27: Delivery Metrics

In combination, the **delivery metrics** drawn together in this table will, where relevant, underpin Southern’s work for 2026-2027. The graphics will provide a golden thread drawing from this strategy into the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan](#) & the [Research & Policy Team Plan](#) with outcomes being reported in the 2026-2027 Annual Report.

 <h2>Strategic Anchors</h2>		 <h2>Key Themes</h2>		 <h2>2026-27 Mission</h2>	
Economic Growth		Employing proportionality when considering best available evidence		Industry Collaboration	
Food Security		Supporting Nature’s Recovery		Co-development	
Resilient Communities		Building awareness of Climate Change implications		Working in partnership	
Fishers as Custodians		Managing fisheries which co-exist & thrive alongside conservation protections		 <h2>Organisational Anchor</h2>	
Evolving Research Methodologies		Inform national discussions on robust inshore fisheries & conservation management			
 <h2>2026-27 Mission</h2>		 <h2>Supporting Defra</h2>			
Give a voice		Fisheries Management Plans* 			
Build confidence		Marine Protected Areas* 			
Drive meaningful action		Marine Consents* 			
Create Ownership		Net Zero/Blue Carbon* 			
Fisheries Objectives	Sustainability 	Ecosystem 	Bycatch 	National Benefit 	
	Precautionary 	Scientific Evidence 	Equal Access 	Climate Change 	

*Ongoing support of Defra’s delivery of Fisheries Act objectives subject to 2026-2029 Spending Review outcomes.



The **Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-27**, due for publication in Summer 2027, will provide an account of how Southern IFCA have preformed in their delivery of this Annual Strategy, via achievement of and contribution to, the **National IFCA Vision & High-Level Objectives**, the **Southern IFCA Vision, Strategic Anchors**, the **2026-2027 Mission Statement** and delivery of the **2026-2027 Key Objectives**. In our delivery we remain accountable to **Defra** (Central Government), our **six constituent Local Authorities** (Local Government), namely Dorset Council, BCP Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council, as well as the **stakeholder community** that we serve. **The Annual Report will demonstrate the vital role that Southern IFCA deliver as a joint committee public service provider in the inshore marine environment.**