



Guidelines for the production of Marine Protected Area (MPA) Fisheries Management Plans

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1 Introduction

The 'Community Planning for MPAs' partnership project engaged the communities of Dorset, in Southern England, in the management of fishing activities in the area's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network. The management of fisheries within these inshore MPAs support a healthy marine environment whilst simultaneously enabling small-scale sustainable fisheries to thrive and deliver cultural benefits.

Communities that are integrated in the development and management of MPAs grow to value these special areas and the way in which they are used. The project recognised this and sought to engage local communities with the process of developing fisheries management plans for MPAs in their area, as well as raising awareness of these sites and their value to both local communities and the marine environment.

By involving local fishery participants in the development of site specific MPA fisheries management plans the project improved the collective local understanding of these sites, what and how they are used, why they are special and ways to sustainably manage them. This has led to an appreciation of why these sites are managed in the way they are and will ultimately support compliance with regulations in the future.

Importantly, these plans recognise the historic stewardship role that the local community have provided to preserve the species and habitats found in Dorset's inshore marine environment. Through engaging people from all walks of life, there has been an increased awareness of the value of Dorset's inshore marine environment and an appreciation for sustainably managed fisheries.

The project can be seen as best practice for the production of Fishery Management Plans for MPAs in England and beyond. This document outlines the process followed for engaging communities in the production of such management plans to improve the collective understanding and support for MPAs and the positive coexistence of well-managed fisheries in these sites.

2 Community Engagement with Inshore Fisheries Management

Historically, the designation of Marine Protected Areas has been surrounded by the promotion of stories of conflict between fisheries, environmental protection and communities. However, the project established a protocol by which the local community, including fishery participants and other stakeholders, were fully integrated into the production of Fisheries Management Plans for four of Dorset's inshore MPAs.

The project was collectively delivered through a partnership between Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA), the local fishery regulators, Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), a locally based environmental Non-Government Organisation, and Dorset Coast Forum, the County's forum for coastal users.

A project Steering Group was established to support the delivery of the project, placing fishery leaders and key stakeholders at the heart of the decision-making process. The early integration of Steering Group Members was integral to developing local support for the project and effectively maximised engagement throughout, particularly within the fishing community.

Workshops were held in the areas relevant to the specific MPA sites, targeted towards fishers, both commercial and recreational, and other marine users. During these workshops, the process of writing the FMP, the aims of writing those plans, and the expected future management actions in the plans were described to the attendees. After this, the members of the community were invited to provide suggestions on how they would like to see the Fisheries Management Plans developed as well as indicate what management actions they felt should not be included. Workshops were held in locations close to each specific MPA, with the target attendees invited those which directly use or engage with that site. Workshop reports were delivered to the project Steering Group enabling the integration of community feedback into the draft Management Plans. The community was then able to comment on these draft plans through a wrap up' workshop.

Following the development of Management Plans, a range of public engagement events were organised or attended throughout the local area to present the plans, highlight Dorset's extraordinary marine environment and to communicate the benefits of well-managed fisheries within its MPAs. The events focussed on raising awareness of the value and benefits of the designated sites themselves, whilst also developing understanding of how well managed fisheries can co-exist within MPAs and help to provide both benefits to the sites themselves as well as the wider community.

The processes of integrating the community in the development of the plans proved invaluable in gaining support for the plans themselves. At the final workshop the attendees were comfortable with the direction which the plans showed the management would be taking and felt they represented a fair picture of how the fisheries and other sectors engage with the MPAs. The process of holding the workshops also contributed to the aim of raising awareness of the MPAs in the wider community, and developed relationships between sectors with overlapping use of the sites. Additionally, through promoting the co-existence of well-managed fisheries in MPAs with the benefits of these fisheries to the community and sites themselves, the relationship between the managing authority and the fishing community was positively developed.

This project has highlighted how effective community engagement is key to the development of MPA Fisheries Management Plans. Such plans achieve more than simply describing the future management of a site, they will bring together a range of stakeholders and build

relationships between them; they raise awareness of the sites and their wider environmental and cultural importance; and they will help to redirect focus from conflict, to draw attention to the overlapping benefits well managed activities have within sites and the community contributions which add to the value of MPAs.

3 Components of a Marine Protected Area Fisheries Management Plan

In simple terms, a Management Plan is a document which sets out the management approach and goals, together with a framework for decision making, to apply in the protected area over a given period of time. Management Plans should be succinct documents that identify the key features or values of the protected area, clearly establish the management objectives to be met and indicate the actions to be implemented.

Whilst the components of most management plans may be similar, there is no set standard or format. However, reviews of such documents have been completed and suggested templates and general guidelines provided (Clarke and Mount, 1998 and Middleton and Thomas, 2003) see Appendix 1.

During the process of writing Fisheries Management Plans for UK Marine Protected Areas, the suggested template from Middleton and Thomas (2003) was used as a base point for the plans. However, during the process minor changes were made to the template to allow the plans to meet the wider goals of the project which included engaging communities in the management of MPAs, raising awareness of the importance of the MPA network and increasing the resilience of management in the sites.

Particular emphasis was added to the descriptions of the history and importance of the sites on both an environmental and cultural basis as well from a standard fisheries perspective. Sections which described the MPA itself and importance were altered to resonate more with general members of the public rather than the standard plain text format of a scientific plan. The Management section of the document included detail on the ongoing management actions as well as highlighting the future actions to be taken. Added to this is information which described how members of the public and other stakeholders could contribute to the ongoing management of the MPA.

Marine Protected Areas in the UK are underwritten by a complex matrix of international and national legislation. As a result, they are co-managed by a group of contributing public bodies and authorities with differing responsibilities. The production of MPA fisheries management plans are important in highlighting the distinction between these organisations' responsibilities.

Therefore, fisheries management plans should highlight who is responsible for management of the fishing activity within a site, but must also make reference to the overarching organisation which will monitor the state of the site. The link between changes in site state (provided by the organisation responsible for site monitoring) and the actions the relevant fisheries management authority could take should be clear.

Plans which aim to both create a resilient management plan which is also clear and accessible to the general public, and highlights the environmental, cultural and economic importance of the MPA and well managed fisheries within them should follow the template set out Table 1. below.

Components of an MPA Fisheries Management Plan.	Description of component
Executive summary	These summarises the contents of the plan.
Introduction	This states the purpose and scope of the plan, and provides an explanation of the purpose for which the protected area was established (including any legislative basis) and the authority for plan development. It may also contain some basic summary information about the protected area, such as its location, size, primary re - sources and values.
Overview of the purpose and governance of MPAs	This explains in more but not overwhelming detail the legislative drivers for MPAs in UK waters, including who is responsible for what aspects of their management.
Evolution of the site	This describes the events which led up to the MPAs designation – applicable where the site has an important community led history. It should contribute to two of the goals of the plan; engaging communities in the management of MPAs, raising awareness of the importance of the MPA network
Description of the site	This summarises relevant descriptive information about the protected area. It normally includes a summary account of the resources (features) of the area (natural, cultural, historical and socioeconomic).
A thriving MPA	This identifies why the MPA is important on an environmental, economic and cultural basis. It describes how the site is used, by who and what the benefits are.
Management of the MPA	This section describes the relevant management which occurs within the MPA, in relation to the activities which are the focus of the management plan itself.
The Management Plan	This contains the specific actions to be carried out in order to achieve the objectives. It commonly includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - list of management actions/activities required (often called prescriptions); - schedule or work plan identifying when each action will be carried out and by whom (this may be a separate document); - priority activities identified;

Table 1. The components of a clear, assessable Marine Protected Area fisheries Management plan.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for a good Management Plan A Management Plan should be:

1. Clear and accessible: easy to read, jargon free and well presented.
2. Concise and comprehensive: no longer than is absolutely necessary, but with enough information to fulfil its functions.
3. Accurate and objective: without major errors or statements likely to date and with the criteria for all judgements clearly explained.
4. Systematic and logical: With management policies derived from an assessment of the site and with a clear rationale given for all proposals.
5. Acceptable and motivating to all those with interests in and emotional attachment to the site.
6. Precise and practical: with clear objectives, realistic methods for achieving them, resulting in desired outcomes which can be monitored.
7. Focused and effective: fulfilling its purpose as a tool for site management, meeting the needs of its users and satisfying any legal or other obligations.

Source: Clarke and Mount (1998).

Suggested template (subject to adaptations)

Executive summary	This summarises essential issues within the plan and relevant decisions.
Introduction	This states the purpose and scope of the plan, and provides an explanation of the purpose for which the protected area was established (including any legislative basis) and the authority for plan development. It may also contain some basic summary information about the protected area, such as its location, size, primary resources and values.
Description of the protected area	This summarises relevant descriptive information about the protected area. It normally includes a summary account of the resources (features) of the area (natural, cultural, historical and socioeconomic), how it is used, and its legal and management framework. It can be equally important to state what the plan does not cover.
Evaluation of the protected area	This identifies why the protected area is important, and explains the values associated with it.
Analysis of issues and problems	This section contains an analysis of the constraints and opportunities affecting the area and a statement of the principal threats to its conservation, management and maintenance. Also any impacts (internal or external) on the important features of the area should be stated, along with any other management considerations.
Vision and objectives	This contains a broad, long-term vision for the protected area, which may take the form of goals, and a 'vision statement'. Any guiding policies for management can be included here.
Zoning plan	If different management zones are required, a zoning plan can be prepared to illustrate the boundaries, classification and management and other activities allowed or prohibited for each zone.
Management actions (prescriptions)	This contains the specific actions to be carried out in order to achieve the objectives. It commonly includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - list of management actions/activities required (often called prescriptions); - schedule or work plan identifying when each action will be carried out and by whom (this may be a separate document); - priority activities identified; and n staff and finances required to carry them out (costings).
Monitoring and review	This section outlines how implementation of the plan will be monitored, and when and how a review of the plan will be carried out. It will include the indicators against which the performance of the protected area will be measured.

Source: modified from Middleton and Thomas (2003)