

Roles and responsibilities of Natural England in the delivery of the Marine Conservation Zone Project

Introduction

Natural England is the UK Government's statutory advisor on the conservation of England's marine environment (from the coast out to 12 nautical miles offshore).

Together with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee we are responsible for recommending Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)¹ to Government in October 2011. To achieve this we have jointly established the MCZ Project which will run from January 2009 to October 2011. For more details about the MCZ Project please visit Natural England's [website](#).

Natural England has different roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the MCZ Project. This document has been developed to provide clarity on what these roles and responsibilities are and outline what our staff will be doing to deliver them.

Natural England's roles and responsibilities

Natural England has four distinct roles in the MCZ Project:

1. Project management;
2. Providing advice to Government;
3. Engaging as a stakeholder in the development of MCZ recommendation;
4. Build support and understanding of the MCZ Project.

1. Project Management

Delivery of the MCZ Project is the responsibility of Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The MCZ Project Board has been established to manage the Project's implementation and budget. The Board is accountable to the Natural England and JNCC's internal management structures and is chaired by Natural England's Marine Director. Full details about the management structures of the Project are available in the [MCZ Project Delivery Guidance](#).

Natural England employs a MCZ project manager. The project manager is responsible for the co-ordination of MCZ Project workstreams, financial management, and to provide the secretariat to the Project Board. The project manager is also responsible for Natural England's internal project management and reporting.

The MCZ Project has eight workstreams. Natural England staff lead six of them as illustrated in Figure 1.

¹ Natural England and JNCC are responsible for recommending MCZs in English territorial waters and UK offshore waters adjacent to England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Workstream	Workstream lead
WS 1: Project management and finance	Natural England: Kate Bull
WS 2: Data, mapping and modelling	JNCC: Beth Stoker
WS 3: Research and evidence	Natural England: Eddy Mayhew
WS 4: Policy and guidance	Natural England: Chris Davis
WS 5: Regional implementation	Natural England: Jamie Davies
WS 6: Communications	Natural England: Lydia Barnes
WS 7: National and International Stakeholder Engagement	JNCC: Sophie Elliott
WS8: National MCZ planning and designation	Natural England: Sarah Wiggins

Figure 1: MCZ Project workstreams

Work stream leads are responsible for the production of work stream plans, implementation of work, reporting to the project manager and the management of risks and issues.

Natural England staff from other teams support work stream leaders in the delivery of their responsibilities. Natural England staff will support work streams that are being led by JNCC (and vice versa).

Natural England's regional responsibilities:

Natural England has identified members of its regional teams to manage and support the delivery of the four regional MCZ projects. The relevant Natural England Regional Director, or named delegate, will be accountable for the financial management of the projects in liaison with the regional Project Boards. They will also assign the necessary staff resource to support the projects.

Natural England regional leads are:

- Finding Sanctuary, South West Region, Roger Covey;
- Irish Sea Conservation Zone Project, North West Region, Chris Lumb;
- Net Gain, Yorkshire and Humber Region, Robbie Fisher;
- Balanced Seas, South East Region, Ingrid Chudleigh.

The Natural England lead officers act as key point of contact between the regional MCZ projects and Natural England. They will:

1. Establish and monitor the Memorandum of Agreement between regional MCZ project partners and Natural England;
2. Maintain a close link with the regional MCZ project teams to ensure that Natural England support is provided as appropriate; and
3. Provide functional management advice to the regional MCZ project manager.

The Net Gain and Balanced Seas project areas include more than one Natural England region². Relevant Natural England regions will support delivery of the regional MCZ projects where required, particularly by identifying Natural England staff to sit on local stakeholder groups as described in section 3.

² Natural England regions can be viewed at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/default.aspx>

2. Providing advice to Government

As the UK Government's statutory advisor Natural England provides evidence based advice to inform the designation of MCZs that will fulfil the commitment to establish an ecologically coherent network of MPAs³.

There are three stages to this role during the Project

1. Project preparation
2. Regional support and data provision
3. Recommendation, analysis and advice to Government

2.1 Project preparation

Natural England provided advice to Government on the content of the Marine and Coastal Access Act and supporting policy documents. These include ['The Government's strategy for contributing to the delivery of a UK network of marine protected areas'](#) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act Guidance notes⁴. We will continue to provide advice to inform the development of evidence based policy as required.

In partnership with JNCC, Natural England has developed detailed guidance that the regional MCZ projects will use to develop MCZ recommendations. The ['Ecological Network Guidance'](#) (ENG) describes what to select MCZs for and the ['Project Delivery Guidance'](#) (PDG) describes the process for developing the recommendations.

2.2 Data provision and regional support

Natural England will provide data to the regional MCZ projects to help stakeholders develop MCZ recommendations based on the best available evidence. As described in section 3, Natural England regional staff will provide support to the regional MCZ projects to help them deliver recommendations that satisfy the ENG through the framework provided in the PDG.

2.3 Submission of MCZ recommendations to Government

Natural England (with JNCC) will submit the MCZ recommendations developed by the regional stakeholder groups to Government in October 2011 as outlined in the PDG. The independent, Government-appointed Science Advisory Panel (SAP) will undertake an assessment of the recommendations and provide advice on whether they fulfil the ENG. If the recommendations are not adequate, Natural England and JNCC will provide additional advice on how best to address any shortfalls which remain.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

Each of the regional MCZ projects has established a stakeholder group which is responsible for developing recommendations – within the framework of the Ecological Network Guidance - on the location and conservation objectives of MCZs and setting out the anticipated costs and benefits of designating them through an Impact Assessment.

Natural England will be represented, alongside other stakeholders, on each of the regional stakeholder groups and also on any associated local or county groups.

³ As set out in 'The Governments strategy for contributing to the delivery of a UK network of marine protected areas'; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protected/mpa/>

⁴ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protected/mcz/guidance.htm>

Natural England staff will have two distinctive roles within the stakeholder groups on which they sit. As representatives of one of the national project sponsors, they will:

- Support the regional project staff in explaining and promoting the Government policy context for the designation of MCZs, including explaining the differences between MCZs and European Marine Sites.
- Provide data that may be of value in identifying the location of MCZs, determining their conservation objectives and informing the Impact Assessments.
- Support the regional project staff in developing the regional profile and furthering the understanding of the region to other stakeholders.
- Support the regional MCZ project staff in implementing the Project Delivery Guidance and the ENG, and provide any necessary clarification about the meaning of these two sets of Natural England & JNCC guidance.
- Provide advice from Natural England's perspective on the likely management implications of achieving conservation objectives.

As stakeholders in their own right, they will:

- Provide advice on MCZ sites and conservation objectives that will deliver the best outcome for nature conservation, geological or geomorphological interest, recreation and access.
- Work positively and proactively with other stakeholders to find common solutions to the locations of possible MCZs and contribute to the development of the Impact Assessments.

4. Build support and understanding for the Marine Conservation Zone Project

Natural England staff will build support and understanding of the MCZ Project, and how it relates to the Government's wider MPA Strategy, amongst sea users and interest groups through meetings and the production of information materials.

In coordination with JNCC, Natural England will be proactive in meeting stakeholders throughout the implementation of the MCZ Project. Meetings will be designed to ensure that those potentially impacted by MCZs (both positively and negatively) have a clear understanding of the outputs of the Project and the opportunities that are available to engage in the development of recommendations.

Natural England will work in partnership with JNCC to produce a range of information materials. These will include general information about the MCZ Project such as the MCZ newsletter as well as materials targeted at specific maritime sectors. Materials will be distributed at important points throughout the Project to inform interested stakeholders about the development of the recommendations.

Any questions

If you have any questions about Natural England's role in the MCZ Project please contact:

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