



# Marine Management Organisation

## South Marine Plan Approach to Monitoring 2018



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## Chapter 1 Introduction

1. This document supports the South Marine Plan. Taking account of requirements in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#) 2009 (referred to as [The Act](#)), this document sets out the south marine plan monitoring approach adopted by the Marine Management Organisation.
2. As monitoring will be an important part of how marine plans are reported on, including to identify content that may need amending, this document is of interest to all those involved with developing, implementing, and using marine plans on a day-to-day basis. This includes public authorities using marine plans when making any decisions capable of affecting the whole or any part of the UK marine area<sup>1</sup>, and stakeholders such as those applying for consents for development.
3. There are two documents that relate to monitoring of the South Marine Plan:
  - Approach to Monitoring (this document): sets out why we are monitoring marine plans, provides background on the approach being taken, and explains how we will monitor (with examples)
  - Annex of Indicators (available separately): provides detailed information on specific steps to be taken in relation to monitoring of the South Marine Plan and the expected indicators
4. The Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk).

### 1.1 Marine plan implementation

5. It is a legal duty under section 58(1) of [The Act](#) for all public authorities making authorisation or enforcement decisions (as defined in section 58(4)) to do so in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. For decisions relating to the South marine plan areas, the appropriate marine policy documents are the adopted South Marine Plan and the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (for as long as these remain in effect).
6. Section 58 (2) of [The Act](#) states that where an authorisation or enforcement decision is not taken in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents, a public authority must state its reasons for doing so.
7. Public authorities taking decisions that are not concerned with authorisation or enforcement but which might affect the South marine plan areas, for example decisions about what representations they should make as a consultee or relating to the preparation of terrestrial

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<sup>1</sup> Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009), Section 58

plans, must **have regard** to the [Marine Policy Statement](#) and the South Marine Plan as stated in Section 58 (3) of [The Act](#).

8. The duty in section 58(1) does not apply to decisions made on an application for an order granting development consent under the Planning Act 2008 (c.29). When taking decisions relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (as defined in the Planning Act (2008)), the relevant Secretary of State must **have regard** to the appropriate marine policy documents.
9. The South Marine Plan includes some detail intended to support implementation. General information, objective and policy-specific notes can be found in the South Marine Plan Technical Annex. The [Marine Information System](#) can also be used to view supporting text and the spatial extents of policies, enabling marine plan users to get the most from marine plans.

## 1.2 Monitoring and Reporting

10. Monitoring and periodic reporting on marine plans is a legal requirement under Section 61 of [The Act](#). There are two reporting duties within [The Act](#) which are outlined below. Section 54 of [The Act](#) is also relevant to this activity, setting out matters related to meeting the requirements of Section 61.

### 1.2.1 The three-yearly progress report

11. At intervals not more than three years after each marine plan is adopted there is a duty to report on:
  - the effects of policies in the marine plan
  - the effectiveness of those policies in securing plan objectives and
  - the progress towards achieving any objectives set out for that region in a marine plan and the [Marine Policy Statement](#)
12. Once prepared, this report will be laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State. After the report is published, the Secretary of State must decide whether to amend or replace the marine plan.
13. It is important that the report is clear and transparent, easily accessible by stakeholders and contains evidence presented in simple visual formats such as tables and charts with associated narrative. Detailed assessment of the evidence used to draft the report will also be made available.
14. Section 61 of [The Act](#) requires successive reports (following the first report under sub-section (4)) to be published at intervals of no more than 3 years following the date of publication of the previous report. The deadline for publishing subsequent reports depends on when the previous report was published, rather than when the plan was adopted.

## 1.2.2 The six-yearly progress report

15. At intervals of not more than six years beginning with the date of [The Act](#) receiving assent (November 2009), there is a duty to report on:
  - marine plans that have been prepared and adopted
  - intentions for their amendment and
  - intentions for the preparation and adoption of further marine plans
16. The six-yearly report is an update on the marine planning system in England as a whole. It draws on any three-yearly reports which have been produced and wider information gathered throughout the marine planning process. The first of these was laid before Parliament in November 2015.
17. After the first report has been published, section 61 of [The Act](#) requires the following reports to be published at intervals of no more than six years following the laying of the previous report, rather than at successive six yearly intervals from the passing of The Act.

## Chapter 2 Background to monitoring

18. Marine plans provide a strategic approach to decision-making, considering future use and providing a clear approach to managing resources, activities and interactions within the south marine plan areas. Marine plans themselves conform with the [Marine Policy Statement](#). This ensures that decisions made within a plan area contribute to the vision for the UK marine area, expressed through high level marine objectives.
19. The content herein sets out how the monitoring requirements of [The Act](#) will be met, including how an adopted South Marine Plan will contribute to the UK's high level marine objectives.
20. Guided by resources available to undertake monitoring activity, a proportionate approach will be taken to monitoring activity. It is likely that the need for monitoring effort will be greatest during the end of the marine plan development process when the monitoring approach is set up, then as part of three-year reporting. The ability to obtain information will be a factor guiding what can usefully be monitored eg recording periods for suitable monitoring information may not be well aligned with marine planning reporting cycles.
21. Indicators in the Annex of Indicators cover the full 20 year life of the plan but it will not be appropriate to assess each indicator in detail as part of every reporting cycle (the Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk)). The indicators detailed result from a process verifying viability and reducing duplication. In many cases, the purpose of reporting on an indicator for the first time will be to establish a baseline. This will enable later reports to be more focused on outcomes as impacts accrue over time.

22. As monitoring of marine plans becomes more established and experience is gained, learning will be used to improve the monitoring process as appropriate. New tools or evidence may lead to updating the monitoring approach. What is monitored may also evolve as new or developing influences and ongoing monitoring insights are identified. As further evidence is collected, it may be possible to formulate new indicators that improve the ability to monitor the existing plan content.

## 2.1 Monitoring implementation and outcomes

23. To understand how and why the South Marine Plan is having a particular effect the monitoring approach addresses two considerations. First, it is important to understand whether the marine plans are being effectively implemented. Second, when implementation occurs, it is also necessary to understand the resulting real world changes. In the approach proposed, indicators for both implementation of, and changes resulting from, the marine plan policies will be monitored.

## 2.2 Taking a framework approach

24. The monitoring approach is appropriate for all marine plans but it is recognised that the marine planning process continues to develop and the monitoring approach may also need to evolve.
25. This monitoring framework approach is based upon the [Marine Policy Statement](#) high level marine objectives. This provides commonality between marine plans that apply in different areas across England (and the UK) allowing subsequent marine plan objectives, which will necessarily vary from area to area, to be set in a common context. This approach, framed around and across objectives, allows a picture to be developed of the effects of the plan as a whole rather than taking a narrow approach that examines effects on a policy-by-policy basis. The relationship between the South Marine Plan objectives and high level marine objectives is described in Chapter 3 of the South Marine Plan Technical Annex.
26. In developing the South Marine Plan, policies have been assigned to the objectives they contribute to most directly. It is the case that policies will indirectly contribute to the achievement of other objectives. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 4 of the South Marine Plan Technical Annex. A range of indicators will be used to demonstrate how the plan has influenced decision-making, and how subsequent changes at the policy level result in the objective being achieved.

## 2.3 Plans are not the sole instrument of change

27. It is important to recognise that there are a number of other influences within the marine plan areas, some with overlapping objectives, together with other factors influencing change such as updates to the marine licensing system and market forces. In this context the marine plans are not the sole instrument of change; this is recognised in the

marine plans through signposting to other relevant information, such as local authority policies. Marine plans complement existing marine management, helping to harmonise direction and increasing awareness of marine matters, but there will always be some matters that require individual, case/decision-specific discussions.

28. As a result it will be challenging, and in some cases it may be impossible, to assess how an outcome or what portion of an outcome (such as a higher rate of employment) can be attributed solely to the South Marine Plan. When reporting, the Marine Management Organisation will focus on how marine plans have contributed to an outcome. This contribution will not be described in the context of other contributing measures and there will be no exploration of the reasons why a wider outcome has or has not been achieved.

## 2.4 Taking account of best practice and lessons learned

29. Development of the monitoring approach and framework has been informed by the [Government's Magenta Book](#) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' [marine planning description document](#). The [Magenta Book](#) is the recommended central government guidance on evaluation of policies, programmes and projects. When it was published in 2011 '[A description of the marine planning system for England](#)' represented Government understanding of best practice in marine planning. Experience in the development ([East Marine Plans Implementation and Monitoring Plan](#)) and subsequent monitoring for England's first marine plans has also been drawn upon. In particular, to ensure we identify and respond to lessons learnt. An independent '[Review of Marine Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Development of Baselines](#)' was commissioned. This reviewed the marine plan monitoring approach to date and made recommendations that have been incorporated in the Approach to Monitoring and associated Annex of Indicators for the South Marine Plan. The Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk).

## 2.5 Promoting join up

30. There are many monitoring programmes already in place that measure outcomes such as health, well-being, employment and environmental state. The Marine Management Organisation has undertaken an assessment to determine which requirements for marine plan monitoring can be met through existing programmes. We will draw on these sources of evidence where possible, avoiding duplication of effort. Where an appropriate monitoring programme or indicator is not available, the Marine Management Organisation will specify the gaps or weaknesses and consider possible solutions based on the significance of the gap and the resource implications of filling it.
31. The Marine Management Organisation consulted with other public authorities and data owners in developing the monitoring approach, to

support join-up and to encourage ownership and participation in monitoring.

32. A relevant suite of monitoring targets and indicators is being developed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Devolved Administrations to determine progress towards achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status under the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#). This has been considered in developing the monitoring framework for the South Marine Plan in light of the need to avoid duplication and highlight complementarity.

## 2.6 Considering the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment

33. In addition to the legal requirements for monitoring set out in [The Act](#), monitoring should also meet the requirements of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the South Marine Plan.
34. A requirement of marine plan preparation is that it be subject to a sustainability appraisal<sup>2</sup>. This appraises the social, economic and environmental impacts of the South Marine Plan against defined topics and ensures sustainable development is at the heart of the plan making process. During plan development, the sustainability appraisal process tests how marine plans perform against predicted effects. Where it is identified that there is a possibility of undesirable sustainability effects following any mitigation action taken in plan development, monitoring can be used to identify such effects and the need for remedial action.
35. In addition to the sustainability appraisal, a habitats regulations assessment<sup>3</sup> of the South Marine Plan has been undertaken in order to assess its effects on protected nature conservation sites (European/Ramsar sites). Where the possibility of likely significant effects remains following mitigation in plan development, monitoring can be used to understand whether such effects are happening.
36. The South Marine Plan alone will not lead to direct effects on sustainability. However, a wide range of potential effects are possible when the plans are used in decision-making eg to grant consent for particular activities, support new initiatives, or support new designations within the marine environment.
37. These assessments contain useful information contributing to plan monitoring such as baselines or assumptions against which outcomes

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<sup>2</sup> The sustainability appraisal incorporates the requirements of the European Union (EU) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive ([Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment](#)).

<sup>3</sup> The habitats regulations assessment incorporates the requirements of the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive ([Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora](#)) and Birds Directive ([Directive 2009/147/EC of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds](#)).

may be monitored. They also contain a number of predicted future effects and therefore are to some extent based on assumptions. As evidence is gathered to support monitoring, this information can improve the accuracy of assumptions made, leading to better predictions in the future.

## Chapter 3 What will be monitored and how

38. This section introduces the approach that will be taken to monitoring. Important elements include:

- Logic models – providing an overview of what plans will achieve
- Logic chains – describing sequential activities and assumptions that clarify how a marine plan policy will achieve an intended result
- Indicators – enabling assessment of logic chain steps
- Baseline – assessing the plan area in its current state
- Understanding changes in context – recognising that monitoring a marine plan must include recognising changes in the wider operating context
- Quality assurance and data management – describes processes necessary to support the monitoring approach

### 3.1 Logic models

39. The Marine Management Organisation will monitor the effectiveness of marine plans based on a logic model. A logic model provides an overview of what marine plans will achieve. The model does this by:

- describing what impact is envisaged from a policy or intervention
- showing the logical steps of how a policy or intervention generates that impact
- clarifying the required inputs and necessary activities to apply the policy or intervention

40. As recognised in the [Magenta Book](#), a logic model provides a framework against which progress towards an impact can be monitored. Logic models can be formulated in different ways albeit around the same basic structure, and terminology may vary among logic models ([Magenta Book](#) Boxes 6A, B). Model terminology in relation to the marine planning process is provided in Table 1.

41. Logic chains are a simplification, dividing a continuous and iterative process into separate steps, setting out a sequence of linked dependencies, ie “if that happens then this can happen”. Multiple interlinked chains form the logic model. Interlinking allows for feedback loops to occur and for examination of interdependent logic eg the merging of two logic chains in a model allows for “if this AND that happens, then this should occur”.

#### Table 1 – Logic model and definition of terms for marine planning

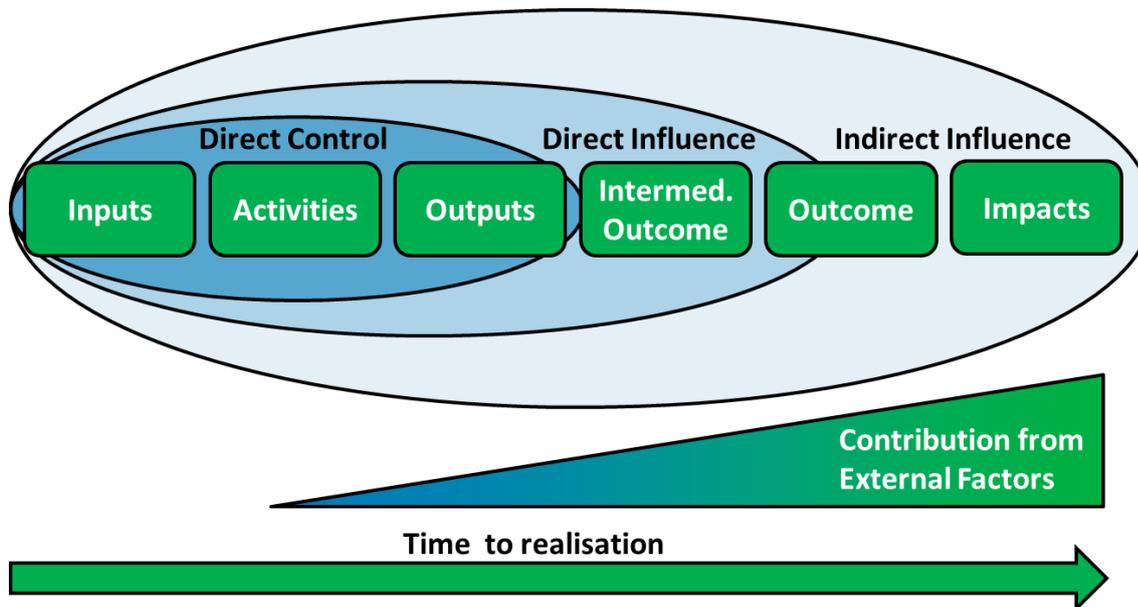
Term	Definition	Example
Inputs	Resources required to produce marine plans and the marine planning process.	Staff, skills, money etc.
Activities	The marine planning activities undertaken.	Plan development, consultations promotional events, training and capacity building events, evidence commissioning, signposting etc.
Outputs	Marine planning products or services.	Marine plans and policies, evidence products, tools, communication routes.
Intermediate Outcomes	What recipients do with (process) or receive from (effects) marine planning outputs and preceding intermediate outcomes.	Increased certainty for applicants, plan-led decision-making, improved awareness of plans or the Marine Policy Statement.
Outcomes	Effects that occur on achieving intent of plan policy or planning.	might be changes linked to plan policy (eg, reduced litter, improved access), or plan objectives to which policies contribute, eg co-existence, space for nature or they may be changes to process eg reduced transaction times or decreased cost to applicants.
Impacts	Contribution to larger scale and or longer term aims or goals that are broader in scope than marine plans.	For example contributing to achieving High Level Marine Objectives or Marine Strategy Framework Directive etc.

### 3.2 Characteristics of logic chains

42. Logic chains have consideration of time implicit within them. Steps early in the logic chain eg activities, must occur before elements towards the end eg impacts (see Figure 1). It may take many years for the impacts on the right of the logic chain to accrue. For example where marine plan policies seek social benefits from construction of infrastructure, policies must be developed and then adopted, proposals for infrastructure must be submitted and then approved in line with the policy, construction must then occur, which will lead to jobs, eventually realising the intended specific impact of the policy.
43. As logic steps progress from inputs to impacts, the level of influence exerted by the marine plan and a specific marine plan policy is diluted

by the effect of other influences. Preparation of marine plans is undertaken by the Marine Management Organisation on behalf of the Secretary of State who remains the marine planning authority. In this role, the Marine Management Organisation clearly has direct control over the inputs, activities, and outputs to produce a marine plan. The plan has direct influence on relevant decisions by public authorities, and indirect influence on how proposals are undertaken as a result of those decisions. The effects of factors external to the policy increase as the logic chain moves from intermediate outcomes to impacts. This is shown in Figure 1.

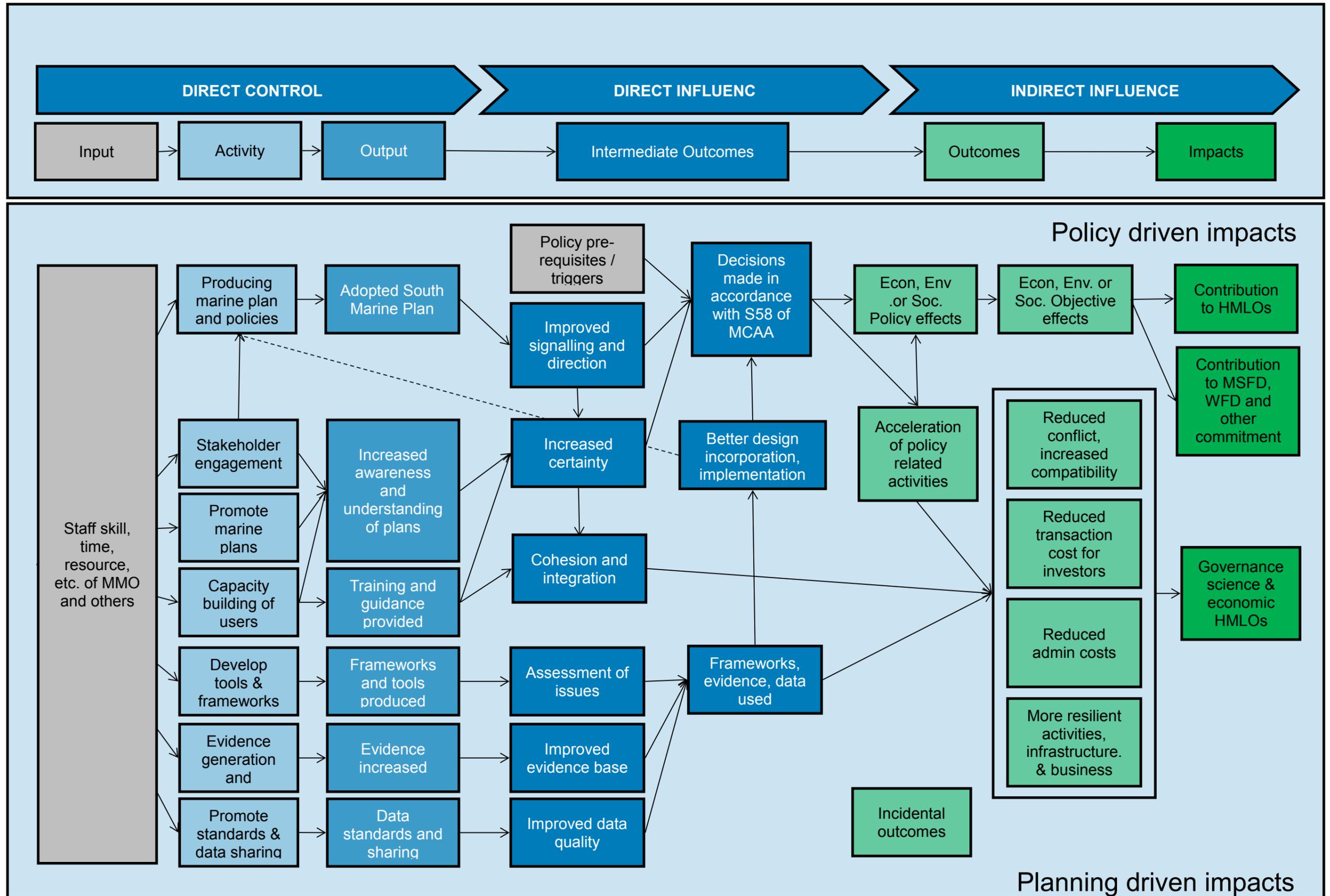
**Figure 1 – The relationship between inputs and impacts in a logic chain and the increasing influence of external factors over time**



### 3.3 Indicators in logic models

44. Central to logic models is the concept of “if that happens then this should occur”. The sequence of dependent steps provides a framework for monitoring effects of a policy and the plans. This is because a logic model approach describes relationships, assumptions and dependencies between steps in the chain that can be used as indicators. By matching monitoring indicators to the logic steps it is possible to track whether steps in the logic model have happened. This should confirm that the assumptions in preceding logic steps of how plans are expected to bring benefits are correct and that the conditions are in place to support further logical steps yet to be reached. By assessing indicators at different steps in the logic chain, it is possible to understand where a policy may not be performing as expected, enabling action to be taken either in terms of plan content or implementation activity.
45. Analysis has been undertaken to understand what characterises inputs, activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, outcomes, and impacts for the South Marine Plan. As marine plans are considered in multiple decision-making processes across a wide range of sectors, the model is complex. Figure 2 illustrates the logic model where a logic chain for any given policy is any pathway beginning at a box on the left and ending at a box on the right.

Figure 2 – The marine planning logic model



46. By using this logic model framework we can understand in greater detail:

- the 'why' behind whether or not the policies in the South Marine Plan are achieving what is expected
- if the South Marine Plan is being implemented as intended and if not, why not
- how implementation has affected the work of marine resource users and decision-makers
- whether (and how) the South Marine Plan needs to be revised in the future
- the benefits of marine planning
- the degree to which objectives are being met through application of policies and any other effects of the plan

47. Information gathered through monitoring in this way will be analysed and used to inform the South Marine Plan three-yearly report. Monitoring information that enables an understanding of how effectively the South Marine Plan is being implemented will be especially important in the early stages after plan adoption. In these cases, information gathered can be used to help address matters related to implementation as they arise ie ahead of reporting where possible.

### 3.4 Indicator selection

48. The indicator set for marine plans has been developed based on a series of sequential steps:

- development a logic model for the marine plan
- scoping of relevant indicators for logic model steps
- quality assessment and prioritisation of potential indicators

49. The methods for indicator quality assessment and prioritisation are detailed in the Annex of Indicators. The Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk). Quality assessment criteria were used to aid indicator selection (Table 2). Descriptions of these criteria are below and their application is seen in tables 3 and 4 for the example indicators.

**Table 2 – Criteria for indicator quality assurance**

Term	Definition
Description	What the indicator is measuring/ data it captures
Rationale	Why the indicator/ data is suitable and useful for the monitoring of change of any given objective
Source (URL link)	Where the data can be obtained and the role/responsibilities of those involved in data collection
Conceptual soundness	Relevance to measuring and monitoring across the geography/ population. Capable of informing policy (marine and future policy considerations) in a time-bound manner. Level at which the meaning of the data is clear and its application easily understood by stakeholders. Extent the logic chain of the data is identifiable

Technical robustness	The data is statistically validated and quality meets defined standards/ codes of practice. Technical robustness also covers issues such as consistency of data (spatial scales) and transparency/ reputation and requirement for ongoing data capture
Spatial Scale	Availability, reliability and consistency of data at differing spatial scales (local, sub-regional, national etc) to be suitable to the outcomes being monitored

### 3.5 Types of indicator

50. A range of indicators have been identified that perform one or a number of functions:

- monitor whether plan policies are being implemented effectively
- confirm policy intent was achieved
- characterise value or effects from the wider planning process
- track context in which plans must operate

51. Indicators have been developed taking into account suitability criteria. Full details on the indicators including descriptions, rationale and technical and conceptual robustness are contained in the South Marine Plan Annex of Indicators the Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk).

52. Three groups of indicators are considered; process, outcome and contextual.

53. Process monitoring examines the development and implementation of the marine plan, tracking progress through the direct control and direct influence steps of the logic model (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Process monitoring confirms assumptions made regarding the steps necessary to achieve expected outcomes and, where these outcomes are not achieved, identifies the factors related to implementation and/or policy that are at work.

54. Outcome monitoring assesses progress towards real world changes resulting from the marine planning process (including engagement in development and later through implementation activities) as well as application of marine plan policies and objectives through decision-making. Outcome monitoring is focused on the indirect influence steps of the logic model (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Particularly in relation to indirect influence steps, it is important to have in mind that marine plans are not the sole instrument of change (see section 2.4). Included in outcome monitoring is consideration and validation of assumptions upon which plan assessments are based.

55. Contextual monitoring describes the context in which marine plans operate. Changes in context may affect plan success and are useful in interpreting change in process or outcome indicators. Contextual indicators are not defined by the logic model framework but are identified under Section 54 of [The Act](#) that requires 'a marine plan authority to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the exercise of its functions' ie context, and then identifies those matters. Contextual monitoring will include a review to check that the policies and objectives

remain in line with high level policy such as the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). It will also highlight pertinent evidence projects commissioned to since the adoption of the South plan.

56. The logic model approach enables the identification of the relevant social, environmental and economic outcomes to be monitored for each objective as set out in the Annex of Indicators (the Annex of Indicators is available upon request by email to [Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Planning@marinemanagement.org.uk)). Examples of two different types of indicator that would be found in different parts of a logic model are included below - the first is an intermediate outcome linked to appropriate implementation of a policy (Table 3) and the second on the outcome of policy application (Table 4).

### 3.6 Types of indicator data

57. Indicators are derived from both quantitative and qualitative data. We will ensure that we make extensive use of appropriate existing environmental, social and economic data collection programmes. Examples include designated site condition assessments undertaken and collated by Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, heritage assets registers held by Historic England, and business data produced by the Office for National Statistics. The Marine Management Organisation will also use data from internal monitoring and feedback, including in relation to decision-making, and comments from the Marine Management Organisation Customer Insight Group, annual customer survey, website statistics, and Marine Management Organisation customer feedback procedures. Specific links between sources and the relevant part of the South Plan can be found in the South Marine Plan Technical Annex.
58. Existing monitoring datasets are supplemented with new data collected by the Marine Management Organisation specific to those using the plans. This includes data from Marine Management Organisation systems used to manage applications and decisions (including authorisation and enforcement decisions, and all other decisions capable of affecting the south marine plan areas), such as the Marine Case Management System (MCMS). To monitor plan use by public authorities or stakeholders, the Marine Management Organisation will be seeking to draw upon low cost, accessible, and easy to use techniques that include a bespoke, targeted South Marine Plan monitoring survey, the collation of case studies, and the testimonials of informed parties.

**Table 3 – An example of an indicator that tracks the implementation of a policy**

<p><b>Objective: ALL Policy: ANY</b></p>	<p><b>Indicator to support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proposals submitted comply with the policy (intermediate outcome)</b></li> <li>• <b>Decisions are made in accordance with the policy (intermediate outcome)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Intermediate outcome Indicator</b></p>	<p><b>Indicator Title:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased proportion of proposals submitted to MCMS comply with the policy</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Marine Management Organisation consider the policy in informing approval of proposals (recorded by case officer notes held in MCMS)</b></li> </ul>
Description	<p>The Marine Case Management System (MCMS) is a software system to support the Marine Management Organisation licence application process. This indicator will look at the proportion of proposals that consider relevant plan policies and where required, the actions taken to be compliant with the policies. This information is sourced from documents and data in MCMS. We expect the proportion of applications submitted that consider the plans to increase over time. We expect a decline in Marine Management Organisation case officers returning applications to address shortfalls.</p> <p>This indicator will also validate the appropriate use of marine plans in granting marine licences. This will be identified by comments and checks undertaken by case officers in MCMS that reference marine plan or policies. It is expected that all decisions for a marine licence show appropriate consideration of plan policies. Success is therefore maintenance of this level of compliance.</p>
Rationale	<p>The South Marine Plan should inform proposals that have been submitted. MCMS is split between the applicant end and the Marine Management Organisation end. Each section contains components that provide indicator information. Applicants can use several methods (check box, free text comments and submitted documentation) to show consideration of plan policies</p> <p>For the Marine Management Organisation, Licence Support Service and licensing case officer parts of MCMS contain questions and comments boxes that check applicant consideration of the plans and collate how case officer decisions have regard to the plans.</p> <p>Where there are noted shortfalls in the application, records of communication in MCMS tracks the exchange between the Marine Management Organisation and applicants. All elements are auditable and can be extracted manually for relevant cases to identify explicit or inferred consideration of a relevant policy.</p>
Source (URL link)	<p>This indicator will be generated from MCMS records that are hosted by the Marine Management Organisation.</p>
Conceptual soundness	<p>This indicator is restricted to decisions taken by the Marine Management Organisation Licensing team and thus represents only a subset of decisions relating to the marine area. The level of detail provided could be limited as applicants apply the relevant policy in a proportionate manner. Changes in the use of MCMS could help enhance monitoring for marine plan reporting. As the indicator is derived from Marine Management Organisation controlled data, there is good access and reasonable opportunity to improve usability, only limited by the resource required to further develop the indicator and/or extract the information. The baseline is the lack of reference to the South Marine Plan policies prior to plan adoption although there may</p>

	be evidence of reference to the draft plans once out to public consultation.
Technical robustness	MCMS contains appropriate information that can be extracted but is not yet in a format suitable for direct analysis. Future development of MCMS to better track decision-making including consideration of marine plans would help support monitoring efforts.
Spatial Scale	As applications have defined spatial areas and documents are related to the application, it is possible to present this information at any spatial scale, including that of marine plan areas.

**Table 4 – An example of an indicator that seeks to understand achievement of intended policy outcomes**

<b>Objective: Shared Policy: Shared</b>	<b>Indicator to support:</b>  <b>Outcome: Economic, environmental or social policy effects (logic model)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>S-DIST-1: Cumulative physical disturbance on mobile species from proposals is avoided, minimised or mitigated</b></li> </ul>
<b>Outcome Indicator</b>	<b>Indicator Title:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Condition status for designated sites and the relative frequency of human activities or other factors identified as adversely affecting feature condition</b></li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Designated site condition assessments monitor the condition of the feature(s) for which the site was designated against conservation objectives for that site or those features. Conservation objectives and associated targets vary among features and are developed from relevant attributes (eg extent, quality, supporting processes). Based on whether conservation targets are attained and recent trends, feature condition is assessed as; i) Favourable-maintained, ii) Favourable-recovered, iii) Unfavourable-recovering, iv) Unfavourable-no-change, v) Unfavourable-declining, vi) Partially-destroyed, and vii) Destroyed. Human activities and other factors that are likely to adversely affect features, and the conservation measures taken to maintain or restore the features, are also recorded.  S-DIST-1 will use condition assessments from individual sites for features that represent highly mobile species, eg marine mammals and birds, and the issue classes eg recreation/disturbance issues, will be included. This indicator will track change in the number of features in each of the condition categories detailed above. Successful application of the policy should help to prevent any change in the number of features destroyed, should result in a reduction in the proportion of features given unfavourable-declining or partially-destroyed status,

	with and an increase in the proportion of features classed as favourable-recovered or unfavourable-recovering.
Rationale	<p>This indicator will show trends in condition for sites across the south plan areas. It will provide an indication of the condition of the network as a whole, of individual sites within the network, or of particular features of interest like highly mobile species that are at risk from disturbance and are features of interest for designated sites; eg Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Annex II species for Special Areas of Conservation.</p> <p>As guidance on considering a network in decision-making is yet to be formulated, the indicator focuses on individual sites at this stage but this focus will be kept under review.</p>
Source (URL link)	The Joint Nature Conservation Committee holds the data and site condition assessment reports (Source: Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies) <a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/CSM_06species.pdf">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/CSM_06species.pdf</a>
Conceptual soundness	<p>Aggregated assessment reporting, specifically relating to the state of the environment, has been used in peer reviewed regional and sub-regional assessments such as <a href="#">Charting Progress 2</a>. Condition monitoring is well established and baselines are available.</p> <p>Condition assessment represents reflect any effects of plan policies on the marine environment. The categories agreed for reporting purposes at a UK level include (recreation/disturbance (eg scrambling, off-road vehicle use, recreation pressure, disturbance of fauna), these align with the S-DIST-1 policy.</p> <p>This indicator only includes designated sites and therefore is not assessing disturbance across the whole plan area. However, designated sites are often associated with important or sensitive species and are likely to respond earlier and to the greatest extent.</p> <p>There are other influences on the condition of sites. Other major negative influences on the assessment are identified as with disturbance and positive influences on interest features, from measures taken on sites to improve or maintain the condition, are also defined to some degree, eg conservation agency grant or management agreement.</p>
Technical robustness	Every feature on every designated site in the United Kingdom should be assessed over a period not exceeding six years in a rolling monitoring cycle following clearly defined <a href="#">Common Standards for Monitoring</a> . Monitoring is a statutory obligation and therefore there are expectations for data collection into the future. Monitoring of designated sites means there is times series data available on feature condition. Time series length will be dependent upon the age of any given designated site. The Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies are the competent authorities in protected site monitoring and have a track record of sound, evidence based reporting.
Spatial Scale	Spatial locations of condition assessments are recorded on a 10km square basis. For each monitoring assessment, a 10km square is calculated based on the site centroid. Data can therefore be

	aggregated to the scale of the site (where sites exceed 10km <sup>2</sup> ) and among sites up to the scale of south marine plan areas. Condition assessments are available for protected sites nationally.
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### 3.7 Establishing a baseline

59. It is important to establish a baseline against which to measure progress towards achieving the plan objectives as far as is reasonable. For the purpose of marine planning, the baseline is not intended to describe the plan area in an unaltered or undeveloped state, instead it provides an assessment of the plan prior to plan adoption. It is acknowledged that baselines are dynamic and would be expected to change over time due to a range of other factors. Baseline evidence will be gathered in relation to indicators so that when three-year reports are prepared, change can be better understood. Such evidence will largely be that which underpins the need for a given marine plan policy, identified in the Annex of Indicators, and will be gathered in support of the three year monitoring requirements. Baseline evidence will vary between policies eg its scale in time and space or resolution, meaning that the way in which it is collected and analysed will depend upon the policy in question. Evidence gathered will be used to tell the story of change observed since the plans were adopted, helping to identify what the effect of marine plans has been over a given period.

### 3.8 Quality assurance and data management

60. The collection, collation and quality assurance of the data and information for plan monitoring are all important considerations. It is crucial to ensure that data and information is sound, fit for purpose and that appropriate quality assurance processes are in place both internally and with the third party data providers. The Marine Management Organisation has its own quality assurance processes where evidence is assessed for its validity, accuracy, timeliness, reliability, relevance and completeness.

61. As data is gathered, attention will be paid to its format, storage, management, accessibility, analysis, synthesis and interpretation. Data collected will be stored in a way that is compliant with the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN), Metadata Discovery Standards. Where data is provided by third parties the Marine Management Organisation will ensure it is also compliant with these standards<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Marine Management Organisation quality assurance process:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140108121958/http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/evidence/quality.htm>