



Aim

The aim of the project was to provide the MMO with a body of evidence on social impacts through an assessment of interactions within and between sectors listed in the Marine Policy Statement (MPS).

The evidence gathering aimed to cover how positive and negative impacts are distributed between sectors to allow assessment of the social pillar of sustainable development in terms of gains and losses, and where possible geographically between inshore, offshore, the coast and land.

Introduction and methodology

MMO required this project to establish a baseline of evidence on social impacts and interactions of the sectors listed in the MPS. An understanding of the social as well as the economic and environmental evidence is required to sustainably manage competing interests in the marine environment.

The project explored evidence relating to interactions between positive and negative impacts, and non-monetary and monetary. The interactions include but are not limited to employment, health, wellbeing, access to resources and employment in other sectors.

The study considers social impacts such as aesthetic and landscape issues and access to marine and coastal environments as well as cultural issues such as community sense of place and way of life, sense of history, social capital, concern for the environment and social exclusion and disadvantage.

The report also outlines how this social information might link to the economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development in marine planning and decision making frameworks such as cumulative effects assessments, co-location/co-existence assessments, impact assessment, sustainability appraisal and an ecosystem approach to marine planning.

The work covers the conceptual framework and the baseline evidence for each MPS sector. A consultation with sector representatives, academics and agencies has greatly assisted with delivery of this work.

Results

Conceptually the research is grounded in the capitals approach¹ put forward by the work of the Government Economic Service / Government Social Research Impacts Taskforce. The interactions between sectors can be thought of in terms of depreciating or enhancing the amount of capital (or access to the capital) that the sectors use to generate goods and services, and associated social impacts. The report outputs are not presented using the language of the capitals approach, in order to maximise their accessibility. A typology of social impacts was established to guide what constitutes the social domain. A broad typology was adopted to ensure relevance across all marine sectors and interaction types.

This report presents social interaction-impact tables for 14 MPS sectors and sub-sectors. Each table represents the potential interactions that a sector is susceptible to, and describes the impact pathways that can lead to primary and secondary social impacts. Each table is supported by evidence on the impact pathways and social impacts based on currently available literature including from stakeholder sources.

An approach was explored to enable social impacts of marine sectors to be spatially represented and to highlight areas where interactions between marine sectors may significantly impact on these social benefits. The primary aim of this exercise was to explore potential ways of mapping social impacts. An

¹ The capitals approach aims to ensure that stocks of capital (produced, human, social and natural) are maintained so that the potential for wellbeing is non-declining over time.



illustrative approach was taken, using readily available social 'indicators' for a core set of the significant social impact types: income, employment, social cohesion, culture and environment. The information was mapped to provide an understanding of where sector interactions may put at risk areas of high social value. Given the significant limitations of the data sets used and necessary assumptions made, the outputs of this exercise are indicative only.

Conclusions and recommendations

Evidence on the social impacts of marine sectors, and on the social impacts of their interaction, is limited. There are a growing number of research projects on this topic particularly linked to the ecosystem services paradigm. However this is largely through economic-ecology research, with a particular focus on economic valuation. There appears to be less research using more qualitative methods despite the need for it.

The evidence base is useful for understanding the nature of social impacts that can occur as a result of sector interactions, however in reality the social impact of any given interaction will always be context specific and as such it is very difficult to generalise on the significance of any given interaction.

The evidence base can be used to start to understand individual, community and sector social characteristics. In addition to the fundamental interaction, the significance of any social impact of an interaction will depend on the characteristics of the individual / community / sector affected, including their /its vulnerability, adaptability and preferences.

A number of recommendations for future research were made including:

- Research into how MPS sectors contribute to coastal community social cohesion and culture.

- Primary research to establish a broad set of marine-specific social indicators.
- Ex-post evaluation of social impacts in England in relation to some sectors.
- Commercial fishing / fishing community social indicators and profiles and non-market economic valuation.
- Improved mapping of marine sector activities to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes.
- An agreed and standardised method for estimating gross carbon savings, and hence valuing the social benefit.

Improved spatial, quantitative and qualitative social impact data will enable greater consideration of social issues in the marine planning process in the future.

MMO comments

MMO is grateful to those that have contributed to the project via the consultation.

This project has provided a baseline as well as detailing the framework for using that evidence in marine planning.

Understanding the available social evidence gives MMO insight to the motivations of people living and working in the marine plan areas as well as those who have a stake in effective management of the marine environment.

This evidence will be useful for MMO in developing marine plans and managing the marine environment but also to others with an interest or stake in the sustainable use of marine resources. We hope that others will help MMO build on this evidence base.

Further information

Please direct any correspondence to the Evidence Team by emailing evidence@marinemanagement.org.uk