



## Aim

To assess the effectiveness of engagement and education practices for marine plan implementation (to external stakeholders) and identify opportunities to enhance implementation support.

## Introduction and methodology

This study focused on external decision-makers who have responsibilities to use marine plans in statutory decisions under s58(1) and s58(3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA, 2009). Decision-makers include government departments, executive non-departmental public bodies, other public bodies, statutory public corporations and committees or joint committees of local government.

The MMO provides a range of engagement mechanisms, activities, and materials to support decision-makers in marine plan use including training, digital marine plan products, hypothetical examples of marine plan use and engagement with devolved administrations and bordering nations. The objectives of this project were as follows:

1. Identify, collate, and map existing marine plan use engagement channels, activities and materials used by MMO and the audiences targeted, and objectives and outcomes sought.
2. Undertake an assessment of existing marine plan use engagement channels, activities, and materials and whether they are achieving the intended objectives, including effectiveness of communications methods, marine plan use tools, take-up of training opportunities, and barriers to effective delivery of training to decision-makers.
3. Identify and recommend proportionate areas for further development or redesign drawing on global best practice case studies and guidance for policy implementation.

The mixed methods approach included a survey, workshops, desk-based review, and global case studies on stakeholder engagement for marine planning authorities. Results were analysed and triangulated to make recommendations on MMO's engagement with external decision makers, supporting their statutory responsibility to use marine plans.

## Results

Overall, external decision-makers noted that MMO's engagement on marine plan use is achieving most of its objectives. The training sessions on marine plan use were found to be useful for entry level staff to understand their responsibility to use marine plans and policies and to clarify which public bodies are involved in delivering marine planning. The Explore Marine Plans (EMP) digital product was noted as relatively user-friendly and useful for marine licence applications and providing data to support cumulative impact assessments. A summary evaluation of marine plan use, based on the Principles of Better Regulation (proportionate, targeted, accountability, consistent and transparent) includes:



## Identifying opportunities to enhance effectiveness of marine plan use engagement (MMO1333)

<b>Proportionate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information available on marine plan use via training sessions, the website and Explore Marine Plans (EMP).</li> <li>Stakeholders not aware of some material e.g., hypothetical examples on marine plan use and the pre-recorded training video.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials not targeted for all the different types of authorities using marine plans e.g. Ports and Harbours.</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training sessions inform decision-makers on the role and identity of organisations involved in marine planning.</li> <li>Overarching objectives of marine plans and their value need to be better understood.</li> </ul>
<b>Consistent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement activities are coordinated across decision-maker groups.</li> <li>Lack of awareness of comprehensive guidance available.</li> </ul>
<b>Transparent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information is readily accessible through channels including in person training and online tools such as EMP.</li> <li>Information is spread over various channels and not always easy to navigate.</li> </ul>

## Conclusions and recommendations

This project provided recommendations to enhance effectiveness of marine plan use engagement. High level recommendations are as follows:

- Establish two different training work streams that are focused on different levels of experience using marine plans.
- Targeted dialogue with groups to tailor the use of marine plans for different decisions.
- Resource the MMO to provide advice on marine plan use and to clarify policies which have multiple interpretations.
- Publish comprehensive guidance on marine plan use along with a dissemination strategy.
- Roll out the MSP Challenge board game for national and regional authorities and at local marine planning events.
- Develop user-friendly and up to date digital marine plan products.

## MMO comments

Findings from the project have been incorporated into the MMO Implementation Strategy and Action Plan (ISAP). Further details and actions for MMO are provided in the addendum of the main MMO1333 report.

## Further information

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