



Aim

As a follow up to MMO1289 Evaluation Plan for an Evaluation of Conservation Measures, which looked at options for a process evaluation of the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) programme of work on assessing marine protected areas (MPAs).

Introduction and methodology

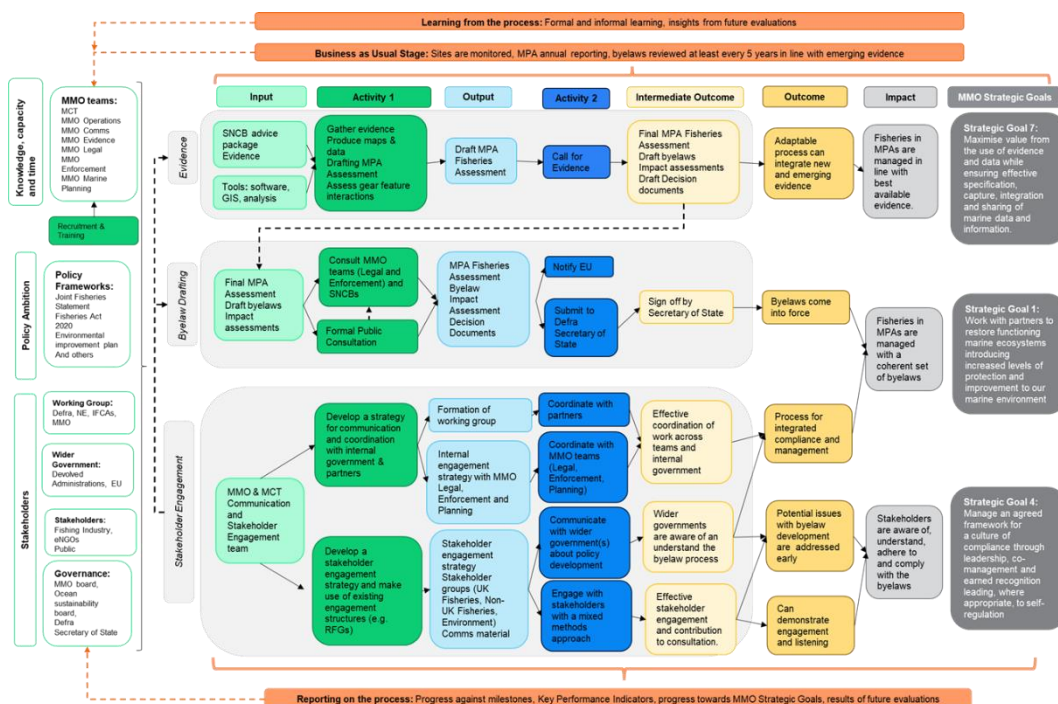
The MMO is considering whether byelaws are needed in a large number of MPAs in English waters where fishing activity could potentially damage environmental features. This is a new programme and the MMO are interested in a evaluating the work for learning and accountability purposes.

Whilst the previous project (MMO1289) investigated possible evaluation approaches and sought to begin to develop evaluation expertise in the MMO's Marine Conservation Team, this short project made a start on a process evaluation by going through the initial inception and scoping process which involved:

- testing a Theory of Change model
• a new stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out
• a workshop was held with MCT decision makers
• the data needs for the evaluation questions were investigated
• interviews were undertaken with internal MMO decision makers

Results

Figure 1: MPA byelaw implementation Theory of Change





Conclusions and recommendations

A theory-based approach was recommended for this process evaluation. The approach involves testing a Theory of Change model to validate, refine, or refute expected causal pathways and understand the extent to which the processes undertaken by the MCT contribute to the intended outcomes of the byelaw making strategy. Methods to collect data to answer evaluation questions include:

- Literature and document review,
- Key Informant Interviews,
- Workshops (or focus groups),
- Surveys of Stakeholders
- Descriptive analysis of statistics collected by MMO will also form part of this evaluation method.

All evaluation questions require at least two of the methods to provide a robust answer and allow triangulation of results. In most cases it will be more. The first source, such as the document review for example, would establish a proposed answer which then needs to be triangulated with at least one further source.

This initial scoping exercise involved engagement with members of the MCT, external stakeholders were not engaged as part of this project although are recommended for engagement as part of any future process or impact evaluation as outlined in the evaluation framework.

MMO comments

These initial scoping steps for a process evaluation were carried out in 2023. The MMO has since initiated a complimentary impact evaluation into the MPA programme (MMO1421) and is considering how best to further evaluate the MPA process.

Further information

Please direct any correspondence to the Evidence Team (evidence@marinemanagement.org.uk)