

UKMMAS News

...updates from the United Kingdom Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy

No. 1 – Summer 2006

UK MARINE MONITORING STRATEGY ANNOUNCED

The UK Government, Devolved Administrations and Agencies have agreed a new strategy for shaping the UK's ability to provide, and respond to, the evidence to demonstrate that our vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas is being achieved. The UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS) requires a step-change in the way we co-ordinate marine data collection and assessment and for successful implementation, the strategy requires everyone to embrace the changes.

To lead the strategy, a senior Government committee, the new Marine Assessment Policy Committee (MAPC), will meet six-monthly and oversee the changes to be completed by December 2007. This will be supported by the Marine Assessment and Reporting Group (MARG), three Evidence Groups to oversee the collection of the necessary data and other groups to oversee data and monitoring protocols.

This strategy comes at a time when a high profile is being given to the marine environment by David Miliband (Environment Minister) through Defra's Strategy Refresh and Ross Finnie's (Scottish Environment and Rural Development Minister) Advisory Group on Marine and Coastal Strategy. All this against a background of the current work on the UK Marine Bill and the possibility of a marine and coastal national park in Scotland are all raising the marine environment up the political agenda and consideration is being given to marine spatial planning in the UK, which will have a large monitoring and data assessment requirement.

Rodney Anderson, Defra's Marine and Fisheries Director, who, together with David Wilson, Head of the Marine Group at the Scottish Executive, co-Chairs MAPC, said,

'it is extremely timely that we, as the UK, provide a mechanism to measure progress towards our vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans, given the increasing pressures. We must manage our monitoring and assessment to ensure that we fulfil our reporting obligations effectively and efficiently. I look forward to the strategy providing us with the power to answer questions about the state of our seas and document ecosystem trends and help us demonstrate, by 2021, good environmental status under the pending Marine Strategy Directive.'

David Wilson added,

'The UKMMAS is very much a shared UK approach working towards the vision for our seas and the Scottish Executive is engaged fully in it. The seas do not recognise administrative boundaries and we need to work together for this important area. In Scotland our territorial waters comprise more than half of what is defined as Scotland.'

This is the first issue of UKMMAS News to announce that the strategy has been agreed and is making progress. The next issue will cover the detail of the evidence groups, their responsibilities and the milestones planned until December 2007 after which the strategy should be part of our core business.



For further details on the UKMMAS – see
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/science/monitoring.htm>

MAPC



Rodney Anderson



David Wilson

The Marine Assessment Policy Committee (MAPC) oversees the UKMMAS structure. It will shape the UK's capability to provide, and respond to, the evidence required for meeting the vision first announced in Safeguarding our Seas, (2002). Its principal tasks are to:

- identify the requirements for marine monitoring and assessment in order to meet International and National obligations and commitments for the marine environment, including operational forecasts and other socio-economic objectives;
- maximise efficiency and effectiveness of UK resources devoted to marine monitoring and assessments;
- provide a cross-Departmental forum for clearance of integrated marine assessments before publication; and
- identify the policy implications resulting from marine assessments and ensure communication to those able to action; providing, where appropriate, a pro-active lead towards adaptive management.

MAPC is jointly Chaired by Rodney Anderson (Defra) and David Wilson, (Scottish Executive), the Secretariat is provided by Defra, Marine Environment Division. The Committee's 3rd meeting is due on 7th November 2006.

Contact: Nigel Thurlow - MAPC Secretariat
Nigel.Thurlow@defra.gsi.gov.uk

MARG



Beth Greenaway

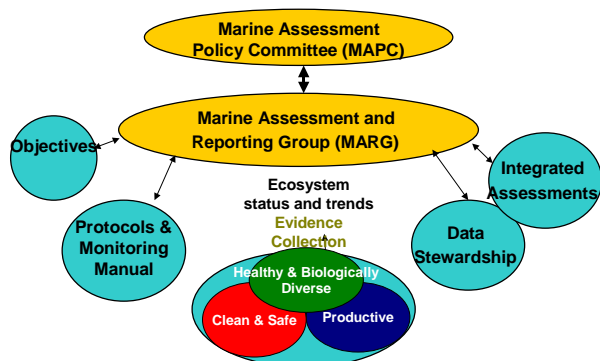
The Marine Assessment and Reporting Group (MARG) reports to MAPC and is responsible for implementing, through the series of Evidence and other Groups, the UKMMAS to fulfil the policy requirements. MARG will:

- define the monitoring programme to meet MAPC needs; ensuring via an audit trail that Marine Objectives are measured;
- provide overall direction to the monitoring programmes ensuring that the maximum efficiency and effectiveness is made of UK resources devoted to the marine monitoring and assessments;
- manage and integrate periodic assessments for adoption by MAPC; and
- be pro-active, noting research and developing technologies and emerging understanding; identify and highlight issues relevant to MAPC for policy and governance changes and adjust the monitoring programmes if relevant and required.

MARG is chaired by Beth Greenaway, Defra, Marine Environment Division; which also provides the Secretariat. MARG's next meeting is due in October 2006.

Contacts: Beth Greenaway, Chair
Beth.Greenaway@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Jamie Rendell, Secretary
Jamie.Rendell@defra.gsi.gov.uk

The new structure



The new UKMMAS contains five key elements (see picture opposite). Our **marine objectives** will be monitored using known **protocols and standards**. Evidence collection will be co-ordinated **via 3 groups**. Sound **data management** will assist with the compiling of any assessments, particularly **integrated assessments**.

Next issue of UKMMAS News – Winter 2006

© Crown Copyright 2006

Comments on this newsletter and requests for further copies should be addressed to:
Nigel.Thurlow@defra.gsi.gov.uk