



**NORTHERN IRELAND MARINE PLAN  
STATEMENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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## Chapter 1. Introduction – No Revision Required

As an island, Ireland has always had a close connection with the sea. In Northern Ireland we have over 650 km of coastline with a number of our largest cities and towns situated in coastal areas. The coast and marine area have an important connection with our social, cultural and economic development. The marine environment is a key asset in terms of biodiversity, recreation, tourism and the transportation of goods and services to and from our ports. In addition it also supports industries such as aquaculture and fishing and there is significant potential for the growth of marine renewables in the future.

The Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15 highlights the importance of 'marine planning' as one of the building blocks to long term economic growth. We in the Department of the Environment are now undertaking work to prepare a marine plan for our inshore and offshore regions.

This will be the first time that marine activities and resources within our waters have been planned and managed in a coherent manner. The future development of our marine area affects many people and we therefore wish to encourage all those with an interest to have their say in the plan making process. Indeed we consider the participation and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders reflecting the variety of competing interests is also essential to the success of the process.

### Marine Planning Framework

The new system of marine planning here is set within the framework of three pieces of legislation:

- Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009<sup>1</sup>;
- Marine Strategy Regulations 2010<sup>2</sup>, transposing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC throughout the UK; and the
- Marine Bill<sup>3</sup>.

The Marine Bill, which was introduced into the Assembly in February 2012, complements the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) by including a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1627/contents/made>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Legislation/Primary-Legislation---Current-Bills/Marine-Bill/>

number of corresponding measures that will help to deliver the UK vision for the marine area of “clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas”. In addition, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive sets the European context for managing our seas with the aim of achieving good environmental status by 2020. These three interlocking pieces of legislation will together establish the legal basis for the marine planning system in our inshore and offshore regions.

The Marine Bill when enacted together with the MCAA will establish the Department of the Environment as the Marine Plan Authority for Northern Ireland’s inshore (0-12 nautical miles) and offshore (beyond 12 nautical miles) regions respectively. We intend to prepare marine plans for the inshore and offshore regions simultaneously under one plan-making process and, subject to the approval of the Executive and the Secretary of State (in respect of the Plan for the offshore region and all retained functions), publish them as one composite document which collectively will be referred to as the Northern Ireland Marine Plan. This will ensure integrated planning throughout our marine area.

In March 2011, HM Government and the Devolved Administrations published the Marine Policy Statement (MPS). The Statement provides the high-level policy context within which all marine plans in the UK will be developed, implemented, monitored, amended and/or withdrawn. It also ensures there is appropriate consistency in marine planning across the whole UK marine area and outlines the national policies for various activities and issues which need to be considered in developing a marine plan. It provides transparency to users, guides the development of marine plans, sets out the importance of encouraging co-existence of uses and how impact should be considered. Until marine plans are in place, all activities that affect or might affect the marine area are subject to the requirements of the MPS unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

At a Northern Ireland level, we published the draft Marine Position Paper<sup>4</sup> in March 2012 for consultation. This document complements the MPS, and sets out the Executive’s objectives for the sustainable development of our marine area and the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/foi/recent-releases/publications-details.htm?docid=8608>

steps being taken to realise these objectives. It identifies the local policy context within which the Marine Plan will be developed.

### **What is this document?**

This is a 'Statement of Public Participation' (SPP), which is required at the beginning of the marine plan preparation process. The key aims of the SPP are to: set out how and when we mean to involve and engage people in the preparation of Northern Ireland's first marine plan; indicate the associated timeframe leading to its publication for public consultation; and invite comment as to the matters to be included in the proposed marine plan. The main stages in producing the Marine Plan are described in this document along with the type of stakeholder participation that will be encouraged at each stage.

We will take all reasonable steps to comply with this SPP and to keep it under periodic review throughout the marine plan preparation process, publishing any revisions in due course.

### **Who is this document for?**

This document is for 'interested persons' – that is anyone or any group likely to be interested in or affected by policies or proposals to be contained in the Marine Plan. This will involve a wide variety of people, including those who live or work near the sea, those who derive their livelihood from the sea, as well as those who enjoy it, care about it or manage it in some way. It will include individuals as well as stakeholder groups and larger organisations.

We want to provide ample opportunity for groups, businesses and individuals to be involved in shaping the Marine Plan and by taking part in this plan-making process you can influence the decisions being made about the Plan.

### **Principles of engagement**

The following principles have been drawn up to shape stakeholder engagement during the plan preparation process. These have been influenced by our previous experience in public/stakeholder engagement and feedback from stakeholders themselves.

**Principles of Engagement**

**We will:**

- **involve people early on and encourage as high a level of participation as possible throughout the plan preparation process;**
- **engage with interested persons and organisations at the appropriate time employing effective engagement methods and allow sufficient time for meaningful consultation;**
- **undertake stakeholder engagement in an open and transparent manner;**
- **be clear in the purpose of any engagement, and provide easily understood information and feedback to help people participate;**
- **seek, wherever possible, to combine stakeholder engagement on the plan with other related issues to maximise use of marine stakeholder time;**
- **respect the diversity of people and their lifestyles and give people a fair opportunity to have their voice heard regardless of gender, age, race, abilities, sexual orientation, community background, circumstances or wherever they live;**
- **be consistent in the approach to public participation and make documents publicly available on our website, including availability in alternative formats where appropriate; and**
- **communicate clearly with people using plain English and avoiding jargon.**

## Chapter 2. Background – No Revision Required

### Why plan for our marine area?

Our seas are a major economic and environmental asset. They provide an important social and cultural function and sustain marine industries and coastal communities. A large number of activities take place in the marine and coastal area including: transportation, renewable energy generation, fishing, aquaculture and tourism.

The marine environment is also home to a number of productive and biologically diverse ecosystems. While our marine area is small relative to those of adjoining administrations, its contribution to overall biodiversity inventories is nonetheless relatively large<sup>5</sup>, with approximately 50% of our biodiversity lying below the sea<sup>6</sup>.

Marine habitats deliver a wide range of ecosystem goods and services of value to society. However, the sea is not a limitless resource and we need to develop an approach to regulating these activities, which will allow for their sustainable management and development now and into the future.

Marine plans and the marine planning process are tools which will facilitate the sustainable development of the marine area. They are based on a balanced consideration of economic, social and environmental factors while taking account of the costs and benefits of key marine activities.

### What are the benefits of marine planning?

Marine planning aims to achieve better management of our marine resources in a sustainable way. It will allow us to set clear objectives and priorities for the future development, management, conservation and use of the marine area. This view has been broadly endorsed through initial stakeholder engagement.

Marine plans are likely to provide detailed policy and spatial guidance for an area and will help to ensure that decisions within the plan area contribute to the delivery of international, national and local policy objectives. The Marine Plan may highlight

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<sup>5</sup> UK National Ecosystem Assessment: Technical Report, Chapter 18, <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Northern Ireland State of the Seas Report 2011, [http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/state\\_of\\_the\\_seas\\_ni\\_report.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/state_of_the_seas_ni_report.htm)

areas where development can proceed and areas where the protection of the environment is given a higher priority, but may also identify areas where different activities and uses can co-exist. The Plan will therefore make important decisions about the future of our marine area and will seek to integrate social, economic and environmental needs and demands on the marine environment.

The Plan will be based on sound evidence taking account of best available scientific, technical and qualitative information from a variety of sources. It will be subject to an appraisal of sustainability, and will be accompanied by on-going stakeholder engagement.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

**A sustainability appraisal is a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (that is social, environmental and economic factors), and is a legislative requirement to be undertaken for all marine plans.**

The Marine Plan in conjunction with the MPS will form a new plan-led system for marine activities, and will provide the framework within which decisions on future proposals are taken. In this way, marine users and prospective developers/investors will have greater certainty about our marine priorities and should experience less regulatory burden and have more confidence to proceed with individual proposals.

### **Progress to date**

A dedicated Marine Plan Team was set up in 2011 within the Department of Environment, and in the lead up to introduction of the Marine Bill, we have been liaising with a range of partners in other Departments and establishing contacts with marine organisations both locally, and in the South of Ireland, Isle of Man and other Devolved Administrations. Substantial progress has already been made in assessing the progress made with plans and policies produced in other jurisdictions, and in collating and analysing information on our marine area primarily through the Northern Ireland State of the Seas Report<sup>7</sup> which complements the UK-

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/state\\_of\\_the\\_seas\\_ni\\_report.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/state_of_the_seas_ni_report.htm)



wide report Charting Progress 2 – The State of the UK Seas<sup>8</sup>, We also intend to gather information on the socio-economic processes which take place in our coastal communities to better understand the issues affecting these areas and the people who live there. It is anticipated this will include an analysis of the socio-economic conditions and impacts of marine activities in these areas.

A significant amount of work has already been done within our marine area, particularly in the field of marine renewable energy. The Marine Plan will utilise and build on the environmental information gathered for the Strategic Environmental Assessment that accompanied the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan 2012-2020, and associated non-statutory Regional Locational Guidance. Many stakeholders will have already participated and provided input to this work.

In taking forward work on the Marine Plan it may be necessary, depending on the relevant issue or activity, to analyse information relating to a broader area than the plan area itself. This is due to the fact that many marine activities and features are not neatly confined to one plan area and there are many interrelationships with bordering seas and even further afield. This may include issues arising within the shared waters at Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle.

Stakeholders from outside our marine plan area may also wish to be involved in the process if they feel they are affected by issues raised through the Plan. We will engage with other marine plan authorities in bordering jurisdictions and indeed would welcome participation and input from stakeholders outside Northern Ireland.

At the start of 2012, relevant authorities<sup>9</sup> were notified of the intention to commence work on the Northern Ireland Marine Plan. An initial stakeholder seminar was also held in March 2012 which attracted almost 70 delegates, drawn from a wide cross-section of interest groups and organisations, including other Departments with marine responsibilities. The issues, opinions and views expressed at that event, particularly those around a draft of the SPP and stakeholder views as to the main priorities for the Marine Plan were fully considered in finalising this document. A summary report of the event is available on our website.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://chartingprogress.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> Environment Secretary of State (DEFRA), Marine Scotland, Welsh Assembly Government, Marine Management Organisation, Irish and Isle of Man Governments and local Councils with coastal responsibilities

## **Statement of Public Participation**

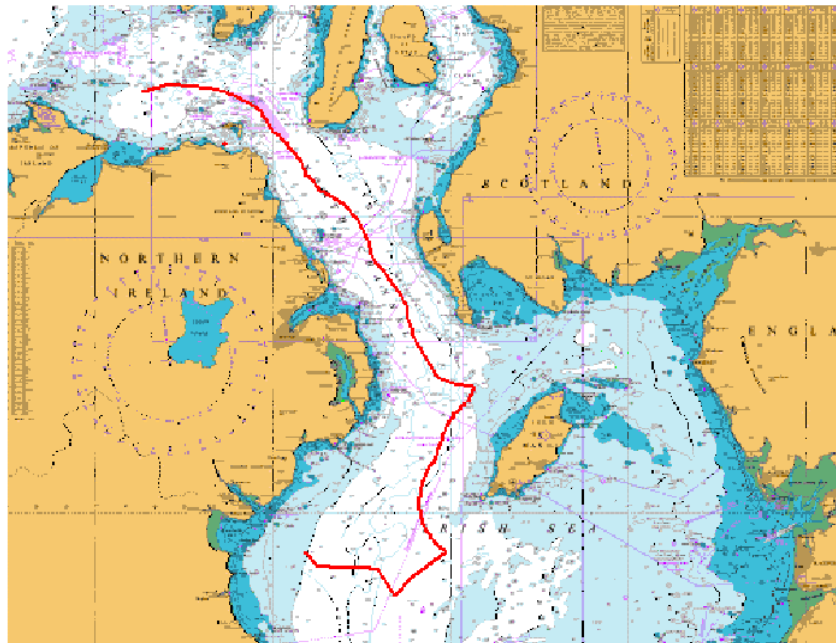
The SPP is designed to enable all stakeholders and the public to participate and contribute to the preparation of the Plan, and through this process should ensure greater connection between marine users and the Plan itself.

## Chapter 3. The Marine Plan Area - Revised

The Northern Ireland marine area comprises the inshore and offshore regions. The inshore region is the area of sea within the seaward limits of the territorial sea adjacent to Northern Ireland, i.e. out to 12 nautical miles. This area includes parts of the Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean and includes the sea loughs, tidal river and the intertidal zone – that is, the area which is above water at low tide and below water at high tide.

### Figure 1: Northern Ireland Marine Plan Area

Adjacent Waters Boundaries (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 - chart to show "the Northern Ireland Zone" as defined in Order - for information purposes only.



The offshore region is the area from the 12 nautical mile limit to the boundary of the Northern Ireland zone. Northern Ireland's waters therefore abut those of Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and the South of Ireland.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland Marine Areas within the UK Context



Key to Northern Ireland Marine Area	
	Northern Ireland Inshore Region
	Northern Ireland offshore Region

### Characteristics of the Marine Area

The Northern Ireland marine area consists of 650km of coastline, with over 10,000 hectares of shore lying between the High and Low water marks. Around 9,700 hectares (over 91%) of this area is designated as Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs). The designations cover a number of habitats such as mudflats, sand dunes or geological features.

While our sea area is small relative to those of adjoining administrations, it is nonetheless intensively used, presenting many challenges for marine plans and planning.

Our marine and coastal area is very diverse in character incorporating 3 broad types of landscape. The north and north-east have a rugged and open character with rocky headlands and cliffs interspersed with beaches of boulders, gravel and sand. The north coast, in particular, is exposed to the waves and swell of the Atlantic Ocean, which has a major influence on the environment. To the north of Rathlin Island, the seabed drops to a maximum depth of about 240m. West of Rathlin Island, off the north-east coast of Donegal, the overall seabed gradient is relatively gentle.

Between east Antrim and Scotland is the North Channel, which reaches a maximum depth of 315m at Beaufort's Dyke off the Scottish coast. Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are located here: the Antrim Coast and Glens, the Causeway Coast and Binevenagh. The Giant's Causeway is a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

The coast of much of Co.Down is gentler and lower lying representing the second geographical type. The shore here is composed of sand and gravel beaches or rocks. The coastline is washed by the Irish Sea and varies in depth between 20-100 m over much of its extent with a deeper channel, exceeding 100m, running north to south between Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. The seabed shelves relatively gently off the south-east coast of Co.Down reaching about 100m at the 12 nautical mile limit.

The third landscape type is the great indentations of the coast that form our sea loughs. The sheltered shores within the loughs are usually composed of fine sand or muddy sediments. Together the sea loughs have an area just over 520km<sup>2</sup> and drain over 40% of our land area.

### **Who is responsible for looking after our marine environment?**

The responsibility for management of our marine environment is split between a number of Departments and their agencies including UK Government

Departments<sup>10</sup> for certain retained functions in both the inshore and offshore regions.

The Department of Environment has the lead role in the protection and conservation of the whole water environment, and also has responsibility as the marine licensing and marine policy authority for the inshore region and the marine plan authority for all Northern Ireland's marine waters. ~~Many of these responsibilities are exercised through the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).~~ The Department established a new Marine Division in November 2012, drawing together from across the Department existing policy, planning, conservation and scientific functions for marine management and protection. In addition, it has responsibility for implementing international, EU and national legislation along with national legislation to promote, protect and sustain Northern Ireland's coastal waters.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has the lead role in managing fisheries and aquaculture. It has functions in both the inshore and offshore regions. It is also responsible for the management of the fishing ports of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie, which is exercised through the NI Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA)<sup>11</sup>. The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)<sup>12</sup>, provides the necessary scientific advice to DARD to enable it to exercise its role effectively. The Rivers Agency<sup>13</sup> has responsibility for the Floods Directive, and the construction and maintenance of designated sea defences.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) is responsible for energy policy including marine developments such as marine renewable energy, gas storage and mineral developments in the inshore region. It is also responsible for ensuring the development of modern telecommunications infrastructure with associated underground and undersea cables. DETI also has responsibility for the development of tourism.

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<sup>10</sup> UK Government Departments with responsibilities in NI waters are Ministry of Defence, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Department for Transport and Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Marine Management Organisation is also a licensing and permitting body in the offshore region.

<sup>11</sup> A DARD sponsored non-departmental public body.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 11 above.

<sup>13</sup> Rivers Agency is an executive agency of DARD.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) is responsible for the conservation and protection of salmon and inland fisheries, with scientific support provided by AFBI.

The Department for Regional Development (DRD) has a role in the management of our ports and harbours, excluding the fishing ports for which DARD has responsibility.

The cross-border areas of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough are managed as 'shared waters' through the Loughs Agency, which is responsible for the conservation, protection and development within these catchment areas. Its objectives include development of fisheries and aquaculture, conservation and protection of inland fisheries, and sustainable development of marine tourism.

Primary responsibility for the monitoring and assessment of our marine environment falls to the new Marine Division NIEA, AFBI, DARD Fisheries and the Loughs Agency as indicated in the State of the Seas Report.

UK Government Departments also exercise responsibilities in NI's waters including defence, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, shipping, licensing and permitting regimes and European and international relations. In addition, the Crown Estate has a management role as it owns the seabed in UK Territorial Waters off the Northern Ireland coast and over half of the intertidal area.

While there is no formal delimitation of the territorial sea boundary between the UK and the South of Ireland, a Memorandum of Understanding was reached between the two Governments in late 2011, supported by the Executive, which provides clarity on this issue for the purposes of offshore renewable energy developments in the seas outside Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough.

## **Chapter 4. Stages and timeline for marine plan production - Revised**

The Marine Bill was introduced into the Assembly in February 2012 and it is anticipated that the legislation will be enacted early in 2013. When in place this will complete the legislative framework for the new marine planning system for all Northern Ireland's seas.

In the interim we are taking forward the Marine Plan preparation process pending the Bill's enactment. This includes fulfilling the legal requirement to prepare and publish a Statement of Public Participation (this document) and take forward an appraisal of sustainability of the Plan, which will include a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

It should take just over 2 years to bring forward the Marine Plan, however more time will likely be needed if following public consultation it is decided that an independent investigation is required. Throughout the whole preparation process, we will engage with stakeholders and other interested persons on an ongoing basis by providing specific opportunities to participate at key stages. We are keen to hear people's views and will accept input at any stage up to publication of the draft plan.

The Marine Plan Team has been working closely with officials elsewhere in other relevant Northern Ireland Departments and agencies through the Inter-departmental Marine Co-ordination Group (IMCG) on matters of mutual interest, and will continue with this collaborative approach in developing the Marine Plan.

Members of the Team have met with representatives from other plan authorities in adjoining administrations including the Marine Management Organisation (England), Marine Scotland, the Isle of Man Government and Government of Wales and have established contacts with officials in the South of Ireland. We have also held meetings with other relevant UK Departments and agencies with marine responsibilities. We aim to continue to meet with the representatives of adjoining administrations to discuss common issues, share knowledge and experience and establish how best to engage with them during this plan-making process.

In conjunction with the other Devolved Administrations, and representatives from the Isle of Man and Irish Governments, we have engaged with the Irish Sea



Maritime Forum (ISMF). The Forum brings together relevant stakeholders with the aim of promoting sustainable development and transnational partnership working across the Irish Sea region, and includes sectoral interest groups such as renewable energy, fishing and environmental organisations.

**Plan timeline and opportunities for stakeholder engagement**

Table 1 below sets out the proposed steps of plan making, highlighting a number of key opportunities for stakeholder input into the process. It should be noted that as plan making is an iterative process the timeline and steps may be subject to change. Throughout this process close co-operation with all other Departments with marine responsibilities will be maintained through the IMCG.

**Table 1: Timeline and key steps for the marine plan-making process**

Key Steps	Activities	Timeline
1: Initiation and Early stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Informal meetings and discussions with key stakeholders;</li> <li>b. Preparation of the Statement of Public Participation with stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>c. Publication of the Statement of Public Participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>February-June 2012</b></p> <p><b>February-June 2012</b></p> <p><b>June 2012</b></p>
2: Evidence gathering and plan preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evidence gathering and working drafts of relevant documents to be prepared, including consideration of options and alternatives;</li> <li>b. Preparation of draft plan and iterative process of Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) together with other necessary assessments;</li> <li>c. Draft marine plan to DOE Minister for consideration.</li> <li>d. Draft marine plan to the Secretary of State and Executive for approval.</li> </ul>	<p><b>June 2012 - <del>Feb 2013</del> April 2013</b></p> <p><b>Up to <del>December 2013</del> Spring 2014</b></p> <p><b><del>Mid-December 2013</del> Mid May 2014</b></p> <p><b><del>End of December 2013</del></b></p> <p><b>End of May 2014</b></p>
3: Consultation and Independent Investigation if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Publication of and consultation on draft marine plan and SA Report;</li> <li>b. Consideration of responses to consultation and seek to resolve any issues arising;</li> </ul>	<p><b><del>January – April 2014</del> June – September 2014</b></p> <p><b>Dependent upon need for</b></p>

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<b>Key Steps</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	c. Consider need for Independent Investigation;	<b>Independent Investigation. Estimated at 6-12 months</b>
4: Adoption	a. Revise draft marine plan following outcome from public consultation and Report of Independent Investigation (if needed)  b. Final marine plan to DOE Minister for consideration prior to seeking Secretary of State and Executive approval for adoption.	<b>Estimated at 2-3 months</b>

## Chapter 5. With whom will we engage? – No Revision Required

### Engaging with stakeholders and interested parties

We would strongly encourage people / organisations interested in the following areas to become involved in the preparation of the Marine Plan at the opportunities provided:

#### **Key Sectoral Stakeholder Interests**

- aggregates
- aquaculture / fisheries / food
- conservation / environmental organisations
- defence and national security
- dredging and disposal
- energy production / infrastructure development
- ports, shipping and navigation
- surface water management
- telecommunications / cabling
- tourism / recreation
- waste water treatment and disposal

representatives, local authorities and bordering Administrations will also be important to the success of the plan preparation process. The Marine Plan Team is committed to communicating and engaging with as many groups and individuals as possible within the timeframe and resources available.

### Engaging with stakeholder groups

Those with an interest in the above areas will likely encompass voluntary / community groups, forums or umbrella organisations, environmental groups, residents groups as well as business interests and developers. There are established groups and organisations within each area which will undoubtedly make a key contribution to the marine plan process on behalf of their members and also provide an important source of information for us.

We believe the following broad categories of groups will play a particularly important role in the marine plan process. However, individuals with an interest in one or

more areas are also encouraged to participate as the issues they raise may be just as important as groups which represent a large membership.

- **Industry representative groups**

There are many industry groups representing specific marine sectors such as fisheries, aggregates and renewable energy. These representative groups will want to be involved to ensure that their members' interests are fully taken into account. We will engage with these groups throughout the process to obtain their views and gain access to their knowledge and experience.

- **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

There are many NGOs in Northern Ireland with a specific interest in the marine area. These include the Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum<sup>14</sup> and the Northern Ireland Marine Task Force<sup>15</sup> (NIMTF). The former is a non-statutory body made up of a cross-section of interests ranging from local Government, business, agriculture, fishing and environmental bodies. It aims to provide meaningful stakeholder input to strategic policies affecting the coastal area, as well as raising awareness of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The NIMTF is a coalition of eight environmental NGOs. These organisations represent a large membership and a wide range of environmental interests. These groups and others, as appropriate, will be engaged throughout the process, and we will continue to explore with them additional or alternative information and environmental data they may have which can feed into the plan process.

- **Local Councils**

There are currently 12 local councils along our coast, and each will have an interest in and an important contribution to make to the marine plan process. These councils have responsibility for local economic development and tourism, which in many areas is strongly influenced by their respective coastal locations. They may also have management responsibility for stretches of coastline or facilities such as harbours or marinas. Local councils will also be mindful of their future role as additional powers / responsibilities are transferred as part of the on-going Review of Public Administration.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.coastalmarineni.com/>

<sup>15</sup> NIMTF is a coalition of eight environmental NGOs: Northern Ireland Environment Link<sup>15</sup>, Ulster Wildlife Trust, WWF NI, The National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Friends of the Earth and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.: [www.nimtf.org/](http://www.nimtf.org/)

- **Statutory partners and other government bodies**

Under marine legislation, we are required to consult with all other Departments which have functions in relation to the marine area during the preparation of the consultation draft and the settling of the text of the Plan for adoption and publication. (See 'Who is responsible for our marine environment', under Section 3).

The Marine Plan will also physically overlap with other Government plans which have a coastal or marine dimension. Other parts of DOE, such as the Local Planning Offices and NIEA will therefore have an important role to play in marine planning to ensure that the Marine Plan complements existing development plans along the coast as well as river basin management plans.

- **Bordering Administrations**

Neighbouring plan authorities have already been formally notified of the decision to prepare the Northern Ireland Marine Plan. We will continue to meet with the other Devolved Administrations on a regular basis to discuss common issues and engage with the relevant Departments in the Irish and Isle of Man Governments throughout the marine plan process. We will take into account their policies and emerging marine plans and seek to resolve any potential trans-boundary issues in a co-ordinated and inclusive manner. Issues which may affect more than one administration could include fishing, renewable energy, shipping, migrating birds, habitat protection and the potential implications of climate change.

- **General public, local communities and local interest groups**

It is equally important that local people, their communities and local interest groups including residents and neighbourhood groups, participate in the plan process so that their opinions and interests can be properly taken into account. In this respect we recognise the particular importance of the community on Rathlin Island, the only inhabited island in our waters. In some instances local people and groups may prefer to have their elected representatives speak and engage in the marine plan process on their behalf.

**Marine Circulation List**

**The Marine Plan Team continues to compile a circulation list for all those with an interest in the marine area, and in particular the preparation of the Marine Plan. We are therefore keen to hear from you should you wish to be added to this list. See Chapter 7 - Contact Us / Getting involved.**

### **Matters to be included in the Marine Plan**

Early engagement with stakeholders and the public at key stages in the plan preparation process will not only ensure that people's views are fully taken into account, but will also help to shape the form, structure and content of the Plan. While the sectoral areas in the marine environment identified at the beginning of this chapter indicate the primary focus of matters to be included in the Marine Plan, an important aspect of the SPP is to provide everyone with an interest the opportunity to put forward their views on this issue. Such representations should be made in writing.

## Chapter 6. When and how will we engage with stakeholders?

Based upon the timeline shown in Table 1 the key methods of how we intend to engage stakeholders at each stage of the plan-making process are set out below. We have included a variety of methods for getting involved during the process to reflect the different needs and preferences of stakeholders and to recognise the numbers of stakeholders involved in events, meetings or workshops can vary. We will seek to use the most appropriate method of engagement to ensure effective participation. Consequently, some of the methods of engagement will be used periodically while others will likely be used on an on-going basis. As the plan process progresses, methods of communication and involvement may be added to or refined based on lessons learnt from earlier engagement.

<b><u>Key Methods of Engagement</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sector-based workshops</b></li><li>• <b>Geographic based workshops</b></li><li>• <b>One-to-one meetings</b></li><li>• <b>Attendance at stakeholder groups meetings</b></li><li>• <b>Provision of information through DOE website</b></li><li>• <b>Newsletters</b></li><li>• <b>Public meetings</b></li><li>• <b>Drop-in sessions</b></li></ul>

olders to

appropriate media.

We are committed to providing as much information as possible about the plan process and opportunities for engagement. We will provide regular email updates and contribute to a DOE quarterly marine update report, which will be made available on our website.

A variety of participation opportunities will be provided at each stage and meetings will be held so far as is practicable in different locations accessible to different stakeholder interests. Wherever possible, stakeholder engagement will be combined to maximise use of marine stakeholder time, for instance, around related areas like Marine Conservation Zones or implementation of Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Mindful also of our wider obligations under Section 75 of the

Northern Ireland Act 1998 we are particularly interested in attracting the views and opinions of younger people and as part of the plan-making process will explore additional methods of communicating effectively with this group.

**Table 2: Key stages of the marine plan-making process and stakeholder engagement**

Marine planning stages and stakeholder engagement	Methods of engagement	Estimated timing
<b>Stage 1. Initiation and Early Stakeholder Engagement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with Government Departments/bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOE has held a series of bi-lateral meetings with those Government Departments and arms-length bodies with marine responsibilities during 2011:</li> </ul>	From June 2011 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop to discuss stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Stakeholder Seminar / Workshop to gauge opinion on how DOE should engage with stakeholders throughout the plan process.</li> <li>• Feedback to stakeholders via e-mail of Report of Seminar / Workshop Event</li> </ul>	16 March 2012  May 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with sector representatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend relevant events and organise meetings with representatives of the main marine sectors will commence Spring / Summer 2012. These meetings are designed to be exploratory and to assist the team acquire knowledge of marine issues.</li> </ul>	March 2012 onwards
<b>Stage 2: SPP and evidence gathering</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of SPP</li> </ul>	DOE will notify stakeholders of publication of the SPP through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email alert to stakeholders via marine circulation list</li> <li>• DOE website</li> <li>• Hard copies on request</li> <li>• Press release</li> </ul>	June 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event proposed to mark formal commencement</li> </ul>	ISMF conference focusing on the Irish Sea Region will be held to accompany publication of the SPP to mark formal commencement of the Northern Ireland Marine Plan process.	June 2012



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Marine planning stages and stakeholder engagement	Methods of engagement	Estimated timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence Gathering and initial engagement with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>This will be followed by smaller events and further opportunities for stakeholders to submit information / data or provide written input relevant to this stage.</p>	<p>Further round of Meetings / Events  <del>June</del> <b>Oct 2012 – Jan 2013</b></p>
<b>Stage 2 cont'd: Scoping content of the Marine Plan / Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability Advisory Group to be established.</li> </ul>	<p>Membership and remit of this group will be made available on the DOE website.</p>	<p><del>June / July 2012</del>  <b>February / March 2013</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going engagement with stakeholders including sectoral interests on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>format and structure of the Marine Plan</li> <li>available evidence and data</li> <li>plan vision and objectives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Series of public meetings / events including drop-in sessions.</p> <p>Regular updates to stakeholders via e-mail alerts and newsletters.</p>	<p>Nov – Dec 2012</p> <p>Plan vision and objectives agreed by <del>Dec 2012</del>  <b>February / March 2013</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult relevant stakeholders on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal</li> </ul>	<p><b>One or more of the methods of engagement will be utilised at this stage.</b></p>	<p><del>Dec 12 – Feb 13</del>  <b>March 2013</b></p>
<b>Stage 2 Cont'd: Drafting the Marine Plan</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with stakeholders on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>future options and scenarios</li> <li>selection of preferred options/scenarios</li> <li>plan policies and proposals</li> <li>delivery framework including implementation and monitoring</li> </ul> </li> <li>Engagement at this stage is likely to focus around the production of a Marine Plan Strategic Issues and Options Paper</li> </ul>	<p>A further round of engagement will be undertaken once all the evidence has been gathered and the plan vision and objectives agreed. This is likely to involve a key stakeholder event with round table discussions and may be followed by smaller events.</p> <p><b>One or more of the methods of engagement will be utilised at this stage.</b></p>	<p><del>Jan – June 2013</del>  <b>March – June 2013</b></p> <p>Options generated <del>Summer / Autumn</del>  <b>2013</b></p> <p>Preferred option(s) selected <del>Autumn /</del>  <b>late 2013</b></p> <p>Plan policies, proposals and delivery framework drafted <del>late 2013</del>  <b>early 2014.</b></p>
<b>Stage 3: Draft Marine Plan and Assessments Consultation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory consultation on the draft NIMP and Sustainability Appraisal Report, and invitation to make representations</li> <li>Publication of other background reports and assessments which accompany the draft marine plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Formal 12 week public consultation.</u></b></p> <p>Notification of publication of consultation draft through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email alert via marine circulation list</li> <li>DOE website</li> <li>Hard copies on request</li> <li>Press release</li> </ul>	<p><del>January – April</del>  <b>June – August 2014</b></p>

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Marine planning stages and stakeholder engagement	Methods of engagement	Estimated timing
	Series of public meetings and exhibitions.  Representations on the draft plan must be made in writing via email or letter within the requisite period.	
<b>Stage 3 Cont'd: Consideration of Representations</b>		
DOE will analyse representations received and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether any amendment to the draft plan proposals is required; and</li> <li>whether an Independent Investigation is needed.</li> </ul>	Updates will be provided through the DOE website and e-mail circulation. <b>No specific stakeholder engagement is proposed during this period.</b>  <b>If no Independent Investigation is deemed necessary, draft plan may proceed to adoption late 2014.</b>	<del>Spring</del> <b>September / October</b> 2014
<b>Stage 3 Cont'd: Independent Investigation (if considered necessary)</b>		
The format of any independent investigation is yet to be determined.	The key brief of the person(s) appointed to undertake an Independent Investigation will be to investigate, through a structured forum, matters specific to proposals in the NIMP which following public consultation remain unresolved.	<del>6-12 months</del> <b>Approx 6 months</b>
<b>Stage 4: Adoption and Publication of the Marine Plan</b>		
DOE will consider the report of any Independent Investigation, and if appropriate amend the NIMP accordingly.  DOE will inform stakeholders of the adoption and publication of the Marine Plan and SA Statement	Notification of publication and adoption of the final plan through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email alert via marine circulation list</li> <li>DOE website</li> <li>Hard copies on request</li> <li>Press release</li> </ul>	<del>Winter 2014</del> <b>Spring / Summer</b> 2015  Plan publication and adoption <b>early</b> <b>Autumn</b> 2015
<b>Post Adoption - Implementation and Review</b>		
The Delivery Framework for implementation and review of the Plan including any opportunities for stakeholder engagement will be determined during the plan process.		<b>Spring</b> <b>Autumn</b> 2015 onwards

### Making a representation on the Marine Plan

The SPP, the draft Plan, the final Marine Plan and accompanying reports will be made available on the DOE website. We will set out clearly on the website and in any email or written correspondence how long stakeholders have to make written representations and detail any additional opportunities to attend stakeholder events

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or meetings in order to make their opinions known. Each stakeholder must choose the best way of getting involved for them and decide whether they wish their views to be represented by a group or organisation or whether they wish to make individual representations. The Marine Plan Team intends to make extensive use of electronic means of communication to assist stakeholder engagement, including the website. Hard copies of documents may be made available upon request.

**Comments at each of the formal consultation stages must be made in writing and will be made publicly available.**

## **Chapter 7. What will we do with stakeholders' views and comments? – No Revision Required**

We will keep records of stakeholder meetings and prepare and publish a summary of key consultation exercises and events which will be made available using the marine circulation list and DOE website. Through this SPP we intend to undertake wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and will consider fully all representations made during the plan preparation and public consultation phases. Nevertheless we cannot guarantee that all views and comments made will be accommodated or will result in a consequential alteration or amendment to the Plan.

We are likely to hear and receive many conflicting opinions and competing requirements in relation to the marine area however these must be balanced with the national policies contained within the Marine Policy Statement supplemented by the Marine Position Paper for Northern Ireland, as well as national and European obligations. Compromises may have to be made and we will therefore weigh the material considerations in each case and make balanced and transparent decisions. However our commitment to engage with stakeholders early in the process and at each key stage means that stakeholders can put forward their views on the matters to be included in the Plan, and as it evolves. We hope that this will result in greater agreement with the content of the draft plan and thus reduce the number of issues which may be raised at a later stage. During the plan process we will also promote dialogue between different stakeholders with competing views. However, it is important that everyone appreciates the conflicting demands on the sea and the need to build consensus to find a common vision and set of objectives as well as positive solutions in specific locations.

### **Review and Revision to the SPP**

Marine planning is a new and evolving activity, and we are required to keep this SPP under review. As the plan preparation process moves forward, we therefore may see the need to make changes to the SPP to reflect the views of stakeholders or to ensure better or more effective public participation. Any significant changes to the document will require the approval of the Minister of Environment (for the

inshore region) and the Secretary of State (for the offshore region and retained functions) and will be publicised in the normal manner.

**Contact us / Getting Involved**

**If you would like to get involved in the marine planning process outlined in the document, have a view as to the matters to be included in the Plan or would like to be added to our contacts database, please get in touch with the Marine Plan Team:**

**Email: [marineplanteam@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:marineplanteam@doeni.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 028 9025 6557**

**Textphone: 028 9054 0642**

**Marine Plan Team  
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**This document may be made available in alternative formats, please contact us to discuss your requirements.**

## Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

### **Biodiversity**

The variability among living organisms from all sources including, among others, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.

### **Ecosystem**

A community of organisms interacting with one another and with the chemical and physical factors making up their environment. It is a discrete unit comprising both living and non-living parts; it can range from something small to something large such as the Irish Sea or the Earth's oceans.

### **Ecosystem-based approach / Ecosystem approach**

An approach which ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within the levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status; that does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes; and that enables the sustainable use of marine goods and services.

### **Inshore Region**

Internal waters and territorial seas adjacent to Northern Ireland. This is all marine waters from mean high water spring tide and includes the sea loughs, tidal rivers and the inter-tidal zone out to 12 nautical miles.

### **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)**

The coordination of all activities, regulatory and management functions to safeguard all natural resources and processes found in and affecting the coastal zone. ICZM aims to integrate the various management systems and organisations, and encourage public participation, to create a sustainable management approach for the coastal zone.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring is a continuous activity that uses the systematic collection of data on selected indicators to provide an indication of the progress toward the achievement of goals and objectives.

### **Nautical Mile**

A nautical mile is a unit of distance used in marine navigation and marine forecasts.

### **Objective**

An objective is a statement of desired outcomes or observable behavioural changes that represent the achievement of a goal. Characteristics of good objectives are that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

### **Offshore Region**

The area from 12 nautical miles to the boundary of the Northern Ireland zone. This is the area of the Irish Sea west and south of the Isle of Man territorial sea.

### **Retained functions**

Retained functions are functions that are not fully devolved to the Assembly and are referenced in clause 10(1)(b) of the Marine Bill.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

A strategic environmental assessment is a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European SEA directive (2001/42/EC) requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

A sustainability appraisal is a tool for appraising policies, plan and programmes to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (that is social, environmental and economic factors), and are required in the Act to be undertaken for all marine plans and incorporates the process for SEA.

### **Sustainable Development**

Development that enables all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. This is based on the UK's shared set of principles: living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

## **Acronyms**

**MCAA – Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 (UK)**

**MPP – Marine Position Paper (Northern Ireland)**

**MPS – Marine Policy Statement (UK)**

**NIMP – Northern Ireland Marine Plan**

**SA – Sustainability Appraisal**

**SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**SPP – Statement of Public Participation**