

Manx Marine Environmental Assessment

Introduction

Project Introduction



Dingy sailing in Port Erin Bay. Photo: J. Quillin. 7th Wave, Port Erin.

MMEA Chapter 1.1

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Manx Marine Environmental Assessment

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Disclaimer:

The Isle of Man Government has facilitated the compilation of this document, to provide baseline information on the Manx marine environment. Information has been provided by various Government Officers, marine experts, local organisations and industry, often in a voluntary capacity or outside their usual work remit. Advice should always be sought from relevant contacts where queries arise.

The editors have taken every care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained but accept that errors and omissions may be present. The editors accept no responsibility for the accuracy or currency of information provided on external sites.

All MMEA chapters may be amended and improved upon in light of new information or comments received. As such, all chapters should be considered as working documents. Any initial guidelines or

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Project Introduction

Introduction

The Manx Marine Environmental Assessment Project (MMEA) was originally undertaken to bring together information currently available for the Manx territorial sea into a technical report, and as a precursor to the potential preparation of an Isle of Man Marine Plan. The discontinuation of the Marine Plan project has changed some of this purpose, but the collation of the various chapters of the MMEA has proven useful, and a second, updated edition was warranted.

As the major project outcome, this multi-disciplinary technical MMEA report has been prepared to provide a robust initial evidence base for a range of purposes including guiding future marine planning and management decisions for Manx territorial waters.

This Project Introduction chapter provides the background to the Manx Marine Environmental Assessment Project and an overview of the technical information that has been compiled.

This chapter also provides an introduction to:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment – an Isle of Man perspective (Appendix A)
- A brief overview of the Isle of Man in context (Appendix B)
- National & International Links and Wider Irish Sea Initiatives Relevant to Manx Waters (Appendix C)

Project Overview

Manx Marine Environmental Assessment

As a precursor to the development of a proposed Isle of Man Marine Plan, representative Officers from three Isle of Man Government Departments; Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA); Department of Infrastructure (DOI); and Department of Economic Development (DED)(now the Department for Enterprise (DfE)), through the Marine Spatial Planning Officer Group (MSPOG); outlined the increasing need to build a robust marine evidence base for a range of purposes including guiding future marine planning and the management decisions for Manx territorial waters.

The requirement to build a local marine information resource to help identify initial opportunities and constraints for any future marine development in Manx waters was also outlined, together with the need to gain an understanding of gaps in current understanding, resources and local skills.

At the time, MSPOG Group (as the steering group) gave direction that an environmental report similar to a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken to bring together information currently available for Manx territorial waters for the very first time, despite there being no legislative requirement for the Isle of Man Government to do so. See also Appendix A of this document.

As such, The Manx Marine Environment Assessment Project (MMEA) commenced and a project officer with local marine experience was appointed to facilitate the collation of the information, produce maps, edit the report and fill gaps in contributions, and to initiate and maintain a partnership with a wide range of local contributors including marine experts, industry and local marine users.

Work to compile the MMEA report has been facilitated by the Isle of Man Government and has been prepared by inclusion of information received from over 150 contributors, including Government Officers, marine experts, local organisations and industry.

This second edition has been completed to update the original version from 2013.

The MMEA Report documents and a Non-technical summary are available to download as PDF documents from:

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/infrastructure/harbours-information/territorial-seas/manx-marine-environmental-assessment/>

Isle of Man Marine Plan

The Marine Plan Project was a cross-Government project of the Marine Spatial Planning Officer Group with representatives from the Departments of Infrastructure (responsible for Harbours and Planning and Building Control), Economic Development (now Department for Enterprise), Environment, Food and Agriculture (responsible for Fisheries and Environmental protection) and the Chief Secretary's Office.

The envisaged deliverables of the Marine Plan Project were:

- a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) for Manx territorial waters to guide prospective marine developments; by identifying constraints to development and a series of policies which should be adhered to when considering these constraints
- a robust assessment regime to consider all future applications for marine development within Manx territorial waters that takes account of the sustainability, economic and environmental impacts.

The key aims of the Marine Plan Project were to:

- maximise potential economic development opportunities through a sustainable approach to our marine environment;
- ensure inclusiveness and accountability for the Isle of Man Marine Plan process;
- enable joined up and consistent Government to take place; and,
- maintain a central role of the Isle of Man within the Irish Sea.

The Isle of Man Marine Plan was formulated to provide an integrated and strategic approach to the use of the marine environment, taking into account economic, environmental and social issues. A major phase in the development of the plan was to develop a stringent, uncomplicated consenting regime that would apply to applications for marine developments in Manx territorial waters.

The Marine Infrastructure Management Act 2016 was prepared by the Department of Infrastructure to provide a robust consenting regime for a number of identified marine activities within the controlled marine area (For more information see Chapter 1.2 (Legislation)). As part of this Act, provision was included that the Department may formulate regulations about the preparation and adoption of marine plan and marine policy statements for the territorial seas (section 51). However, to date, no regulations have been prepared in relation to a marine plan or marine policy statement.

Activities in the Irish Sea and Development Potential for Manx Waters

The Isle of Man is actively engaged in a wide range of activities around the Irish Sea given its central location, and the Isle of Man Government is regularly consulted by the UK and Irish Governments on developments for offshore renewable energy projects, hydrocarbon exploration, exploitation and licensing, developments relating to marine aggregates as well as development of marine legislation, policies, and plans, and applications for cables and pipelines.

The Isle of Man is also consulted by developers in relation to proposed projects within the Irish Sea, and regularly receives requests to share information and data, where possible and permissible to do so. It is therefore envisaged that the baseline information provided within the MMEA chapters may be an informative and efficiency saving tool across Government and externally. The information contained may help facilitate discussions for future potential developments in Manx Waters.

MMEA Consultation

The MMEA project is part of an ongoing initiative for greater collaboration between Government departments, marine stakeholders and wider engagement with Manx public through marine spatial planning under the original auspices of 'The Isle of Man Marine Plan.'

Consultation was carried out at local and regional levels, and included adjacent jurisdictions, relevant agencies, research institutions and Universities; all users of the seas, potential developers and local stakeholders as well as all local authorities and Tynwald Members. Consultation was conducted throughout the process and well established links within the Irish Sea Region will continue to be developed.

The consultation on the MMEA Report provided public access to each of the technical documents as an opportunity for anyone with an interest in the Manx marine environment to review the information, identify gaps and highlight areas where work may later be commissioned. In addition, relevant datasets and marine mapping underwent a process of verification to ensure accuracy.

The report was updated following comments received during the consultation phase, either through written comment or through directed discussions with key marine stakeholders. As a result, the following documents were compiled for the first edition:

- The 2013 Final MMEA Report
- A 2013 Final Non-technical Report
- A summary paper of matters raised and information received in the consultation

As new information and marine data has become available, a second edition was undertaken based on the same chapter topics and structure as before. The second edition was launched in July 2018.

The MMEA Report is designed to be a technical compilation of information on Manx territorial waters. It is hoped that by bringing all the information together in one place, it may be more widely accessible to the general public, and other marine users.

The Project Approach

The Manx Marine Environmental Assessment brings together, for the first time and in an accessible format, baseline information currently available for Manx territorial waters to support the policies and objectives of the Isle of Man government.

Project Aims

The MMEA technical Report aims to:

- Provide an overview of the current Manx marine environment including the physical environment, habitats and species, current industry and infrastructure;
- Provide an assessment of the current uses of the Manx territorial sea by engaging stakeholders as contributors to the project;
- Identify gaps in our current knowledge;

Topics covered

The holistic report covers a wide variety of topics with over 800 pages of technical content across 23 chapters. To make the report more manageable and accessible, the report has been split into 7 themes which break-down as follows:

Introduction	Project background, Legislation
Physical Environment	Hydrology, Weather & Climate, Coastal Geology, Climate Change, Marine Pollution.
Ecology/ Biodiversity	Species & habitats. Marine and Coastal Conservation (site designations & species protection).
Fisheries	Commercial fisheries and sea angling.
Historic Environment	Historic & cultural heritage.
Infrastructure	Shipping & navigation, Cables & pipelines, Energy and minerals.
Tourism, Recreation and Education	Activities, facilities, events and opportunities.

A **Non-Technical Summary** document has also been compiled as an overview document.

The Study Area

The Isle of Man has a relatively small land area (572 km²/ 221 sq. miles); however it holds a central location in the Irish Sea with Manx territorial waters, of around 3970 km², accounting for greater than 87% of overall Manx territory.

The Island has jurisdiction over its territorial waters which, as defined by the Territorial Sea Act 1987 includes the area from the mean high water mark to 12 nautical miles (except where the distance between the Isle of Man and adjacent territories is less than 24 nautical miles, where the limit is the median line).



Figure 1. The Isle of Man and its territorial waters in the context of the wider Irish Sea. [Charts: © Crown Copyright, Department of Infrastructure, Isle of Man. 2012. UKHO: © SeaZone Solutions Ltd. Licence no. 2005, [GDDI/10 & 012011.006]. © British Crown Copyright, 2005.] NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

The Department of Infrastructure has a similar role to that of the UK Crown Estate as the owner of the seabed within the territorial sea.

The Isle of Man has ownership of all petroleum, gas and other minerals within the territorial sea.

For further information about the Isle of Man territorial sea limit and the legislative framework, please refer to MMEA Chapter 1.2 (The Legislative System).

Project scope

The 23 chapters within the MMEA Report provide an initial baseline description of the 7 themes covered and the knowledge and resources currently available or identified through a desk-based study.

Several of the chapters provide initial information regarding the sensitivity of key features to a range of existing threats, with initial generic considerations for a range of future potential marine development. Data and information availability is also noted to help identify gaps in knowledge, resources and local skills.

The MMEA report is intended primarily as a series of technical documents rather than an accessible resource for the general public and it is not a policy document but a statement of known information about Manx territorial waters. Due to the technical nature of the documents a degree of interpretation may be required and the information provided should not be taken out of context of the report as a whole.

General chapter structure (*NB: may not applicable to all chapters*).

Summary
Introduction
Baseline Information
Data and Information Availability
Sensitivity of Receptors
Initial considerations for marine developments
Initial considerations for handling marine developments
References

Information is presented with direct relevance to the Isle of Man, beyond which information has been drawn from the broader Irish Sea and placed in a Manx context.

Project Limitations

- The Manx Marine Environmental Assessment is neither a policy nor legislative document.
- There are acknowledged gaps in our information and understanding of the Manx marine environment. The study area is extensive (approximately 3970 km²) and there are limitations in the information available on certain topics and locations. It is to be expected that more information will become available over time.
- With renewable energy becoming increasingly important this information provides a baseline from which to build a robust Environmental Impact Assessment.
- More recently there has been the establishment of a centralised location for the collection, management and storage of marine data and resources through the Isle of Man Atlas. However, much of the information contained in the technical documents has been compiled from a number of sources.
- New marine datasets created for the project have not been the subject of formal verification. Basic metadata has been included where possible to do so.
- Potential environmental effects on a range of activities have not been assessed at a strategic level. Instead contributors have provided initial considerations for further discussion.
- The MMEA Report will not replace any requirements for the collection and analysis of appropriately detailed project-specific baseline information and data.
- The Report will help to identify areas where there may be opportunities for, or environmental or economic constraints against, development.

Sources of information

The MMEA Report provides a summary of information drawn from a wide range of sources spanning many disciplines. Despite the availability of a wealth of local marine knowledge, including information from over 114 years of research at the now-closed Port Erin Marine Laboratory, together with strong shipping, fishing and community links, such a wide breadth of marine information has not previously been brought together for the Isle of Man.

Written descriptions of current knowledge on each theme are presented with reference to peer-reviewed scientific publications and other key sources of local information. Information has also been captured from discussions with local stakeholders holding relevant local knowledge. A reference list is provided at the end of each chapter and many items including links and contacts are cited within the compiled text.

Any initial guidelines or recommendations noted within the document have been provided by contributors to help facilitate future discussions between stakeholders, Government Departments, future developers and the general public, and should be read only in the context of the document as a whole.

The Isle of Man Government may integrate further information as it becomes available to continue building the evidence-base for a variety of purposes. For this reason, the full report is available as a working document and should be considered as such.

Project Schedule

The MMEA project commenced officially on 15th September 2011 on appointment of the MMEA Project Officer. It was initially envisaged as a 6-month project but this was extended in response to the positive feedback from key stakeholders, quantity of content received and the evolving project requirements. Unlike similar initiatives elsewhere, the MMEA report has been prepared with the full involvement of a wide variety of key stakeholders, many of whom have contributed in a voluntary capacity, or outside their usual work remits.

Table 1. Approximate timeline for the first edition of the Manx Marine Environmental Assessment.

September 2011	Project initiation and project planning
October 2011	Initial contact with contributors
October 2011 – May 2012	Initial contributions received. Technical content compiled.
October 2012 – May 2012	Data collection, management and marine mapping.
May 2012	Maps included in draft documents
May 2012 – September 2012	Review of draft documents. Further technical content compiled.
August 2012	Department Approvals for launch
September 2012	Prepare and load all working documents for consultation
October 2012	Consultation Launch
October - November 2012 (minimum 6 week)	Consultation phase
November 2012 to January 2013	Compilation of consultation responses and production of final maps and document.

The second edition of the MMEA was completed in October 2018.

Marine Mapping and Data Management

Several new marine datasets have been created from new and existing sources of local information, mostly using information brought together for the first time by volunteers coordinated by the MMEA Project Officer and assisted by the Marine Officer of the Manx Wildlife Trust.

Where possible such data has been mapped and archived using GIS (geographic information systems) as a first step towards building a digital archive of marine mapping. New marine datasets created for the project have not been subject to formal verification and are therefore listed as Draft within the Report. Current shortcomings in the current marine data management systems have been identified during this project.

It is envisaged that the maps featured together with underlying data including GIS shapefiles will gain verification during the consultation stage and may become more widely accessible both across Isle of Man Government and to external organisations.

A **List of Figures** is provided in the full technical report.

It is envisaged that a data inventory for the MMEA project will be compiled as an additional live document.

Contributions

Over 150 individuals have contributed towards the technical content of the report, including Government Officers, marine users, marine experts, local organisations and industry.

The Marine Spatial Planning Officer Group with representatives from the three sponsoring Departments (DEFA, DOI, DfE) provided strategic direction to the project through monthly update meetings and regular reporting. The officers have also contributed towards the project as authors and/or reviewers.

We are particularly grateful for the huge investment in time and effort that many organisations and individuals have made in the production of this report. Many contributors have written chapters or contributed substantial information in a voluntary capacity or in addition to an already busy workload. Others have given freely of their knowledge and answered numerous queries during the development of the project.

We hope that the Manx Marine Environmental Assessment will provide a lasting legacy, serving to educate and inform a broad audience, both on the Isle of Man and further afield, of our unique and valuable marine resources.

Particular note is given to the following individuals for their technical direction and extensive technical contributions to the first edition of the report:

- Laura Hanley – formerly MMEA Project Officer - collated numerous items of content and data, technical contributions, data management, marine mapping, compilation of the documents, continues to identify and fill technical gaps in liaison with further contributors.
- Dr Fiona Gell – formerly Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer (DEFA - Fisheries) - technical contributions and steer particularly for the Ecology/ Biodiversity Chapters.
- Dr Kevin Kennington – Marine Monitoring Officer (DEFA – Government Analyst Laboratory) - technical contributions and guidance, particularly for Physical Environment Chapters;
- Dr Peter McEvoy – Director of Agriculture (DEFA) (formerly Marine Spatial Planning Officer) – technical contributions and guidance;
- Dr Emma Rowan – Senior Infrastructure Policy Officer (DoI) (formerly Marine Spatial Planning Officer) – initiated the project, technical contributions and guidance.
- Eleanor Stone – formerly Marine Officer at the Manx Wildlife Trust – technical contributions, reviewer of ecology/ biodiversity chapters, assistance with data management and marine mapping.

A full list of contributors to the project is provided as an Appendix to the full MMEA Report.

Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement for the MMEA project undertaken has included but is not limited to the following:

- August 2011 - over 40 potential contributors received a formal written invite to contribute.
- September 2011 – a further 30+ potential contributors received invite by email.
- 6 th October 2011 - Stakeholder meeting to introduce potential contributors to the project and to answer initial questions.
- 6 th October 2011 – IOM Gov. Officer meeting to introduce potential contributors to the project and to answer initial questions.
- October 2011 – Further Officer meetings at DEFA Government Analyst Laboratory, DOI Isle of Man Coastguard, DEFA Fisheries
- January 2012 - Basic project overview available on Department of Infrastructure Website
- The MMEA has featured in several publications including FishSkeet newsletter (December 2011), CleanTech Infocus Magazine (May 2012), Manx Biodiversity newsletter (August 2012), PLANNET Magazine (August 2012), and IOM Gov. UPDATE Magazine (September 2012).
- Several press releases have featured the MMEA (2011-2012).
- Presentations to groups on request including the Marine Committee of the Manx Wildlife Trust
- March 2012 - Presentation made at Mobile Working Seminar (application of GIS) hosted by Manx National Heritage.
- April 2012 - Presentation and display at CleanTech events hosted by Department of Economic Development (both London and Isle of Man).
- Map display at Energy Expo Event (2012) by Dept. of Economic Development, during the Royal Manx Show.
- Promotion of project at various conferences including; Transnational Partnership Meetings, Port Health Authorities, Inter-Channel Environment Meeting
- Information leaflet provided as handout for group meetings and other Government events.

Individual meetings with key marine stakeholders were held throughout the project, including meetings with representatives from the shipping and fishing industry. Updates have also been provided to the Manx Conservation Forum.

In addition, the Department of Infrastructure released a Statement of Public Participation (SPP) to outline how and when interested groups and members of the public could engage in the various stages of the overall Isle of Man Marine Plan Project.

As an internal resource the stakeholder list for both the MMEA and Isle of Man Marine Plan project is continually updated.

References

Isle of Man Marine Plan 2012. Consultation on marine development consenting process.

Isle of Man Marine Plan 2012. Statement of public participation.

APPENDIX A

Strategic Environmental Assessment

In the UK Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) have been developed, arising from the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the “assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (“SEA Directive”) which was implemented in the UK in July 2004. This Directive requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Authorities must prepare and/or adopt such a plan and prepare a report on its likely significant environmental effects, consult environmental authorities and the public, and take the report and the results of the consultation into account during the plan preparation process and before its adoption.

The Isle of Man is independent of European and UK legislation and has no legal requirement for the undertaking of a Strategic Environmental Assessment of our territorial waters.

However, the Isle of Man is committed to following best practice and through the Marine Spatial Planning Officer Group, it was agreed that a Regional Environmental Assessment should be carried out drawing together all information currently known about our marine environment (in a similar way to has been done in other places). A Project Officer was employed from September 2011 – December 2012 to develop the MMEA, overseeing contributions from a wide range of contributors.

A review was carried out of similar assessments carried out elsewhere, including Regional Environmental Assessments from the Channel Islands, Scotland, Shetland and the UK SEAs to help develop a framework for the Manx Marine Environmental Assessment.

APPENDIX B

Isle of Man Context

The Isle of Man is a self-governing British Crown Dependency centrally located in the Irish Sea between England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The Isle of Man has a distinct constitutional position within the British Isles. It has an entirely separate legal, political and tax system from that of the United Kingdom.

The Tynwald (Manx parliament) is the oldest continuous parliament in the world, having been founded in 979 by the Vikings. The Island is not a sovereign nation in its own right. Legislation passed requires the assent of the Crown (Privy Council), or in certain circumstances the island's Lieutenant-Governor.

The Crown Dependencies are British possessions of the Crown, as opposed to overseas territories of the United Kingdom. Unlike the other Crown Dependencies of the United Kingdom (e.g. Jersey, Guernsey) the Isle of Man has a unique closer, relationship with the European Community by reason of the Customs & Excise Agreement with the United Kingdom. The Agreement governs the customs union that exists between the United Kingdom and Isle of Man Governments and provides that the two are also regarded as one territory for customs, VAT and most excise duty purposes. This agreement is given force of law by Act of Parliament (UK) and equivalent legislation on the Island by Tynwald. The customs union, the Customs & Excise Agreement and the relationship of the Isle of Man with the European Community are recognised in European Law by means of Protocol 3 of the United Kingdom's Act of Accession to the European Community. The affairs of the Island and the other Crown Dependencies are handled by the UK's Ministry of Justice.

The Island was ruled by Norse, Scots and English Kings during the Middle Ages, and by sovereign Lords of Mann from 1406 until 1765, when it was acquired by the British Crown. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 'Lord of Mann', is the Head of State and is represented in the Island by the Lieutenant Governor.

The Isle of Man has a distinct cultural and political identity. Government policy is to be both economically competitive and internationally responsible in supporting the interests of its people.

The Island is 221 square miles (572 sq km); 33 miles (53km) long by 13 miles (21km) wide and home to a population of 83,314 (2016 census). A richly varied rural landscape rises to the 2,036 ft (621m) summit of Snaefell, the highest peak. The town of Douglas, on the east coast, is the capital and main centre of population with 26,997 people (2016 census).

Provisional key census results published in December 2016 indicate the Island's population stands at 83,314 reflecting a decrease of 1.4% on 2011, the date at which the last census was undertaken. For further details, see <https://www.gov.im/media/1355784/2016-isle-of-man-census-report.pdf>

Regular air and sea services connect with a number of destinations in the United Kingdom, (including London by air), and the Irish Republic through the port in Douglas and airport at Ronaldsway. The nearest ferry port is Heysham in the north-west of England, 58 nautical miles (107 km) from Douglas. Other important passenger ferry links include Liverpool, Birkenhead, Belfast and Dublin.

There are no immigration barriers between the Isle of Man and the UK and Ireland, but the Island does have a work-permit system.

APPENDIX C

National & International Links and Wider Irish Sea Initiatives Relevant to Manx Waters

Trans-national Partnership Working

The Isle of Man Government has actively been involved in Transnational Partnership Working across the Irish Sea, most recently under the project advocated by the University of Liverpool. Given the pivotal role of the Isle of Man within the Irish Sea, it is essential to maintain good communication links with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure currency with any developments which might impact upon Manx Territorial waters. The Irish Sea Maritime Forum was created to facilitate more efficient exchange of information and knowledge between all jurisdictions involved, helping to further develop stakeholder engagement and the continued development of new and established relationships.

<http://www.irishseamaritimeforum.org/>

OSPAR Convention

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention) is an important mechanism through which Governments of the western coast and catchments of Europe, together with the European Union, cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. The OSPAR Commission is in the process of establishing a network of Marine Protected Areas, the designation of which will be informed by the OSPAR Initial List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats. The Isle of Man is a signatory to all five Annex's of OSPAR, and the designated Ramsey Marine Nature Reserve in 2011 as the first evidence of this process in Manx waters.

The Irish Sea Conservation Zones Project (ISCZ) 2009-2011

This ISCZ Project was one of the four UK (excluding Scotland) regional projects, which together made up the wider Marine Conservation Zone Project, set up to develop recommendations for a network of Marine Conservation Zones around England, Wales and Northern Ireland (outside of Manx territorial waters). Recommendations have been formulated by a Regional Stakeholder Group made up of 40 representatives of different sectors in the project area and the Isle of Man was represented on the project group by the Chief Executive of the Manx Fish Producers' Organisation and the Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer, Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man Government.

The Scottish MPA Project

Similarly, the equivalent programme for developing MPAs in Scotland, a joint project by the Scottish Government (Marine Scotland), JNCC, Historic Scotland, SEPA and SNH, has conducted similar identification, consultation and recommendation processes:

[http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/marine-protected-areas-\(mpa\)/scottish-mpa-project/](http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/marine-protected-areas-(mpa)/scottish-mpa-project/)

The Irish Sea Pilot Project

As part of a Review of Marine Nature Conservation, the UK Government set up the Irish Sea Pilot project in 2002 to test the potential for an ecosystem approach to managing the marine environment at a regional sea scale. This process was effectively the start of the principle of Marine Spatial Planning in the Irish Sea.

The Isle of Man had involvement in the Irish Sea Pilot Project and the final report was published in 2004 (Vincent *et al.* 2004). Isle of Man Government Officers from the former Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (now DEFA); and the Government Analyst Laboratory were members of the Irish Sea Pilot Steering Group.

One of the main conclusions of the report was the importance of the UK working closely with international Government partners and stakeholders, and the acknowledgement that this will be crucial in the effective future management of the national seas and adjacent waters.

For more information see: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1541>.