



Stakeholder Decision Making for Marine Conservation Zones

Background to Finding Sanctuary

Back in 2005, nine partner organisations set up Finding Sanctuary as a pilot project for Marine Protected Area (MPA) planning. From the very beginning, they were keen to ensure that those who used the sea for leisure and livelihood would be at the heart of decision making. In April 2007 a regional workshop event was run that was attended by 107 people to define the role and membership of the Finding Sanctuary Steering Group. On the basis of this workshop 15 people were selected and met for the first time in September 2007.

In 2009 Finding Sanctuary became one of four regional projects which together make up the Marine Conservation Zone Project and the Steering Group was expanded to ensure that a wider group of stakeholder interests were able to participate in the process. The objective of the representatives on the Steering Group is to work collaboratively to plan the location of the region's network of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The record of planning meetings through 2010 show how the location of potential MCZs (pMCZs) has been continuously changed and modified to try to accommodate the different interests of stakeholders around the table.

In August 2011, Finding Sanctuary will present a report to Government detailing the recommendations that have been developed by the Steering Group.

Why is stakeholder engagement so important?

In order to be truly viable, a Marine Protected Area network doesn't just have to make ecological sense, it has to be politically and publicly supported. The best way to gain this support is through involving stakeholders directly in decision making and helping them to understand and engage in the process.

Decisions for MCZs should be made within a transparent, fair and collaborative process. The goal is to meet the ecological targets that have been set, whilst at the same time ensuring that negative impacts to human activities can be minimised.

Making good decisions

Finding Sanctuary will be making recommendations to Government that have been developed regionally by knowledgeable stakeholders to enable the Government to make better and more informed decisions. There are some key features about the way this process is being run that make it truly collaborative:

Consensus

The process by which Steering Group members discuss and move towards decisions is a consensual one. This means that they are seeking to explore different scenarios and options, understand each others' interests and seek to uncover win-win outcomes. Where consensus cannot be reached (after due exploration and understanding) an explanatory note will be jointly developed to explain why this is the case and this commentary will form part of the record of the group's work.

Stakeholder representatives

Representatives on the stakeholder group have been selected for their knowledge, standing, experience and commitment to the process. These are people who have had to take on the responsibility to balance their own interests with the need to meet the ecological targets that have been set.



Iteration

The network is developing iteratively, this means that we set out to improve the network by refining sites and trying to incorporate the needs of different stakeholders by reviewing each version of the work and then applying what has been learnt to the next version.

All details of the project including the notes of all the local and regional planning meetings are available publicly on our website in the Resources section. Reports are available on our website as soon as they have been written after each meeting which means that it is possible to follow exactly how decisions have been taken. Potential MCZs are very dynamic in the way that they are being developed and changed; and ensuring that our work in progress is visible is a very important aspect of our planning process.

Collaboration

Stakeholders have spent many meetings working with each other trying to meet the targets that they have been set. This means that they are focused on trying to understand each other's needs and interests and trying to come up with collectively generated options and then solutions.

Maps

Maps show the areas that are important for marine life and human activities are the key planning tool for decision making. Stakeholders can understand the spatial relationships of the different data sets and explore the options in context.

Uncertainty

In an MCZ planning process there will always be key uncertainties in the data and the task that has been set. Stakeholders have been encouraged to openly acknowledge these uncertainties and to state what assumptions they have made to overcome them.

Structure for decision-making

There are four key decision making components within Finding Sanctuary (Diagram 1 & 2):

1. Steering Group

The Steering Group is made up of a range of sea user representatives who have the responsibility to develop and submit recommendations on a network of MCZs to Government.

2. Working Groups

The Working Groups consist of a subset of the Steering Group which were selected to carry out the detailed work and planning of MCZs on behalf of the Steering Group. Between April 2010 and November 2010 they operated as separate inshore and offshore groups and from December 2010 they came together as a single 'Joint' Working Group.

3. Local Groups

Local Groups have been set up in Dorset, Devon, Somerset, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Over the last year, they have played an important role in the shaping of potential MCZs in their inshore areas and helping bring local knowledge to the Working Groups.

4. Named Consultative Stakeholders (NCS)

Named Consultative Stakeholder (NCS) status was set up by the regional Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) projects to allow regional, national or international stakeholders who may not be able to resource

attendance at the steering group meetings to play a less intensive role in the development of MCZ recommendations. NCS are able to give their views on the MCZ recommendations being developed by the project at key stages and their comments are recorded and fed into the planning process.

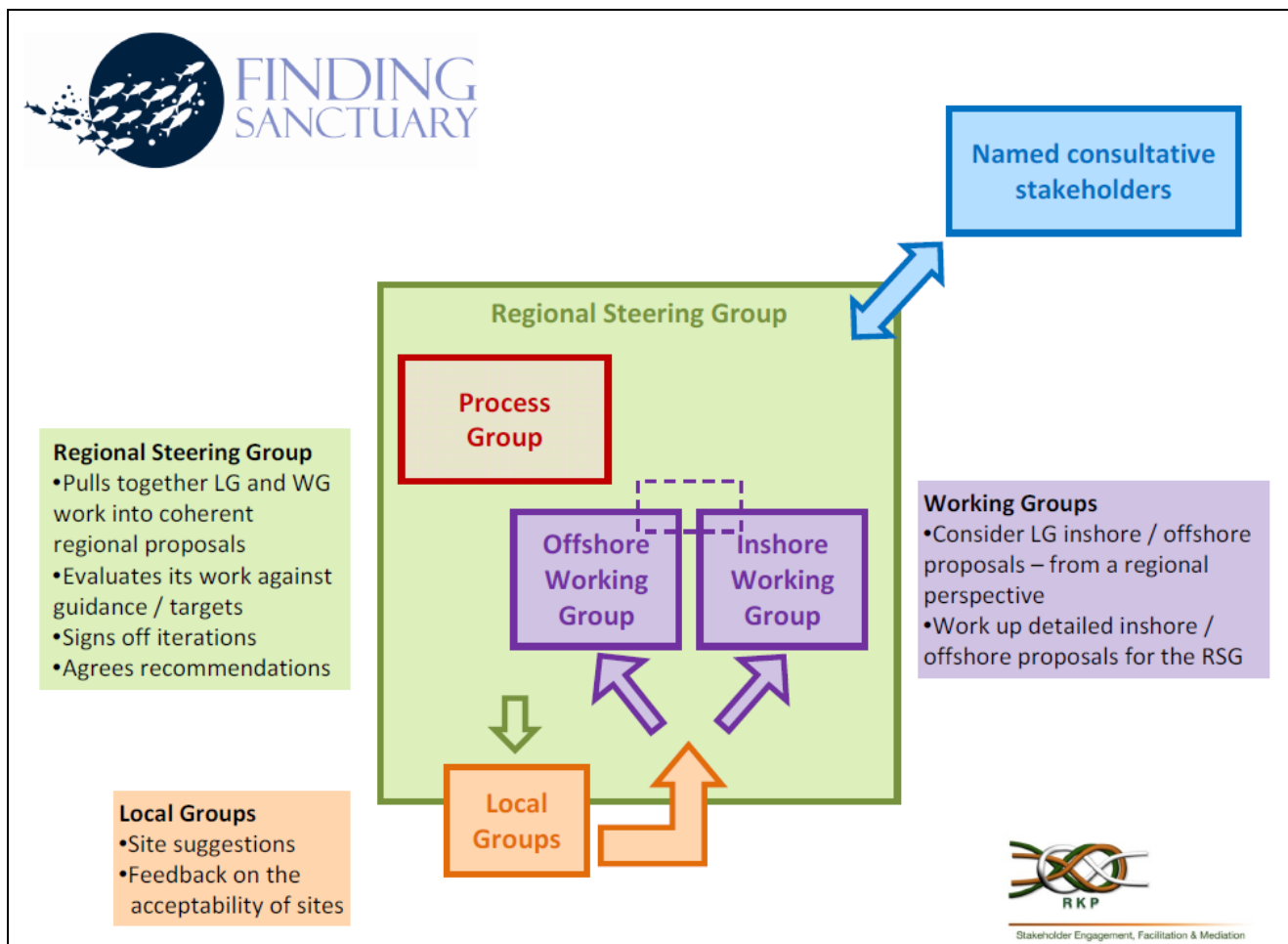


Diagram 1: The Stakeholder engagement structure

Wider Engagement

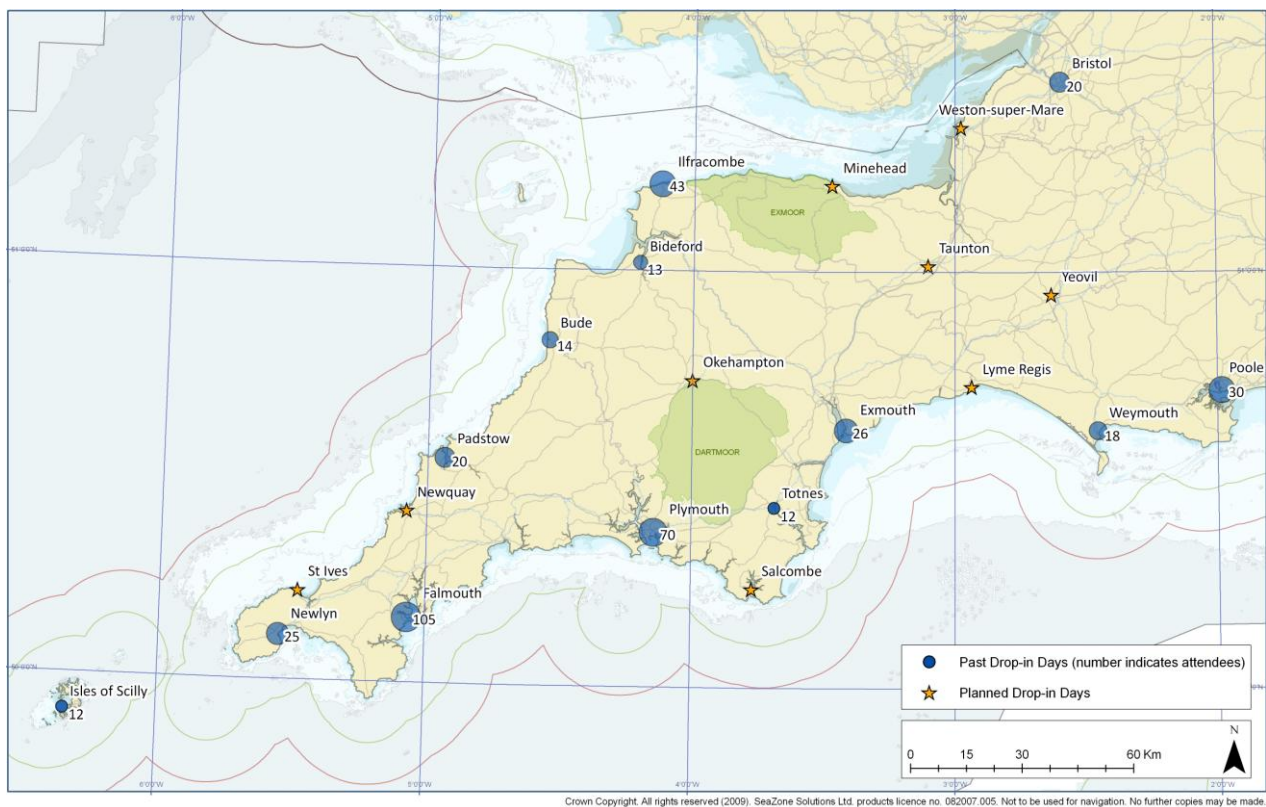
Those who are involved at a regional level in particular need to ensure that they are communicating with their wider constituency. For some sectors this presents a real challenge, particularly if they are very large, disparate or reliant on voluntary groupings. Finding Sanctuary staff provide an important supporting role in helping individual stakeholders connect with their representatives and vice-versa.

Liaison staff have been employed in each county since 2007 to ensure that stakeholder activity could be accurately mapped and individual stakeholders are able to understand and be kept up to date with decision making.

The Project team have helped stakeholder representatives communicate with their constituents by providing communications support through materials such as leaflets and brochures, making sure reports

are available and helping with newsletters or articles. From the very start of the project a range of different media has been used to contact sea users as well as raise awareness of the project in the general public:

- Finding Sanctuary website
- Interactive map – for data collection and representation
- Quarterly news letter
- Press releases and articles in sector specific media
- Posters and leaflets
- Interviews – to gain data from sea users and sea user groups
- Drop in days – to raise awareness (Map 1) - advertised on website, forums, social networking and through regional media
- Sector meetings
- Provision of contact details and feedback form on the website



Map 1: Locations and attendance of Finding Sanctuary drop-in days

Key facts and figures

- Over **248,000** stakeholder interests have been represented
- Individuals engaged with to date: **5146**
- Individuals who receive our quarterly newspaper: **3620**
- Total number of interviews conducted: **901** Including **569** interviews with individual sea users and **332** interviews with clubs, businesses and organisations.
- Number of interviews with conservation and recreational organisations representing individuals: **327** representing **247,382**.
- Number of fishermen interviewed: **257**
- Number of fishing organisations interviewed representing individuals: **5** representing **51**.
- Total number of articles since Oct 2009: **245**
- Total instances of radio or television coverage: **42**
- Total number of visits to our website since Oct 2009: **29,733**
- Events held in the south-west: **17**
- People contacted at events: **505**
- Number of stakeholder meetings: **64** – which equates to 6488 hours, or 811 days, or 2.2 person years without counting the time spent by stakeholders talking to their constituents.

Next steps

From early September you can view the recommended sites at <http://www.finding-sanctuary.org/> When the final recommendations have been made, the regional MCZ projects will begin to reduce their input into the process. Further work between September and January will involve Natural England and JNCC putting together their supplementary advice as well as work on the Impact Assessment.

How to stay in touch

For more information about the MCZ designation process after August 31st you can email mczproject@jncc.gov.uk or visit the following websites:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protect/mcz/>

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/protectandmanage/mpa/mcz/default.aspx>

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4525>

The regional MCZ Project newsletters will be finishing but if you wish to continue to receive the latest information and updates on the MCZ Project sign up to the MCZ Project Newsletter:

<http://jncc.us1.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=205a2a3660eb825f6170957cf&id=2eb0f14994>

The final stages

Once the Regional MCZ Project site recommendations, impact assessment and Natural England and JNCC's advice has been received, Ministers will consider the supporting evidence and potential environmental, social and economic impacts, before deciding sites to take forward for designation. The factors considered in reaching the Government's decisions, will be made clear in the public consultation documentation. The public consultation on sites the Government intends to designate is expected to take place during the



summer next year and will be an opportunity for stakeholders to review, comment and feedback to government on the proposed designation decisions before they are finalised.

Ongoing involvement

Most of the contribution needed from stakeholders to make well supported, well informed recommendations for MCZs, has now been captured through a wide variety of engagement including negotiations, meetings, interviews and data sharing. The amount of direct input from stakeholders into the designation process will reduce when the regional MCZ projects handover to Natural England and JNCC. However we recognise the need to continue to involve sea users and interest groups and keep them well informed of progress.

- We will keep stakeholders updated through the MCZ Project newsletter.
- Queries can be answered through the Project email address or through Natural England local advisors and JNCC international advisors.
- Some direct engagement with Regional Stakeholder Group members and named Consultative Stakeholders will be maintained to quality assure the process at various stages.
- The public consultation will be another opportunity for stakeholders to have their say.