Scoping Report

Purpose of the Programme (what will it aim to do?):
Locate, delineate and characterise Annex I ‘reef’ habitats in the central English Channel.

Objective of the Programme (why is it needed?):
To inform regional management policy relating to the conservation requirements under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive

Background information:
Reef structures are included in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. Such structures need to be located and mapped so that suitable candidates can be selected as ‘Special Areas of Conservation’. These will form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected habitats that is being established by the UK Government to meet its obligations under the Habitats Directive. For the marine environment, the aim is to complete the Natura 2000 network by 2008, following which management objectives will be agreed and instigated by 2010.

Broadscale element

Purpose:
Pilot survey, to search an area in the central English Channel for sites that might contain rocky reef outcrops consistent with Annex I ‘reef’ habitats

Objective:
To provide information to scope further smaller scale surveys.

Information type:
Habitat distribution patterns.

Environment & Circumstances:

Intermediate element

Purpose:
Determine the location and extent of rock outcrops within areas previously identified by the pilot survey. Inspect bedforms & communities using video techniques

Objective:
To identify specific areas containing potential Annex I habitats

Information type:
Moderately detailed map of habitat distributions.

Criteria for map

Survey area: 10,000 sq km
Map scale: 1:1,000,000
Map resolution (pixel size): 5 km
Spatial precision: +/- 500 m
Accuracy of habitat classes: Low
Level of habitat detail: Eunis Levels 3 & 4

Criteria for map

Survey area: 2000 sq km
Map scale: 1:25,000
Map resolution (pixel size): 20 m
Spatial precision: +/- 10 m
Accuracy of habitat classes: Moderate
Level of habitat detail: Eunis Levels 4
Environment & Circumstances:

Finescale element
Purpose:
To achieve full acoustic coverage of selected study sites and characterise the range of reef biotopes (outcropping rock, boulder, cobble) contained in different depth strata.

Objective:
To characterise biotopes associated with particular acoustic signatures, to enable inference of biotope distributions over larger spatial scales.

Information type:
Distribution, boundaries and composition of key habitats.

Environment & Circumstances:
High relief rocky outcrops, boulder and cobble fields. Moderate tidal currents. Moderate turbidity. 40 – 100 m.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for map</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey area</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Level of habitat detail</td>
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