

# The Resilience of Coastal Communities (ROCC) Project

Resilience of Coastal Communities (ROCC) is an innovative new research project, funded by UKRI as part of the Sustainable Management of Marine Resources (SMMR) programme, running until April 2025. ROCC seeks to identify how coastal communities can build **resilience to new and accelerating risks**, while also improving their **quality of life** and the **health of the marine environment** they depend upon.

ROCC will develop a 'nexus approach' to **explore synergies and trade-offs between resilience, wellbeing and environmental sustainability in UK coastal communities**. This 'nexus approach' will be underpinned by the principle that decision-makers must consider the potential knock-on impacts to all elements of the nexus when designing solutions targeted towards enhancing one of them. **ROCC will look at nexus interactions in the past, present and future to develop knowledge and practical tools that build thriving, sustainable and resilient coastal communities.**

## Key project aims:

ROCC will work closely with policy makers, practitioners, managers and communities to identify strategies for building resilience in coastal communities in the Southwest and across the UK.

The project's key aims are:

- 1** To develop a new 'nexus approach' to marine policy and management that considers the key synergies and trade-offs between resilience, wellbeing and environmental sustainability.
- 2** To use lessons from past and present responses to threats and disturbances (such as climate change, Covid-19 and regulatory change) to build a strong evidence base to underpin the evolution of marine management policies.
- 3** To develop a participatory decision-making framework that can be used to tackle difficult decisions, find synergies and reduce the risk of inequitable trade-offs for different groups and objectives.
- 4** To support the design of marine management policies that benefit both coastal communities and the marine environment, and equip them with greater capacity to withstand and adapt to current and future challenges.



## THE RESILIENCE NEXUS

The 'nexus approach' to marine management recognises that the resilience of individuals, families and communities is interwoven with their wellbeing and their impact on the marine environment.

Building new understanding of solutions to marine management that improve resilience, wellbeing and sustainability, the nexus approach provides tools to incorporate synergies and trade-offs in decision-making.

By adopting the nexus approach, future marine policy and management can be designed to benefit both coastal communities and the marine environment, with greater capacity to adapt to current and future challenges.



**FRAGMENTED AND FRAYED**

In the **past**, marine management considered the wellbeing and resilience of coastal communities, and the sustainability of marine environments as separate strands of policy, with little attention paid to how they interact and affect each other (+/-).



**TURNING TO TRADE-OFFS**

In the **present**, we understand that the wellbeing of communities and marine sustainability are intricately woven together. There is some recognition of trade-offs, where an improvement in one element can negatively impact another. Resilience of communities to change is an emerging but distinct priority.



**WEAVING A WAY FORWARD**

In the **future**, it is vital to recognise that any one of these three strands of policy may positively (+) or negatively (-) intersect with the other strands. Marine policy that promotes synergies and addresses trade-offs strengthens the ability of communities to respond to future challenges.

### Project outputs:

The ROCC project will produce a number of core outputs:

- **A series of open-access databases**, including: i) an evidence map of **existing UK research** on resilience, wellbeing and sustainability highlighting both strengths and gaps in current evidence; ii) a database of available **archival material** and evidence of past responses to change and resilience-building in coastal communities; iii) a data discovery tool signposting environmental, climate and social science **data on future scenarios of change** in coastal communities.
- **A diagnostic of existing trade-off decision making processes and tools** in UK marine policy. Building upon this, a new, collaboratively-developed **participatory trade-off analysis tool** (MaPTA+) designed to support stakeholders, marine resource-users, practitioners and managers in identifying and avoiding unacceptable trade-offs in marine management decisions.
- **Guidelines for designing policy and management interventions** for heritage organisations, businesses, charitable organisations and government to co-build resilience, wellbeing, and sustainability in coastal communities.
- **State-of-the-art theoretical and applied social science research** on the nexus interactions between human resilience, wellbeing and environmental sustainability



## Glossary:

- **Human resilience** is the ability of an individual, group or community to respond positively to disturbance or change. This may be the ability to absorb disturbance, to adapt and re-organise while undergoing change, or to transform to a new set of functions, values and identities.
- **Human wellbeing** is the ability of an individual, group or community to satisfy their human needs and achieve a state of being well, physically and mentally. Wellbeing includes the material, relational and subjective elements of what it means to live well.
- In this research, **environmental sustainability** refers to both the health or state of the environment in the context of being an environment that can sustain itself into the future, and the human actions that impact the health of the environment.

**The ROCC project is led by an interdisciplinary team of researchers and partners** drawn from the University of Exeter, University of Bristol, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Devon Maritime Forum, Cornwall Rural Community Charity, Sole of Discretion, Cornwall Council's Strategic Historic Environment team, and the Marine Management Organisation.

For more information on the ROCC project, please contact:

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