



Diverse Marine Values
Integrating Diverse Values into Marine Management

Integrating Diverse Values into Marine Management in England

Workshop Report

22nd July 2024



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1 Introduction

Funded by the UKRI Sustainable Management of Marine Resources (SMMR) Research Programme¹, the 'Diverse Marine Values' project is driving an innovative agenda of transdisciplinary research to advance our understanding of values-informed marine management. Through the project, we are exploring marine decision making in a system-based way and trialling innovative approaches to engagement across three case study areas - the Shetland Islands (Scotland), Upper Severn Estuary (Wales / England) and Portsmouth (England).

Building on the learning so far, through Work Package 5 the project aims to enhance national approaches by working with marine management institutions and stakeholders in Wales, Scotland and England to develop understanding around the change that is needed, along with practical actions which could help to better incorporate values into decision making.

Our English workshop was held on Monday 22nd July 2024 (virtually), and working with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Defra and other stakeholders, we reflected on the work undertaken as part of the Diverse Values project, including experience of arts-based methods (ABM) across the case study areas, then explored key decision-making processes including marine planning and development of fisheries management to:

- Consider progress being made across MMO and Defra's processes at integrating social values into decision-making.
- Reflect on the challenges faced in integrated values into decision-making.
- Identify opportunities to explore and enhance capacity for delivering more value-based management.

This report provides a summary of the workshop discussions and will be further considered through on-going work with key institutions in our Year 4 extension to the Diverse Values project (from August 2024 – August 2025).

2 What progress is being made in incorporating social values into decision-making in England?

2.1 General

- There is greater social emphasis in the new UK Marine Strategy, so the direction of travel is good for including social values in decision-making.
- The Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) is weak on social values, although the social policies in marine plans are given real teeth through s58(1) of MCAA.
- The Marine natural capital and ecosystem assessment (mNCEA) programme is demonstrating the importance of social values in decision-making. There are case studies which support how this approach can be used in practice.
- Positions such as MMO Social Scientist (Gurpreet Padda) typifies the importance placed on social values and enhances capacity for their inclusion.

¹ <https://www.smmr.org.uk/>

2.2 Marine Planning

- Marine planning is a key process for considering wider social values, and like Wales and Scotland, England's Marine Plans follow the High-Level Marine Objectives (HLMOs) and include policies addressing social values which are then used by decision-making authorities.
- Social considerations are mainstreamed throughout marine planning from the start and MMO's marine plan monitoring includes indicators to assess use of social policies in proposals and decisions.
- MMO are undertaking work on local decision-making within a marine planning context, with the aim of driving more local input and to ensure any 'local plans' reflect the needs and wants of local people.
- For the replacement of the MMO East Marine Plan, the MMO are now taking a Natural Capital approach (NCA) to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). One main component being ecosystem services and the goods and benefits we receive from them, including communities, health and wellbeing.
- The NCA will be embedded into the assessment of alternatives and inform decision-making in marine plan. There is much more emphasis now regarding use/demand, value and regional importance of assets.
- Stakeholder engagement is integral to every stage of development of England's marine plans. The MMO continues to work hard to engage "hard to reach" stakeholders such as the fishing sector to enhance participation. Evidence work has been commissioned to explore approaches to enhance engagement.

2.3 Fisheries Management

- The Fisheries Act recognises that social values have a place in management, to be weighed up with environmental and economic values.
- Effectively managing fish stocks via Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), as required by the Fisheries Act, would have the most positive effect on securing benefits for fishermen.
- FMPs have specific goals within them around collecting more social data and understanding benefits beyond food derived from the fisheries.
- Each FMP has an evidence statement and they are looking to incorporate social and cultural data and the mNCEA team is looking at this.
- There is a move towards co-management / co-design approach to fisheries management - this includes significantly more varied engagement e.g. Lyme Bay Sole Fishery work².
- More groups are being added to legislation, for example recreational fishers are now included under the Fisheries Act and Joint Fisheries Statement to be considered within FMPs and they often get more / wider social benefits from recreational sea angling than the economic benefits that commercial fishers' access.
- Introducing equality impact assessments into FMP implementation measures will recognise accessibility and the impact on varied groups.
- There is a recognition empirical data is not the only data we need to collect, and that we need to incorporate practical and lived experiences into management measures.
- The development of the Cuttlefish FMP is being informed by practical experience to co-design evidence gathering and Defra are working with Cefas on incorporating experiential knowledge into fisheries management.

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-fisheries-groups-south-west-7efg#lyme-bay-sole-fishery>

- There is a move towards engagement approaches that are 'better' for specific stakeholders e.g. in person for fishermen.
- Social aspects have directly informed fisheries management on occasion e.g. moving forward crawfish measures to protect stocks due to the importance to the local community.

3 What are the key challenges to the inclusion of social values in marine decision-making?

3.1 Policy

- The UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) is not strong enough on social aspects - an updated and more relevant MPS needs to be clearer about social values and the importance of them.

3.2 Evidence

- The evidence base for social values is limited and there is a lack of empirical data for social values which makes it challenging to incorporate into decision-making alongside environmental and economic values, in a comparative way.
- Understanding what social values are and how to incorporate these into consultations is needed and understanding is currently limited.
- It can be difficult to include values in decision-making as their subjective nature can be difficult to account for and it is harder to understand levels of confidence associated with qualitative data.
- Understanding social cumulative effects, at different scales, is even more problematic.
- The purpose of engaging with stakeholders in a statutory process is to generate 'evidence', ABM can be emotive - how does that translate into evidence / data, or is it more valid for raising awareness?
- We need a robust process for incorporating qualitative data into evidence bases to be used in decision-making
- What to do with conflicting values between stakeholders, how do you choose what to incorporate?
- Getting social dimensions into FMP's is challenging, including getting the balance right between social and economic importance of species
- We need to be careful in treating 'social' and 'environmental' values as separate because they are often different facets of the same resources.

3.3 Capacity

- Capacity to scale up engagement and understanding of social values is difficult. The MMO is a small organisation and we do not have the funding and resource currently to engage more locally to be able to understand social values. Capacity to deliver even the bare minimum is challenging.
- Environmental skills and experience are more common among marine decision-makers' staff than social science and this can contribute to challenges when implementing marine plans' social policies in their decision on applications.
- Challenges with perception of ABM and the word 'Art' vs 'Creative' methods to support uptake.

3.4 Engagement

- We need to be realistic about the level of influence that communities can have in decision-making particularly in a statutory process.
- Capacity building is needed for ‘hard to reach’ stakeholders to enable them to be involved in decision-making.
- Power imbalances around knowledge and participation - need to have systematic, inclusive, and equitable forms of stakeholder mapping and engagement. But this is difficult to carry out in practice for many reasons (e.g., accessibility, capacity, and outreach; working within value-laden contexts (socio-political, cultural, institutional etc)).

4 What are the opportunities to better consider social values in marine management?

- Recognising capacity constraints, we could consider looking beyond government to wider organisations to lead on engagement
- There is a possibility to use ABM to explore what fishers want in FMPs, what is culturally important to them?
- There is a strong history of arts in relation to fishing³, such as fishing safety so there may be more openness to considering application of ABM.
- The development of the Ocean Literacy Strategy for England (through Year 4 of the Diverse Values project) was noted as a critical action for enhancing capacity for engagement in decision-making. There are opportunities for decision-makers to engage with this process through workshops to support development of the strategy.

5 Summary

The workshop discussions demonstrate that progress is being made in England, particularly driven by the marine planning process, under the MCAA, and the legal requirements for considering ‘social’ objectives in FMPs. This has led to increased focus on better inclusion of social values and developing capacity to support this, including emphasis on social science and evidence across MMO and Defra, to complement existing focus on ecological and economic aspects. The development of the NCA through the mNCEA programme is a critical activity in broadening the values that are considered in decision-making and embedding this within key processes such as marine planning will be important in moving the NCA approach from theory to practice.

Challenges are still indicated – and echo our discussions in Wales and Scotland – particularly around representing social values as evidence and how to consider them in decision-making alongside other forms of evidence, in a rigorous and robust way, and how to address issues such as when elicited values are in conflict. Capacity concerns are also a common issue, particularly when considering scaling up participation and engagement.

³ E.g. Clyde - <https://www.clydefishermenstrust.com/projects/arts-culture-heritage/?popup=casting-the-net>; Hull (history of introduction of safety measures) - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyrr7kldyero>; NE coast - <https://nen.press/2024/03/17/fishing-new-exhibition-of-work-inspired-by-the-north-east-coast-opens-3-may/>; Misc - <https://medium.com/@lmargison/the-art-work-of-fishing-f6a4caf564a5>

Time was limited in our discussions regarding opportunities, but there was positive indication of potential further consideration of ABM, for example in relation to FMP development, and to make better use of non-governmental organisations to support engagement, alleviating capacity pressures. The Ocean Literacy Strategy for England was noted as being a key aspect of capacity building and will be taken forward during Year 4 of the Diverse Values project, along with other opportunities to work with stakeholders to further understand capacity needs and how they might be supported.

The Project Team thanks the participants for their attendance and constructive engagement in the workshop.

6 Workshop Attendees

Emma McKinley (Cardiff University)
Tim Acott (University of Greenwich)
Lucy Greenhill (Howell Marine Consulting - Chair)
Zoe Pearson (Howell Marine Consulting)
Victoria Leslie (University of Portsmouth)
Sayyidah Salam (University of Portsmouth)
Emma McKinley (University of Cardiff)
Rachel Holtby (Strathclyde University)
Sidonie Kenward (MMO)
Stephanie Hague (MMO)
Laura Seddon (MMO)
Courtney Inch (MMO)
Rachel Thirlwall (MMO)
Angus Naylor (Defra)
Mel Nicholls (MMO)
Edward Hind-Zoan (Defra)
Elizabeth Brett (MMO)
Gurpreet Padda (MMO)