

Shetland Marine Region update

On 22 March 2016, Scottish Ministers gave a Direction to the Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust (operating as the NAFC Marine Centre) and the Shetland Islands Council to prepare a regional marine plan

(<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/seamanagement/regional/partnerships/Shetland>).

Since receiving the direction the NAFC Marine Centre and the Shetland Islands Council have worked together to:

- Form an advisory group to guide development of the regional marine plan, including agreement of membership to ensure that it covers commercial, environmental, recreation and community interest
- Work with the advisory group and Marine Scotland to develop terms of reference to guide the NAFC Marine Centre, the SIC and the advisory group
- Publish agreed Terms of reference, which will be available on the NAFC Marine Centre, SIC and Scottish Government websites
- Hold two advisory group meetings to discuss the development of the regional marine plan
- Draft a Statement of Public Participation which will be published by the end of March

The NAFC Marine Centre has also developed a State of the Environment Assessment (SoEA), as required under the Marine Act. This assessment provides a comprehensive baseline data set for the development of a regional marine plan and for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which will accompany the regional plan. The SoEA covers a range of topics including water and benthic quality (e.g. microbiology, biotoxins), to marine species and habitats, as well as an assessment of marine industries. The assessment links ecosystem components to supported ecosystem services. The trends in marine industries is examined, and where these are dependent on ecosystem components these linkages are assessed. It is expected that the assessment will be repeated every 5 years. The assessment brings together information and data from a variety of sources, and where appropriate spatially presented, which will be made available on NMPi.

Consultation with the SIC, advisory group and Marine Scotland led national group has aided the development of the assessment. The assessment will be subject to peer-review by the MASTS community in early March.

In addition the NAFC Marine Centre and SIC have developed procedures (incorporated into the terms of reference) for co-ordinated response to Marine Licence applications as Marine region delegate. To date over 25 licence application responses have been provided to Marine Scotland.