

# Making the most of Scotland's seas:

turning our marine vision into reality



The Scottish  
Government



Scottish Natural Heritage  
All of nature for all of Scotland



Scottish Environment  
Protection Agency



marinescotland

## THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1. The starting point is the Scottish Government's core purpose:

*'To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.'*

Our strategic objectives and desired national outcomes reflect economic, environmental, social and cultural aims.

## THE VISION FOR THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

2. Alongside this, we have a vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive, biologically diverse marine and coastal environments, managed to meet the long-term needs of people and nature' and an agreed set of high level marine objectives <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/1057/0080305.pdf>. This provides a sound basis for establishing coordinated plans and actions, to ensure their sustainable management to meet our high level aims.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE AS WE WORK TO DELIVER THE VISION?

3. Most of Scotland's coastal waters and seas are already clean, healthy and safe. We need to protect them, and safeguard the ecosystems and natural assets they support, as the basis for increasing productivity and sustainable economic growth.
4. To achieve the vision will mean:
  - **Building the success of the sectors for which we have direct responsibility to ensure sustainable economic growth, which means:**
    - Growing the overall economic value of the marine environment in a sustainable way;
    - Making a big contribution to Scotland's renewable energy targets;
    - Growing the value of the aquaculture sector, within Scotland's marine 'carrying capacity';
    - Ensuring a viable and sustainable fishing industry;
    - Recognising the needs of, and opportunities presented by, Scotland's sea ports;
    - Providing the framework within which marine-based recreational activities like wildlife tourism and angling can flourish;
    - Promoting thriving and safe coastal communities.
  - **Maintaining or improving the environmental quality and diversity of Scotland's seas through:**
    - Introducing new measures to conserve important marine sites and species;
    - Ensuring that marine planning and licensing take account of environmental capacity and sensitive locations;
    - Working to achieve good environmental status and to meet our other objectives and commitments under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Natura 2000.
  - **Protecting and enhancing our most important marine heritage assets in such a way that they can be valued, understood and enjoyed.**
  - **Ensuring marine planning recognises and supports other activity, such as shipping, and oil and gas, for which we do not have direct responsibility.**

5. Underpinning all of this is the need to understand, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on the marine environment. The seas also have a crucial role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring food security and contributing to wider strategic aims and outcomes (for example related to health and well-being).

## WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER THE VISION

6. There is a clear framework for the activity of the Scottish Government and other bodies on the marine environment and we need to work together to ensure that we are aligned to achieve agreed outcomes. Delivering the overall vision for the marine environment will require close and effective co-operation amongst the key public bodies in Scotland with a national remit – principally Marine Scotland, SEPA as the environmental regulator, SNH as the Scottish Government's advisor on natural heritage and Historic Scotland, an agency of the Scottish Government with responsibilities for the historic environment.





7. To achieve an integrated approach, Marine Scotland, SEPA, SNH and Historic Scotland have agreed that their contribution to delivering this vision will be incorporated into their corporate or strategic plans. We will establish ways of working based on mutual trust and respect, focusing on how best to deliver the overall vision rather than sectoral or organisational interests. This will be particularly the case as we search for more cost-effective ways of working, where we will look to locate activity where it can best be done. The emphasis will be on innovative ways of meeting our new challenges.
8. We will also work in a complementary way with a range of other bodies with marine management roles and responsibilities, including in particular local authorities and with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Crown Estates.
9. In delivering our vision for Scotland's seas we also need to be outward looking, recognising that that means working with the Marine Management Organisation, other UK administrations and other countries, particularly in developing a regional seas approach.

## MAJOR EXTERNAL DRIVERS

10. There is a range of broader processes which will shape the future framework within which we will work. They are at different stages, but working together we have scope to influence the development of each to deliver jointly the shared vision for the marine environment.
- Under the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** we are committed to Good Environmental Status for all our seas by 2020: the indicators are wide ranging, and will provide the framework for judging progress towards overall environmental objectives. We will learn from experience on the EU Water Framework Directive (which includes similar requirements, for some marine areas, with a deadline of 2015) and ensure we have a coherent approach across the two Directives, and Natura. Complementary activity will help us address their respective requirements.
  - As part of the agreement on executive devolution, we are developing with UK colleagues an agreed **UK Marine Policy Statement** (UKMPS), to address those issues where a consistent approach across all UK waters is needed, and to clarify issues on the devolved/reserved interface.
  - Major exercises are ongoing to assess the state of our seas: **the OSPAR Quality Status report, the UK 'charting progress 2'** and our own **'State of Scotland's Seas' report**.



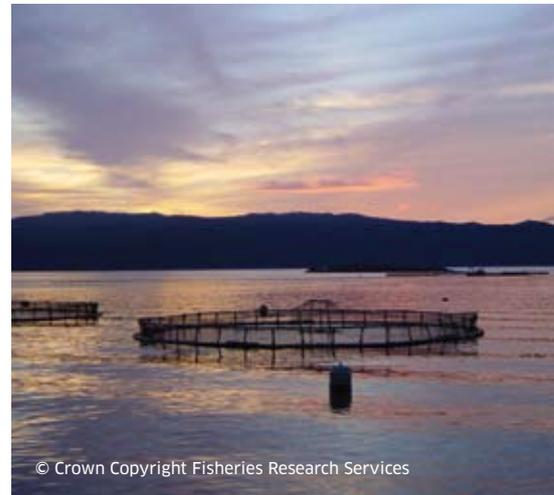


- One of the key sectoral marine policies - the **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)** - is under review. We need to influence its development so that fisheries management can both reflect Scottish interests and integrate with wider marine planning and management aims and responsibilities.
- We need to take account of the wider climate change agenda, including the implications of Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework and the Climate Change Scotland Act. In addition to understanding and managing the impacts of climate change on the marine environment, we want to take advantage of opportunities for developments in marine renewables and offshore wind energy to contribute towards both ambitious climate change targets and socio-economic benefits for Scotland.

11. The other major factor in the external environment is the tight financial position for the public sector. This means that, in working out how to deliver our overall vision, we need to identify and resource the highest priority workstreams which will contribute most to achieving real outcomes, and ensure that we achieve value for money when delivering those workstreams. We need to consider what we can give up, or do less of, to live within available resources. We are committed to doing this in a way which avoids simply transferring cost from one organisation to another, while maximising opportunities to collaborate in areas of common interest.

## AN INTEGRATED APPROACH BASED ON MARINE PLANNING

12. To deliver this vision, there is consensus that we need an integrated approach to the marine environment. That is because it is not possible to take robust decisions about a particular business sector, species or geographic area without an understanding of wider impacts. The other crucial purpose of a plan-led approach is to provide a stable environment for long term business decisions.
13. Marine planning is at the heart of this integrated approach, identifying how different uses can be accommodated, and where choices have to be made. The Scottish Marine Plan is the centre of gravity for our system of marine planning, but part of a wider network - regional plans, the UK Marine Policy Statement, and co-operation with other nations in the context of MSFD, CFP etc.
14. Regional marine planning reflects the need to ensure that local communities and stakeholders can play a central role in decisions affecting them. Alongside this we need to work in partnership with local authorities, and involving other key partners to develop effective ways to link marine spatial planning with land use planning and ensure that their aquaculture planning responsibilities are taken into account.



# ACHIEVING THE VISION

## 15. To achieve the vision we need to:

- Deliver a more integrated evidence base that allows us to understand the functioning of marine ecosystems and the impact, both individually and cumulatively, of human activities;
- Develop effective tools and resources, for developing a Marine Plan and, in particular, for making choices between different uses, recognising the economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts;
- Integrate fisheries management with wider marine management and planning;
- Work to achieve good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive by 2020;
- Implement the marine nature conservation strategy, which includes new Marine Protected Areas to safeguard key marine habitats and species, and a new complementary strategy for the protection, management and promotion of marine heritage;
- Develop streamlined and customer-friendly licensing processes, working within a plan-led approach. The Marine Act delivers some simplification of licensing and we aim to establish a one stop shop across the Scottish public sector, to improve efficiency of delivery while ensuring the requirements of relevant legislation are met;
- Establish what this new approach means for assessment, delivery, monitoring and compliance. Once this is established we will need to look across the scientific, monitoring and compliance requirements in Scotland's seas and identify the most cost-effective way of delivering these in collaboration;
- Develop an approach to regulating marine renewables that promotes their rapid development as part of a sustainable approach.