

# Marine Scotland

National Marine Plan

Equality Impact Assessment: Results



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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

<b>Title of Policy</b>	National Marine Plan
<b>Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy</b>	The National Marine Plan is intended to help ensure Scotland's seas are developed in a sustainable manner. Its purpose is to provide a framework for managing increasing demands for the use of our marine environment, encouraging economic development of marine industries and incorporating environmental protection into marine decision making. It will provide clarity for marine decision making thus creating an environment of certainty for marine investment, such as renewables, while ensuring appropriate environmental protection is achieved.
<b>Directorate: Division: team</b>	Marine Scotland: Marine Planning & Policy

### Executive summary

The National Marine Plan (NMP) may affect a diversity of people with an interest in the marine environment in Scotland. The NMP sets out planning policies to inform and guide marine users and developers on how marine resources should be used/managed/located etc. As such marine planning policies will have implications on:

- The preparing of and consultation on marine plans by marine planning authorities;
- The preparation of applications by developers, and assessment of these applications by marine licensing authorities and other decision makers;
- The choice of location of marine developments and activities; and
- The requirements placed on the construction, operation and expansion of marine developments.

### Background

The introduction of Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 gave the Scottish Government authority to introduce statutory marine planning for Scotland's seas. A National Marine Plan will manage increasing demands for the use of our marine environment, encourage economic development of marine industries and incorporate environmental protection into marine decision making. It will also have a role to play in managing adaptation to climate change.

A number of sectors/groups of people will be affected by the adoption of a National Marine Plan including:

- Marine activities/businesses: oil and gas, renewable energy, ports and harbours, aquaculture, aggregates and coastal defence.
- Developers of licensed activities in Scotland's Marine Area. (all such activities listed above).
- Activities in Scotland's Marine Area that do not require licenses, or that have licenses that do not have a spatial component to them (including fishing, shipping, tourism, leisure and recreational activities).
- Marine nature conservation, coastal defence, and marine heritage activities/conservation.
- Coastal communities
- The Scottish Government (through Marine Scotland's Planning and Licensing functions)
- Local Planning Authorities
- The Crown Estate
- Regional Marine Planning Partnerships (including Local Authorities)
- The Ministry of Defence

Marine activities have the potential to affect these groups in many ways. For example, coastal communities may benefit economically and socially from the success of coastal and marine economies in their area; such as fishing, port infrastructure or tourism. Similarly, communities can suffer high levels of social and economic deprivation as a result of industrial decline. Coastal communities may benefit from improved coastal recreation opportunities and environmental improvements whereas they may suffer from possible adverse effects of marine air quality, visual intrusion, coastal erosion and flood risk.

These effects may impact equalities target groups embedded within these communities both positively and potentially negatively. However, at the scale of the National Marine Plan there is no clear differentiation between the potential effects upon target groups and non-target groups.

## **The Scope of the EQIA**

A pre-consultation of the draft National Marine Plan was held from 15 March 2011 to 07 June 2011. This consultation received 77 responses from a wide range of marine sectors and stakeholders. In addition a consultation of the draft National Marine Plan was held from 25 July 2013 to November 2013. This consultation received 124 responses from a wide range of marine sectors and stakeholders. During the consultation period 31 public events were held around the coast and Islands. Both these consultations contained two questions on equality:

- **Question 38: Do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan discriminates disproportionately between persons defined by age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race and religion and belief?**

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- **Question 39: If you answered 'yes' to question 38, in what way do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan is discriminatory?**

## **Key Findings**

It was determined as part of the pre-consultation framing exercise that a light touch assessment will be taken with this EQIA as evidence shows that the NMP has insignificant potential impacts and minimal relevance to equality. However, further evidence was gathered during the consultation on the Draft NMP.

Half (sixty-three) of the respondents to the Draft NMP consultation gave a response to the equality questions above. Only two (both individual) respondents commented that the Scottish National Marine Plan does discriminate disproportionately. One referred to the accessibility of the Draft NMP and not to the impact of the policies. The other did not specify the expected impact of policies. The overwhelming majority viewed the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan as non-discriminatory.

Only two respondents (the same two individuals who answered 'yes' at Q38) answered Q39. Both respondents commented upon the need for improved accessibility and standards for the consultation. One respondent requested improved accessibility to the NMP in terms of both simplicity and a lack of requirement to be computer literate, in order for it not to be regarded as discriminatory.

## **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The Scottish Government has concluded that no changes to the policy are necessary as a result of the EQIA, as the proposals in the Plan are intended to apply equally to all affected, and appear to have no significant differential effect on the basis of the protected characteristics.