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Stakeholder Engagement, Facilitation & Mediation

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ISCZ: End of Process Evaluation

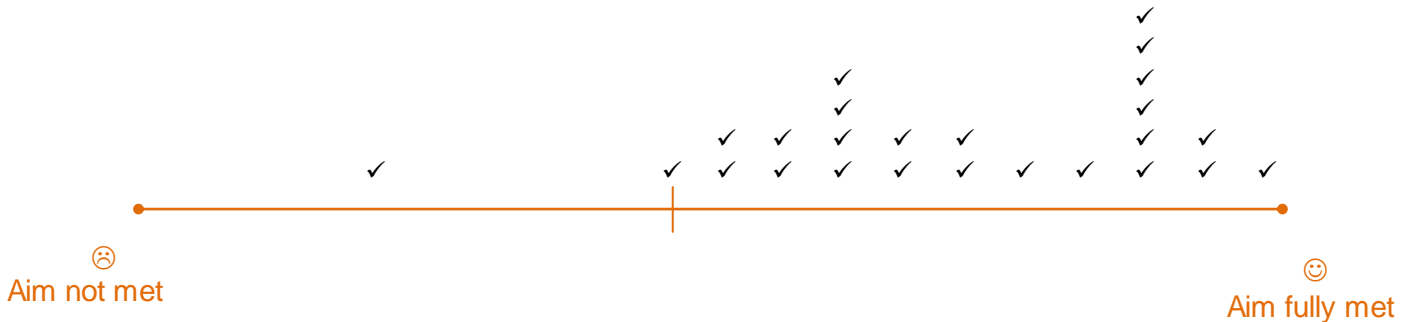
REPORT

Report: 8th August 2011

This part of this report is a compilation of the responses from ISCZ RSG members gave in their evaluation forms at their last meeting in July 2011.

A. Please give your views on how far each element of this process was met.

1. A representative group of regional stakeholders (the RSG) drew up proposals for a regional MCZ network, following a set of ecological design guidelines signed off by Government.



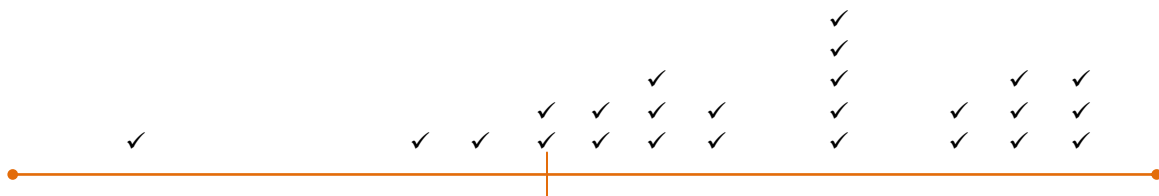
Comments / Rationale

- More scientific and ecological input at every meeting from people with a high level of knowledge of Irish Seas region would have been beneficial
- The resulting recommendations seem comprehensive and generally reasonable
- Representation not always appropriate with some sectors and individual louder than others, largely however, through a very difficult process the goals have been achieved.
- ENG states quality of broadscale habitat should be looked at, this did not occur
- I think the group was by the end representative and for the later part followed guidance. The initial phase felt less stable.
- Good range of interests, representatives genuinely seemed to engage with their own sector (i.e. views of group, not personal). Focus groups a key source of detailed and up to date data and local knowledge + awareness of actual / potential impacts of management of activities.
- Whereas final network not “gold plated” solution, it was an optimum working solution, taking into account industry and specialist interest activity.
- Aim met to the extent allowable given limited and late guidance documentation and inadequate information on the impact of MCZs on activities.
- The representation of the group has been a challenge with key infrastructure projects / companies not represented from the start of the process as they were denied a seat in the RSG. This meant the overall consensus of the RSG was to encourage MCZs with wind farms.
- Wind energy caveats allowed to rule and have disproportionate voice (social equity). Ecological data not allowed to be taken into account and other data poor but improving. Needed to revisit sites but not allowed to so network probably sub optimal as a result – although it might be ok
- Surprisingly for such diverse interests all pulled together, compromised when necessary, but always tried not to affect the interests of other stakeholders if at all possible.
- Element was largely met. Was some problem with consistency of attendance but this was probably as good as it could have been.
- Group has had good representation and worked very well together. Ecological network guidance adhered to and very largely delivered. Network proposals are strong and have highest level of support possible and a good level of support.
- Very good structure – worked well
- Some stakeholders inevitably feel excluded by the process due to its fast pace and the ability of stakeholders directly involved to facilitate feeding in views
- We did not completely achieve our aim and in some ways I feel that geodiversity and biodiversity was not central to the process. I understand why but feel it was an opportunity lost.
- Largely this objective was met; the network sites proposed have been designed using the guidance. The guidelines perhaps came a little late after the process was started though.

- In relation to the ENG, yes, very nearly achieved. Co-location will, if agreed, allow virtual complete compliance.
- There is a proposed network. Where it does not meet ENG guidelines, there are good reasons for it.
- Aim almost met except for sub tidal mud. The requirements were quite succinct and they were carried out.
- There was good representation but some groups had stronger voices in the room.
- Several stakeholders were not sufficiently represented in the early stages of the project. Other stakeholders i.e. the MMO, DECC & DEFRA should have had more of, or just a presence.

2. There was a structured, coherent and transparent process that allowed the RSG to:

- build up a knowledge base and an understanding of the issues
- explore potential solutions to these issues.
- have a central role in planning,
- have a process of negotiation and resolution of conflict between differing needs and interests



☹️
Aim not met

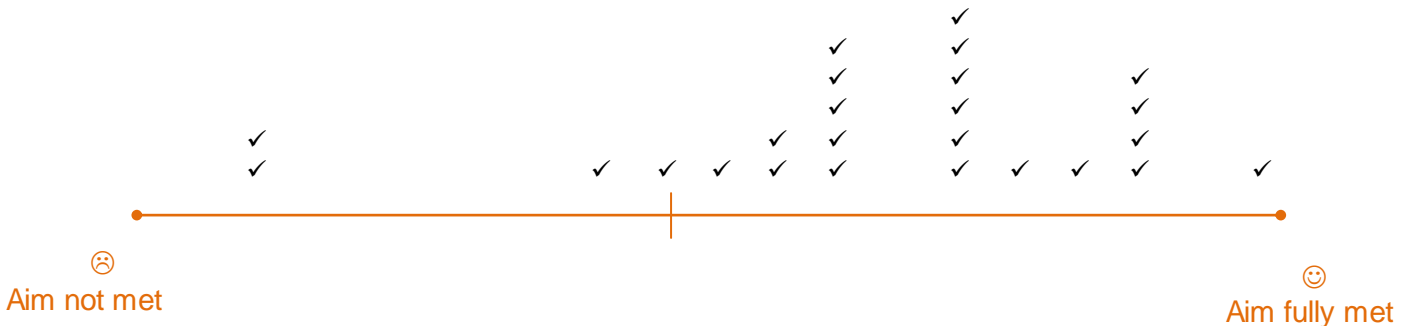
☺️
Aim fully met

Comments / Rationale

- Guidance documents produced too late in the process which jeopardised the process and could have advanced project outcomes
- For stakeholders not in the RSG I don't think it was transparent enough, in terms of making them aware they are not all internet users
- Not at all. Management to the sites and reference areas were not brought up until the end of the process that negated all coherence
- The early process, driven by the first facilitation company did not allow space for issues and knowledge. Decisions were process driven rather than evidence based. That was rectified subsequently but many of the original decisions had to stand because time was now getting short
- The full RSG meetings and the focus meetings especially, allowed data, issues, solutions, networking to be fully explored. ISCZ team proved very approachable and supportive with taking issues forward when requested by individual RSG members.
- Largely met, however it felt like we were playing catch up sometimes with data and information coming quite late to the process.
- It was a difficult process and conflict was inevitable but largely this was managed in a very pragmatic way
- Yes except that sometimes information was late in coming to us
- Process has been structured and transparent for most part – short timescales and late guidance have hindered. RSG has clearly been and felt central to planning. good negotiation and resolution process at RSG, FG and I-IS
- I think this worked reasonably well. It did take time as expected to build up trust and understanding.
- I found the process extremely difficult to understand early on but this did improve considerably as time progressed.
- Guidance kept changing or not sufficiently clear at outset.
- The project team and facilitator have done a good job with the process and guidance documents provided. The process has been very inconsistent to other regional projects which has made participation on a national level difficult.

- The ? of the third point remains to be seen.
- Science (particularly in early workshops) still evolving
- Extremely well organised, coherent and transparent. Overall structure a little wobbly at first- RSG all wanted clearer guidance re potential management implications before potentially relinquishing “rights” to an activity in a proposed MCZ/ reference area. Took too long to round to coastal/ins hore sites which had move and therefore more controversial stakeholders and interests.
- Participation in the process created a high degree of transparency although it was not always then clear for example where data came from and its quality etc.
- Additional ecological data layers were introduced after production of the 2nd iteration – this data was not permitted to be used to build up knowledge and explore other pMCZs. There were also a number of times where view points were not allowed to be heard by other stakeholder’s forceful and sometimes aggressive behaviour.
- The sheer scale of knowledge to be captured and evaluated has been difficult but largely successfully done, and effectively used to inform the process. Some examples of railroading decisions however and lack of transparency through decisions being interpreted differently to original intent.
- The process would have been much improved by some earlier explanation of what management measure might be appropriate to MCZs and reference areas.
- Format of meeting good to facilitate informal building of cross sectoral knowledg e base.

3. There was good decision making to identify the location for MCZs and the decisions were taken by stakeholders

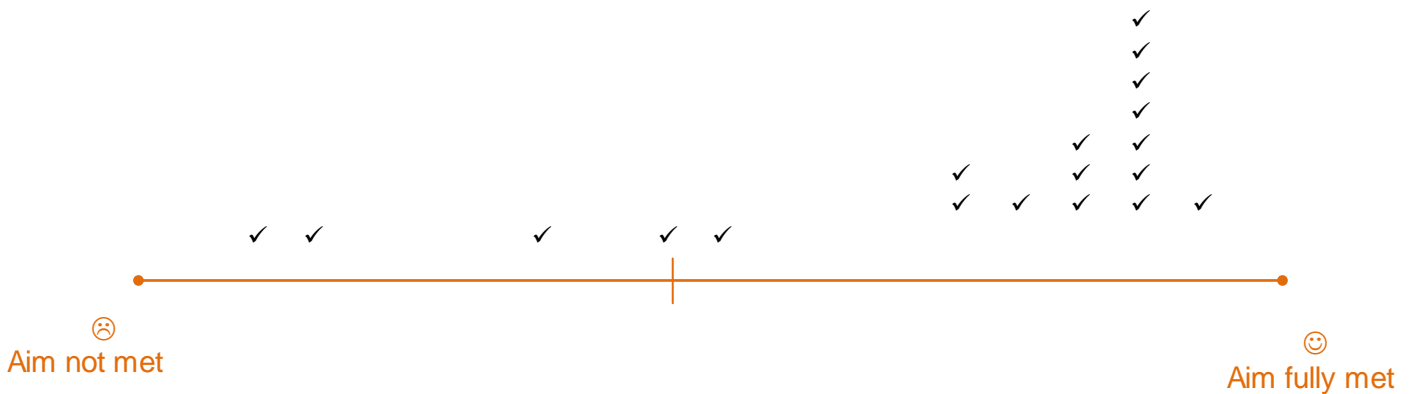


Comments / Rationale

- Concern re: some influence from SAP and project team on placement of proposed areas. Also agreements from RSG’s appeared to back track / alter on couple of occasions.
- Early decision making hindered by lack of data but all decisions made by stakeholders, with good use of available data. Decision making process – later stages very sound.
- Yes, worked well.
- Not at all. Initially people were told to point to a map (not chart) without coordinates many of who did not know what they were doing.
- Some areas came from the project team and although finalised by the RSG did not come from them initially such as the estuaries.
- Unable to comment as not involved in the early stages of the project.
- Positive comments are that stakeholders were able to negotiate to reach some agreement. However, the best evidence was not used in many decisions.
- Sometimes one group of stakeholders or gender was dominant.
- Some decisions were made early on that the stakeholders were not in involved in (location of some zones for discussion), reasons for this are understood but the stakeholders should have been involved. The early “voting” system should never have been used to reach consensus or decisions.
- Early sessions at times appeared random, but later workshops became much more focused.
- More so than in other regional projects
- All stakeholder made contributions, were listened to and attempted to accommodate.

- Decision making improved when the facilitator changed and when stakeholders formed better relationships.
- Probably the weakest area of the process as many stakeholder reps did not have detailed knowledge of specific locations. Therefore locations chosen often on “best guess” basis.
- From the stakeholders location it was good. Project team suggestions generally very poor due to lack of local knowledge and this was directly due to the initial idea of having a neutral team with no local knowledge. Made them look foolish although dedicated professionals – unfortunate and not their fault - due to the process set up by government.
- I joined after the process had been running for a while so many of the MCZ were roughed in. However there was iteration and almost all of them were adjusted. It wasn't always clear in retrospect why.
- Mostly good process however not all directly impacted stakeholders have a voice at RSG so others representing them reluctant to commit to final decisions. Also decisions made without all guidance available.
- No ecological data was available at the start of this process – decisions were driven initially solely by socio economics
- I feel that the early site identification by consensus overlook perhaps constrained choice to sites with limited ability to modify. However choose we must and on best available information.
- Yes, the majority decisions were taken “full and robust” discussions apart from one or two “late entrants” – BUT process had to be iterative and therefore this was inevitable.
- This was a complex process, generally dependent on which stakeholders / reps were available.

4. The process and final recommendations are understood by a wide range of stakeholders, especially those who will, or are likely to be impacted by the advent of an MCZ network. This includes stakeholders who have national, regional and local interests.

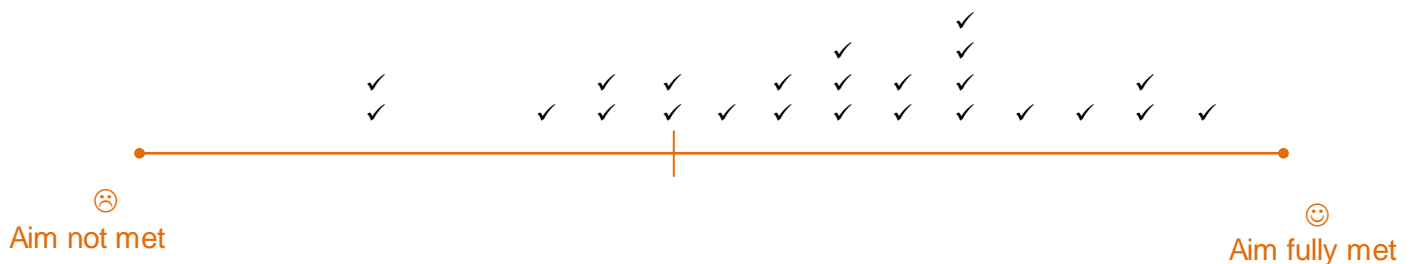


Comments / Rationale

- I think the rationale is well understood by RSG but it is important that the key points of the outputs and the process to get them well communicated to all stakeholders
- I don't think this will be fully met until it goes to consultation.
- Not enough information on implications of such designations on stakeholders
- Given diversity, this was a pragmatic compromise.
- It is a complex process and not yet finalised though there is some level of understanding of the likely results.
- I believe that stakeholders not personally engaged in the process will find it difficult to understand and will be unwilling to accept recommendations they don't like.
- Yes, but implications and management remains uncertain.
- By those within the RSG, yes. For a wider set of stakeholders, still significant work required to explain and win support for pMCZs.

- The recommendations are understood, there still needs to be better clarity on the implications, management measures etc. we were asked to make decisions about sites without knowing this which hinders the process enormously and is a fundamental flaw of this process. This should have been the first information provided.
- Inevitably there will be significant parts of the fishing industry who are not aware of the sites or how they will be impacted. This is particularly the case as potential management measures have just been released today.
- Yes I agree with this statement as all stakeholders learnt a lot.
- Process and final recommendations well understood by RSG and some other groups of stakeholders – active representation by RSG. Coastal MCZ likely to involve wider range of stakeholders not yet engaged.
- I think the way in which information is distributed is good and there should be no problem in identifying final position. A request has been made for coordinates, length, and size of zones so that it is easier to understand by those affected.
- Dissemination to the wider public not too good and often information provided too late for adequate circulation within networks.
- Yes – we all understand what we have agreed.
- The technical content seems well explained but the final recommendations need exceptional clarity if they are to be well received.
- The collation process and delivery of reports is clear and detailed allowing the final decisions to be understood by the wider community. However, ongoing support to interpret by those impacted will be needed
- How well RSG members disseminate information to the wider stakeholder in unknown.
- I think the group consisted of representative of stakeholder groups most impacted and influenced by the MCZs
- Yes – supported by facilitator's very clear summaries to group checking what was agreed. Confusion over one small area in pMCZ4 highlights how clearly everything else had been summarised.
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5. The best available data was used



Comments / Rationale

- More information could have been sourced making data more accurate with more time.
- Data for the marine environment is poor so sighting MCZs based on it will always be a challenge.
- Data was reasonably good in terms of VMS and representatives at meetings. Broadscale habitats were not always accurate.
- It was in the end but very unfortunate that it wasn't available from the outset.
- Additional ecological data available but not allowed to be used by Dialogue Matters! That said, happy that modelled data used when necessary as this is best available.
- A lot of information used was verbal or dated. Survey information and modelling information is time limited but the best use of data available was made.
- The best data available at the time was presumably used but the uncertainties in it were sometimes underestimated.

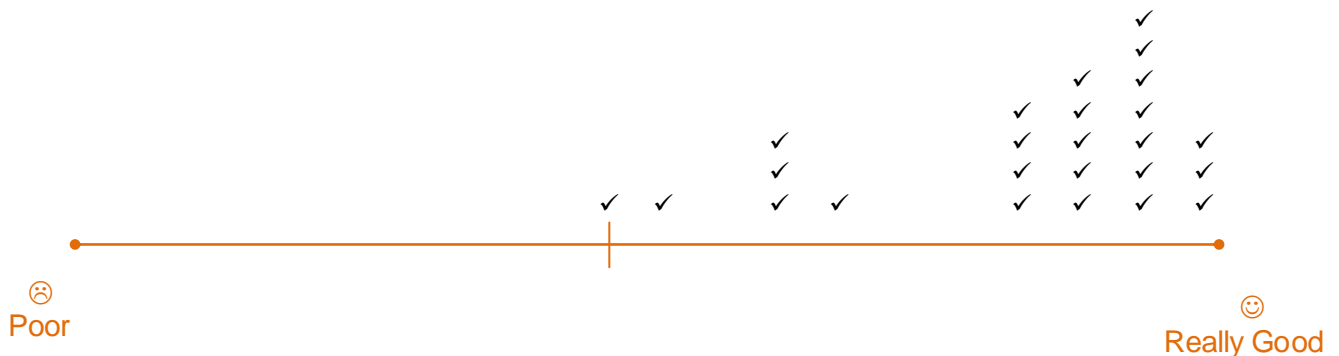
- The main issue is that decisions were often based on a lack of data and that most new data obtained from SNCB commissioned reports etc. always seemed to arrive too late to incorporate.
- Still think some data was either incorrect or inadequate.
- Probably was but often the material provided in advance of a workshop severely lacking in detail / scale to enable us to make best use of it in decision making.
- Yes.
- Lots of data came in late or had to be rejected / reviewed but a very definite and substantial increase in quality and quantity later on. Congratulations to team beavering away to seek out and make use of these.
- Data was evolving. Groups were subject matter experts who frequently had knowledge that surpassed the presented data.
- Limited time restricted potential to accommodate and integrate better datasets.
- The DEFRA / SNCB guidance re mobile species made it very difficult to include these fully. But with the ISCZ RSG there was clearly some willingness to consider this interest – e.g. black guillemot at St Bees.
- Understanding that this is a difficult thing to gather data but a lot of data came quite late in the process. Also a lot of data are just not available for the proposed sites.
- Feel that much post grad research was missing but it is not easily accessible especially in the area of geodiversity.
- There appears to be more detailed seabed data available in the Northern Irish administration that has not been incorporated into this project. I would wish to know the robustness of different AAEI data sets some of which have come from environmental NGOs.
- It could always be argued that more information would have assisted the process but there was always going to be an argument that there was insufficient time and resource associated with the project. Sometimes, due to the time span between meetings and technical detail did not make it easy.
- The initial meetings were handicapped by the delay in data contract reporting. Subsequently, best available data has been used to good effect.
- Yes, I think so – there is never a right time as data is continuously being made available.

B. Any other comments that you want to make about how the Irish Seas Conservation Zones process delivered on the aims set for it at the outset?

- I think it has made a big impact in terms of better cross sectoral understanding and given participants an insight into other users of the Irish Sea.
- The most valuable element has been stakeholder engagement and the ongoing relationships that will need to be maintained. Awareness and understanding of other sectors needs is far more important than the actual designations.
- Dialogue Matters were appalling – do not use again!
- Initial attempts to provide coherent network according to guidance would have been facilitated if environmental / ecological / geodiversity data for adjacent water had also been made available – particularly relevant to connectivity.
- Aims were achieved within a structured forum that allowed all stakeholders an equal voice.
- Pleased to say that we virtually achieved all the target set.
- ISCZ has delivered very strongly against ENG by strong working and personal relationships from RSG working has been a particularly valued outcome.
- It was always going to be difficult to meet the ENG targets given the socio economic impact on certain sectors. But it is felt that the final recommendations were as near as possible and therefore I believe it delivered the aims.
- Feel we achieved an incredible amount considering both the difficult geographical and social make up of the ISCZ. However geodiversity is always the poor relative of biodiversity conservation.
- Taking the Irish Sea as a whole without the various territorial waters boundaries would have improved the representivity of MCZs in the region.

- Guidance from a national level needed to be more forthcoming and has made the process more difficult.
- Overall, despite my reservations (expressed in answers to other questions) this is a massive step forward in providing a framework for marine conservation.
- It delivered what it set out to do via EUNIS and stakeholders were consulted. The whole process was always fraught due to the lack of knowledge of what would eventually evolve.
- Concern re: balance of certain individuals / groups and the ? Effect that their views and interpretations had on this. Generally a good and positive outcome produced.

C. How do you rate the support given to you as stakeholders by the Project Team?



Comments / Rationale

- Not good for the first half of the project however this did improve as the project progressed and involvements / implications became better understood.
- Sometimes there was confusion which was not fully resolved, but the team was good overall
- Fair. There was a lack of understanding from the team on certain areas e.g. whether wind farm sites would MPAs. They were as helpful as they could be on a day to day basis.
- Friendly, helpful.
- Can't fault the project team, they delivered under pressure and always tried to respond to queries.
- Good support throughout.
- Requests for information have been fulfilled in my limited involvement in the RSG.
- The process involved was not easy for the project team with a number of staff leaving and new faces replacing them. This coupled with demands by the RSG for detailed information on coordinates etc. but they coped admirably.
- Excellent – they have worked indefatigably to support stakeholders.
- Always quick to respond and most helpful when queries raised.
- Generally good although would have preferred better resources e.g. size of maps at the workshops; Irish Seas on A4? Not good.
- Good team and facilitator.
- Project team provided information and expertise in a timely and professional manner
- Very good. Lots of data and reports – difficult to cope / keep up at times, especially as often short notice.
- I have to thank the project team for assisting us through the process.
- Thanks to all project team.
- On the whole excellent, only a few occasions they have struggled due to sheer volume of work being managed.
- They seemed to be well on top of the technical issues and frank where knowledge was scant.
- The support information has been great. We really appreciated the opportunity to participate.



- Old consultant: ballot voting was very poor, stuck to process too tightly, no flexibility, upset stakeholders. New consultant: allowed time for RSG to have important discussions, more fair decisions made. However, by this time there was no opportunity to revisit pMCZ2.
- Set up badly, too constrained and too process driven. Replacement facilitator although more flexible not too good at noting pertinent information. Also tended to paraphrase, also tended to lead – on at least one occasion up a blind alley.

This part of this report presents the comments made ISCZ RSG members in their evaluation forms at their last meeting in July 2011 grouped by relevant subject.

About the make up of the RSG

- Representation not always appropriate with some sectors and individual louder than others, largely however, through a very difficult process the goals have been achieved.
- I think the group was by the end representative and for the later part followed guidance. The initial phase felt less stable.
- Good range of interests, representatives genuinely seemed to engage with their own sector (i.e. views of group, not personal). Focus groups a key source of detailed and up to date data and local knowledge + awareness of actual / potential impacts of management of activities.
- The representation of the group has been a challenge with key infrastructure projects / companies not represented from the start of the process as they were denied a seat in the RSG. This meant the overall consensus of the RSG was to encourage MCZs with wind farms.
- Group has had good representation and worked very well together
- Was some problem with consistency of attendance but this was probably as good as it could have been.
- Some stakeholders inevitably feel excluded by the process due to its fast pace and the ability of stakeholders directly involved to facilitate feeding in views
- There was good representation but some groups had stronger voices in the room.
- Several stakeholders were not sufficiently represented in the early stages of the project. Other stakeholders i.e. the MMO, DECC & DEFRA should have had more of, or just a presence.
- not all directly impacted stakeholders have a voice at RSG so others representing them reluctant to commit to final decisions.
- Coastal MCZ likely to involve wider range of stakeholders not yet engaged.
- I think the group consisted of representative of stakeholder groups most impacted and influenced by the MCZs

About how the RSG worked as a group

- Surprisingly for such diverse interests all pulled together, compromised when necessary, but always tried not to affect the interests of other stakeholders if at all possible.
- Very good structure – worked well
- Wind energy caveats allowed to rule and have disproportionate voice (social equity).
- For stakeholders not in the RSG I don't think it was transparent enough, in terms of making them aware they are not all internet users
- Management of the sites and reference areas were not brought up until the end of the process that negated all coherence
- I think this worked reasonably well. If did take time as expected to build up trust and understanding.
- RSG has clearly been and felt central to planning.
- Participation in the process created a high degree of transparency
- generally dependent on which stakeholders / reps were available.
- There were a number of times where view points were not allowed to be heard by other stakeholder's forceful and sometimes aggressive behaviour.

- Some examples of railroading decisions however and lack of transparency through decisions being interpreted differently to original intent.
- Yes, worked well.
- Sometimes one group of stakeholders or gender was dominant.
- All stakeholder made contributions, were listened to and attempted to accommodate.
- Aims were achieved within a structured forum that allowed all stakeholders an equal voice.

About the job the RSG did in relation to the ENG

- The resulting recommendations seem comprehensive and generally reasonable
- ENG states quality of broadscale habitat should be looked at, this did not occur
- Whereas final network not “gold plated” solution, it was an optimum working solution, taking into account industry and specialist interest activity.
- Aim met to the extent allowable given limited and late guidance documentation and inadequate information on the impact of MCZs on activities.
- Element was largely met.
- We did not completely achieve our aim and in some ways I feel that geodiversity and biodiversity was not central to the process. I understand why but feel it was an opportunity lost.
- Ecological network guidance adhered to and very largely delivered. Network proposals are strong and have highest level of support possible and a good level of support.
- There is a proposed network. Where it does not meet ENG guidelines, there are good reasons for it.
- Aim almost met except for sub tidal mud. The requirements were quite succinct and they were carried out.
- Largely this objective was met; the network sites proposed have been designed using the guidance. The guidelines perhaps came a little late after the process was started though.
- In relation to the ENG, yes, very nearly achieved. Co-location will, if agreed, allow virtual complete compliance.
- Needed to revisit sites but not allowed to so network probably sub optimal as a result – although it might be ok
- Largely met
- I don't think this will be fully met until it goes to consultation.
- Pleased to say that we virtually achieved all the target set.
- It was always going to be difficult to meet the ENG targets given the socio economic impact on certain sectors. But it is felt that the final recommendations were as near as possible and therefore I believe it delivered the aims.

About guidance and guidance documents

- Guidance documents produced too late in the process which jeopardised the process and could have advanced project outcomes
- It felt like we were playing catch up sometimes with data and information coming quite late to the process.
- Guidance kept changing or not sufficiently clear at outset.
- short timescales and late guidance have hindered
- sometimes information was late in coming to us
- RSG all wanted clearer guidance re potential management implications before potentially relinquishing “rights” to an activity in a proposed MCZ/ reference area

- The project team and facilitator have done a good job with the process and guidance documents provided
- decisions made without all guidance available.
- The DEFRA / SNCB guidance re mobile species made it very difficult to include these fully. But with the ISCZ RSG there was clearly some willingness to consider this interest – e.g. black guillemot at St Bees.
- Guidance from a national level needed to be more forthcoming and has made the process more difficult.

About the choices of sites

- Some areas came from the project team and although finalised by the RSG did not come from them initially such as the estuaries.
- Initially people were told to point to a map (not chart) without coordinates many of who did not know what they were doing.
- I think the rational is well understood by RSG but it is important that the key points of the outputs and the process to get them well communicated to all stakeholders
- stakeholders were able to negotiate to reach some agreement
- Some decisions were made early on that the stakeholders were not in involved in (location of some zones for discussion), reasons for this are understood but the stakeholders should have been involved.
- Probably the weakest area of the process as many stakeholder reps did not have detailed knowledge of specific locations. Therefore locations chosen often on “best guess” basis.
- From the stakeholders location it was good. Project team suggestions generally very poor due to lack of local knowledge and this was directly due to the initial idea of having a neutral team with no local knowledge. Made them look foolish although dedicated professionals – unfortunate and not their fault - due to the process set up by government.
- I joined after the process had been running for a while so many of the MCZ were roughed in. However there was iteration and almost all of them were adjusted. It wasn't always clear in retrospect why.
- I feel that the early site identification by consensus overlook perhaps constrained choice to sites with limited ability to modify. However choose we must and on best available information.
- Given diversity, this was a pragmatic compromise.
- It is a complex process and not yet finalised thought there is some level of understanding of the likely results.
- implications and management remains uncertain.
- there still needs to be better clarity on the implications, management measures etc. we were asked to make decisions about sites without knowing this which hinders the process enormously and is a fundamental flaw of this process. This should have been the first information provided.

About ownership of the work

- By those within the RSG, yes. For a wider set of stakeholders, still significant work required to explain and win support for pMCZs.
- I believe that stakeholders not personally engaged in the process will find it difficult to understand and will be unwilling to accept recommendations they don't like.
- The recommendations are understood

- Inevitably there will be significant parts of the fishing industry who are not aware of the sites or how they will be impacted. This is particularly the case as potential management measures have just been released today.
- Yes all stakeholders learnt a lot.
- Process and final recommendations well understood by RSG and some other groups of stakeholders – active representation by RSG.
- I think the way in which information is distributed is good and there should be no problem in identifying final position.
- A request has been made for coordinates, length, and size of zones so that it is easier to understand by those affected.
- Dissemination to the wider public not too good and often information provided too late for adequate circulation within networks.
- Yes – we all understand what we have agreed.
- The technical content seems well explained but the final recommendations need exceptional clarity if they are to be well received.
- The collation process and delivery of reports is clear and detailed allowing the final decisions to be understood by the wider community. However, ongoing support to interpret by those impacted will be needed
- How well RSG members disseminate information to the wider stakeholder in unknown.

About the use of data & information

- More scientific and ecological input at every meeting from people with a high level of knowledge of Irish Seas region would have been beneficial
- Ecological data not allowed to be taken into account and other data poor but improving.
- The full RSG meetings and the focus meetings especially, allowed data, issues, solutions, networking to be fully explored
- Science (particularly in early workshops) still evolving
- although it was not always then clear for example where data came from and its quality etc.
- Additional ecological data layers were introduced after production of the 2nd iteration – this data was not permitted to be used to build up knowledge and explore other pMCZs.
- The sheer scale of knowledge to be captured and evaluated has been difficult but largely successfully done, and effectively used to inform the process.
- the best evidence was not used in many decisions.
- No ecological data was available at the start of this process – decisions were driven initially solely by socio economics
- Not enough information on implications of such designations on stakeholders
- More information could have been sourced making data more accurate with more time.
- Data for the marine environment is poor so sighting MCZs based on it will always be a challenge.
- Data was reasonably good in terms of VMS and representatives at meetings. Broadscale habitats were not always accurate.
- It was in the end but very unfortunate that it wasn't available from the outset.
- Additional ecological data available but not allowed to be used by Dialogue Matters! That said, happy that modelled data used when necessary as this is best available.
- A lot of information used was verbal or dated. Survey information and modelling information is time limited but the best use of data available was made.
- The best data available at the time was presumably used but the uncertainties in it were sometimes underestimated.

- The main issue is that decisions were often based on a lack of data and that most new data obtained from SNCB commissioned reports etc. always seemed to arrive too late to incorporate.
- Still think some data was either incorrect or inadequate.
- Probably was but often the material provided in advance of a workshop severely lacking in detail / scale to enable us to make best use of it in decision making.
- Lots of data came in late or had to be rejected / reviewed but a very definite and substantial increase in quality and quantity later on. Congratulations to team beavering away to seek out and make use of these.
- Data was evolving. Groups were subject matter experts who frequently had knowledge that surpassed the presented data.
- Limited time restricted potential to accommodate and integrate better datasets.
- Understanding that this is a difficult thing to gather data but a lot of data came quite late in the process. Also a lot of data are just not available for the proposed sites.
- Feel that much post grad research was missing but it is not easily accessible especially in the area of geodiversity.
- There appears to be more detailed seabed data available in the Northern Irish administration that has not been incorporated into this project. I would wish to know the robustness of different AAEI data sets some of which have come from environmental NGOs.
- It could always be argued that more information would have assisted the process but there was always going to be an argument that there was insufficient time and resource associated with the project. Sometimes, due to the time span between meetings and technical detail did not make it easy.
- The initial meetings were handicapped by the delay in data contract reporting. Subsequently, best available data has been used to good effect.
- there is never a right time as data is continuously being made available.

About the process

- The process has been very inconsistent to other regional projects which has made participation on a national level difficult.
- Process has been structured and transparent for most part
- It was a difficult process and conflict was inevitable but largely this was managed in a very pragmatic way
- Overall structure a little wobbly at first
- Took too long to round to coastal/inshore sites which had more and therefore more controversial stakeholders and interests.
- I found the process extremely difficult to understand early on but this did improve considerably as time progressed.
- Extremely well organised, coherent and transparent.
- Format of meeting good to facilitate informal building of cross sectoral knowledge base.
- The process would have been much improved by some earlier explanation of what management measure might be appropriate to MCZs and reference areas.
- Mostly good process
- This was a complex process,
- Well set up in terms of increasing understanding across sectors. Varying success in terms of achieving some specific parts of the work but overall a much better approach than usually encountered.

About decision making

- The early process, driven by the first facilitation company did not allow space for issues and knowledge. Decisions were process driven rather than evidence based. That was rectified subsequently but many of the original decisions had to stand because time was now getting short
- good negotiation and resolution process at RSG, FG
- Concern re: some influence from SAP and project team on placement of proposed areas. Also agreements from RSG's appeared to back track / alter on couple of occasions.
- Early decision making hindered by lack of data
- Decision making process – later stages very sound.
- The early “voting” system should never have been used to reach consensus or decisions.
- all decisions made by stakeholders, with good use of available data.
- Early sessions at times appeared random, but later workshops became much more focused.
- Decision making improved when the facilitator changed
- Decision making improved when stakeholders formed better relationships.
- the majority decisions were taken “full and robust” discussions apart from one or two “late entrants” – BUT process had to be iterative and therefore this was inevitable.
- Second facilitator's very clear summaries to group checking what was agreed
- Confusion over one small area in pMCZ4 highlights how clearly everything else had been summarised.
- Some of the earlier meetings were rushed, possibly on account of the time available versus agenda scope.

About the facilitation

- Facilitation of the process improved considerably under Rob (R K Partnership).
- The first consultant was poor at identifying issues that needed resolution – this could have been done much more efficiently with the use of formal small groups. As it was the process seemed to proceed almost irrespective of the issues raised. Second consultant much better.
- The initial facilitator was very poor and stalled whole project. The second facilitator made up ground and was very positive influence.
- Heard bad results from initial facilitation and process design but from my limited placement on the RSG this was extremely well governed.
- Early facilitation was very process led, lot of post it note exercises. Discussion got lost. Later facilitation seemed much more direct and focussed, good plenary sessions etc.
- Comments to second consultant only: I think the fact that we delivered a proposed network that most stakeholders can accept speaks for itself and the process to get to this point was well managed and thought out. Thank you.
- 2nd set facilitators led the RSG with much more focus and direction.
- Both consultants brought some important strengths to elements of the project. RKP have done a tremendous job – working with the project team and best available data and RSG, to make the project a great success. Well done!
- Dialogue matters – unconstructive, did not listen to stakeholders, patronising, did not use ecological data when available! Useless. Also resulted in RSG losing Chris Frid our academic advisor – not good.
- I feel the second facilitator was better marginally than the first. However both had a difficult task to do especially bringing the group together initially.
- I think the later consultant (Rob Angell and team) were more professional and focused than Dialogue Matters. This latter approach kept the work flowing and on track. Well done!

- 1st good timekeeping etc but inflexible and failed to take RSG concerns into account. 2nd excellent re timekeeping , giving individuals a voice, and best of all for ensuring democratic discussion, binging in the quiet over at the back and therefore essential to provide assurance and confidence that a, the discussion had been full and b, the conclusions were widely supported – very clear about yes, no & inconclusive. Felt quite proud about the statement re co-location – genuine consensus clearly expressed (albeit with too many subordinate clauses! Plain English prefers short, sweet sentences).
- Change of facilitators did not help the process. Terms of reference for facilitators unclear.
- Replacement facilitator although more flexible not too good at noting pertinent information. Also tended to paraphrase, also tended to lead – on at least one occasion up a blind alley.
- Old consultant: ballot voting was very poor, stuck to process too tightly, no flexibility, upset stakeholders. New consultant: allowed time for RSG to have important discussions, more fair decisions made.
- Dialogue Matters were appalling – do not use again!

About the ISCZ project team

- ISCZ team proved very approachable and supportive with taking issues forward when requested by individual RSG members.
- Not good for the first half of the project however this did improve as the project progressed and involvements / implications became better understood.
- Sometimes there was confusion which was not fully resolved, but the team was good overall
- Fair. There was a lack of understanding from the team on certain areas e.g. whether wind farm sites would MPAs. They were as helpful as they could be on a day to day basis.
- Friendly, helpful.
- Can't fault the project team, they delivered under pressure and always tried to respond to queries.
- Good support throughout.
- Requests for information have been fulfilled in my limited involvement in the RSG.
- The process involved was not easy for the project team with a number of staff leaving and new faces replacing them. This coupled with demands by the RSG for detailed information on coordinates etc. but they coped admirably.
- Excellent – they have worked indefatigably to support stakeholders.
- Always quick to respond and most helpful when queries raised.
- Generally good although would have preferred better resources e.g. size of maps at the workshops; Irish Seas on A4? Not good.
- Good team and facilitator.
- Project team provided information and expertise in a timely and professional manner
- Very good. Lots of data and reports – difficult to cope / keep up at times, especially as often short notice.
- I have to thank the project team for assisting us through the process.
- Thanks to all project team.
- On the whole excellent, only a few occasions they have struggled due to sheer volume of work being managed.
- They seemed to be well on top of the technical issues and frank where knowledge was scant.
- The support information has been great. We really appreciated the opportunity to participate.

Other comments

- I think it has made a big impact in terms of better cross sectoral understanding and given participants an insight into other users of the Irish Sea.
- The most valuable element has been stakeholder engagement and the ongoing relationships that will need to be maintained. Awareness and understanding of other sectors needs is far more important than the actual designations.
- Initial attempts to provide coherent network according to guidance would have been facilitated if environmental / ecological / geodiversity data for adjacent water had also been made available – particularly relevant to connectivity.
- ISCZ has delivered very strongly against ENG by strong working and personal relationships from RSG working has been a particularly valued outcome.
- Feel we achieved an incredible amount considering both the difficult geographical and social make up of the ISCZ. However geodiversity is always the poor relative of biodiversity conservation.
- Taking the Irish Sea as a whole without the various territorial waters boundaries would have improved the representivity of MCZs in the region.
- Overall, this is a massive step forward in providing a framework for marine conservation.
- It delivered what it set out to do via EUNIS and stakeholders were consulted. The whole process was always fraught due to the lack of knowledge of what would eventually evolve.
- Concern re: balance of certain individuals / groups and the effect that their views and interpretations had.
- Generally a good and positive outcome produced.