CELTIC SEAS PARTNERSHIP

Fisheries Stakeholder Data Collection Workshop
Report on Outcomes

Grand Mercure Hotel, Bristol, 11th March 2016

Contents

1. Background

1.1   The Celtic Seas Partnership

The current study is part of the Celtic Seas Partnership project, an EU LIFE-funded initiative, developed by WWF, that covers a geographical area from Scotland's west coast to Northern France including Ireland, Wales and south west England. The project aims to support the implementation of EU environmental and maritime policy, using a stakeholder-led approach to contribute to the development of marine strategies, particularly under the MSFD for the achievement of GES. The Celtic Seas Partnership project set out to "*test, evaluate and disseminate actions and methodologies to offer best practice approaches for effective trans-boundary engagement based on an ecosystem approach to deliver the MSFD*".

A key step of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive cycle is the development of a programme of measures or actions and to do this the Celtic Seas Partnership established a series of Task Groups made up of key stakeholders from across the regions. The Biological Diversity Task Group was began work in November 2014 to consider how stakeholders could work together to develop a measure to help the delivery of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Biodiversity descriptor (D1) to achieve Good Environmental Status. The group has representation from across all of the Celtic Seas region administrations (UK, Ireland and France) from the fishing industry, governments, statutory bodies and eNGOs.

The Biological Diversity Task Group recognised that achieving GES for many of the MSFD descriptors is constrained by lack of data and information to establish baselines and to inform management.   This was also a common theme among other Task Groups. Discussions within the working group and on the suggestion of fishing members highlighted the capacity and shared interest of the fishing industry in collecting both commercial species stock data and environmental data.

Task Group members have identified that relationships between scientists, fishermen, governments and eNGOs need to improve and that everyone has something to contribute.

A statement from one participant sums this up:

"*Commercial fishermen have lots of knowledge from experience, but this can conflict with datasets especially those expanded by modelling. We need to find a way to get the commercial sector on board and their knowledge needs to be accepted by policy makers*"

The Biological Diversity Task Group agreed that as an action from the Celtic Seas Partnership that an initiative to *"Develop a scheme to provide equipment and training for fishermen and other sectors to monitor the state of the marine environment in the Celtic Seas"* be developed with the long-term goals:

- To build partnerships between scientists, policy makers and sea users that help to develop a shared understanding of the environment.
- Develop an understanding of where data collected by sea users can support monitoring for MSFD descriptors.
- To establish a robust network of sea users (large and small organisations) who have the capacity (finance, skills & technology) to effectively collect data/information to enable us to build our understanding of the state of the Celtic Seas.
- Ensure that this is embedded into the formal systems for monitoring.

The Celtic Seas Partnership project finishes in early 2017 and a desire to see practical outcomes from the project was expressed at the second round of Country Workshops in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Wales, England and France. The workshop and preceding scoping work were a result of this and aims to assist and enable stakeholders to develop legacy projects from the Celtic Seas Partnership work.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide a space where key players could come together to discuss how they could work collaboratively and agree how to work to a common purpose and identify next steps.

The workshop was loosely facilitated by the Celtic Seas Partnership to help guide participants through the discussions they felt they needed to have to progress together in this area of work.

2. Account of Sessions

2.1   Identification of a shared Goal

Discussions on the day very quickly demonstrated that the attendees had direct experience of data gaps constraining either management or their own activities in their respective sectors.

There was a consensus that fishery stakeholders have a role to play in addressing some of these data gaps and a recognition that the fishing industry was keen to do so.

In order to establish the common ground between sectors an exercise to produce a "shared goal" was undertaken. The discussions between the group reinforced the need for a strategic approach identified in the scoping exercise that preceded the workshop.

The group achieved a consensus for a shared goal:

"***A strategy to make industry collected data scientifically credible and salient to inform policy and its implementation***"

2.2 Group Identity and Agreement

It was thought that if the group was to take ownership of the goal and work to develop a stakeholder data collection strategy that the group identity needed to be defined and its core principles agreed.

It was proposed that the group develop and sign a Statement of intent outlining its shared goal and core principles. This statement of intent would then provide an organizational endorsement of purpose to work towards the development of a fishery stakeholder data collection strategy.

The attendees present represented a wide range of sectors including fishing industry representatives, environmental NGOs, individual experts, Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, Defra and scientists. The difficulty and potential time scales for statutory bodies to officially sign up to or commit to a concordat was highlighted.

It was suggested that individuals from these organisations could sign on their own account and promote the strategy to colleagues in the interim. An additional suggestion was that the statutory bodies could join the group as "observers and advisors" in the interim.

A number of names for the group were suggested including The Clifton Group, The Fishery Stakeholder Data Strategy Group, and Fishing4Data but a final name was not decided upon.

The group identity therefore is:

A partnership between the fishing industry, eNGOs, scientists and individual experts from statutory bodies

2.3 Presentations

Presentations were given during the workshop and Power-point files will be distributed alongside this report.

2.3.1 Fisheries Stakeholder Data Collection (scoping exercise). Andy Woolmer, Salacia Marine/Celtic Seas Partnership

Andy gave an overview of the key data and information gaps that are currently constraining evidence based stock assessment, effective fisheries and conservation management, and are or have the potential to impact fishing businesses.

This scene setting presentation illustrated with examples of these gaps and where previous collaborative projects had set out to address them highlighting the potential capacity of the fishing industry to play a role in data collection.

The presentation ended with the overarching issues that had arisen from the scoping exercise:

- Need for a strategic approach/roadmap and coordination of delivery
- A need for common data standards and methodologies – across all information types
- Need for a formal route from data collection to use in management
- Issues around data management and ownership
- The need for a business case support data collection in the long-term

2.3.2 Marine data management - with a focus on fisheries data. Gaynor Evans, Data Scientist, British Oceanographic Data Centre

Gaynor provided the group with an overview of marine data management with the intention of helping develop a shared understanding of the issues around both collection, management and usage.

The role of marine data centres was highlighted and their role and function with focus on fisheries related data both nationally and internationally.

A lively discussion around the use of "Bronze" data ensued with a debate about levels of information is required to make at management decision and the tension between absolute precision and resolution.

2.3.3 Data Collection Protocol Guideline Project (Fishing into the Future. Jim Masters, Chief Executive, Fishing in to the Future

This organisation has been consulting with the UK fishing since 2013 about how to improve data collection by fishermen, resulting in a project they are currently delivering called the Fishermen: Science Interface Programme. Together with project partners Cefas, they are working to develop a set of high-level data collection protocol guidelines that will enable consistent, high-quality and usable data to be collected by fishermen from all sectors. These guidelines are intended to help those involved in industry data collection programmes to plan and implement effective projects, where effectiveness is measured in terms of the utility and uptake of the data for relevant applications.

The protocol guidelines will be developed, tested and refined through a series of focused, multi-stakeholder technical workshops throughout 2016. The first workshop will draw on a sub-set of this larger Celtic Seas Partnership group, augmented by key organisations and disciplines that will bring specific expertise. Subsequent workshops on this theme will broaden engagement to the wider Celtic Seas Partnership group and other stakeholders as required. The final set of practical set of data collection protocols will then be subject to wider consultation and scrutiny at a later stage.

Fishing into the Future is also looking to contribute to the development of a strategic approach to the issues of data collection by fishermen as captured in the Statement of Intent, and hopes to work in partnership with the Celtic Seas Partnership project on these broader issues.

For further information on the project being delivered by Fishing into the Future please read their Briefing Paper on this subject (distributed with this report), or contact them directly.

2.4 Barriers to Delivery

In order to identify barriers to achieving the development of a strategy and implementation a series of small group discussions were facilitated. This enabled the group to develop a shared understanding of the various cultural, policy and practical barriers existing in each sector. In an attempt to rationalise the individual barriers identified by the groups they have been tabularised and grouped into themes below (Tables 1&2).

2.4.1 Barriers to strategy development

The barriers to achieving the shared goal of strategy development have been grouped into 5 themes (see Table 1);

- High level Policy and Organisational Barriers
- Approach and Methods
- Resource Considerations
- Intra-group Relationships
- Shared Vision and Understanding

High level policy and organisational barriers identified by the groups related to a perception that higher levels of government, government bodies and even science are not sufficiently solution or delivery focused. These comments relate to a lack of high level policies that fail to translate to practical actions on the ground. There may be cultural challenges with some organisations to stakeholder data collection and there was a suggestion that there are not sufficient incentives to change these standpoints.

The shared goal of a Celtic Seas/UK &ROI wide strategy may face barriers related to the devolved administrations should they choose to act independently.

Approach and methodological barriers were those aspects that could prevent a strategy from being successfully developed by the group through a failure to provide clarity of purpose and therefore leading to a strategy that did not translate into tangible on-the-ground actions. There was a strong feeling in the group that the strategy has to be focused on the delivery of change and not simply a high level paper exercise.

Resource considerations fell into two categories - financial and organisational. The development of a strategy will require staff time and expertise which require funding. This can only reasonably be done on the behalf of the group if an organisation can act as a facilitator providing secretariat and admin support for contracts and finances. Funding may be available via a number of routes and the group were asked to inform the Celtic Seas Partnership of opportunities.

Intra-group relationships relate to the tensions that exist between fishing industry and eNGOs, and the willingness of organisations or projects to work as a collective. Despite examples where fruitful collaborations have taken place in the past, the relationship between the fishing industry and eNGOs is often conflictual and characterised by a feeling of distrust. However, it was clear at the workshop that there was a willingness from both fishing industry organisations and eNGOs to work together recognising the mutual advantages conferred.

> *Silo mentality*
>
> *Silo mentality is mind-set that occurs in some organizations or groups who do not want to share knowledge with or acknowledge other individuals working in the same field. A silo mentality can result in duplication, wasted resources, missed opportunities and prevent progress.*

Beyond the fishery/eNGO relationships the risk that organisational, project and/or policy silos exist and will prevent collaborative working to achieve the goal of an overarching strategy to develop and implement stakeholder data collection. This is a key issue that should be acknowledged when taking strategy development forward and approaches to address this risk considered.

Shared Vision and Understanding relates to ensuring that the group shares an understanding and a commitment to the common goal. The workshop identified and agreed a goal which encompasses the sectorial drivers of addressing fisheries, conservation and scientific data shortfalls. This goal and the terms of reference for the group need to be clear and unequivocal in order that both group member and their constituent members can understand and can subscribe to.

A key point raised by members during this exercise is the strategy needs to be delivery focused if buy-in is to be achieved and maintained. Those organizations that operate "on the ground" measure performance and success in tangible change and actions.

2.4.2 Barriers to strategy implementation

The barriers to implementation of a future strategy i.e. seeing it translated into actions have been grouped into 4 themes (see Table 2);

- Cultural or Policy
- Technical and Capacity
- Resourcing
- Trust and Relationships

Cultural or Policy barriers encompass a series of perceived barriers in both inter-sector relationships e.g. between fishers and policy/management, and internal cultures within sectors or organisations. An example of the latter was highlighted during the workshop; SNCB technical staff view stakeholder information as insufficiently precise for use in reporting whereas the conservation management advisors viewed it as adequate to inform management. Clearly these barriers need to be addressed, probably through coordinated work packages, if stakeholder data is to be used to address data gaps in this context.

The wider shifts in culture and policy related to inter-organisational/sector relationships will require initiatives beyond technical projects and studies, although these will help underpin confidence in the approach.

Affecting high level policy changes will require a collective voice; a strength of the group especially with the lobbying experience that some members can bring.

Technical and Capacity barriers are likely to be the most obvious obstacle to implementation. Discussions suggested that if fishery stakeholders are to play a role in addressing the key data gaps then the methodology for addressing each gap needs to be developed, reviewed and standardised from vessel-to-scientist-to-management. A number of the attendees cited examples of their involvement in projects or where they had collected data the ultimately did not result in any tangible change or where the information was simply not used. Implementation of a strategy may therefore require a period of coordinated technical project work to produce a framework or toolbox for stakeholder data collection.

Beyond the technical barriers there were perceived capacity barriers in terms of skills and expertise both within the fishing industry but also within the statutory bodies. Fishers are highly skilled in working at sea with unique local knowledge but lack the formal scientific or technical skills that may be necessary for data collection. A series of technological tools and solutions were highlighted at the workshop that may address some of these and quite clearly many can be addressed via training which an example was also highlighted.

The perceived lack of expertise within the statutory bodies is something that was voiced by some of the attendees. This seemed to be related to specific administrations and organisations. These capacity shortfalls within management or regulatory bodies requires some further clarification, but the barrier is a real one; if the staff required to make a decision based upon data and evidence provided does not know what to do with it.

Resourcing was probably the most commonly voiced potential barrier to implementation. There may be a perception that stakeholder data collection can be done "on the cheap" but despite the potential cost savings gained in collection, any data collection programme does need to be adequately resourced. Discussions highlighted that support will be required at the different levels throughout the data collection – data management – analysis framework. This is an aspect that needs to be understood if expectations are to be managed and resources identified/allocated.

Trust and Relationships barriers were touched upon above in discussing the Intra-group relationships. In the context of implementation the trust and relationship issues were wider and discussions focused on issues of data confidentiality and usage, securing and maintaining buy-in and confidence across sectors, and wider communication issues particularly around potentially negative counter-productive negative media stories and campaigns.

Data confidentiality was voiced as a concern from a number of attendees and particularly fishing industry representatives. Some data such as high resolution Vessel Monitoring Data and catch composition data may be highly commercially sensitive such concerns need to be addressed in a data collection framework. These issues have been successfully addressed in existing fisheries data collection systems e.g. EU VMS and E-logs, so procedures do already exist to build upon.

Beyond the commercial sensitivities there were concerns around fisher collected data used for purposes other than originally intended with negative consequences. These concerns were voiced in relation to MPAs designation resulting in fishing restrictions in particular.

These underlying trust issues were reflected in comments made in relation to public perception of the fishing industry and the industry's perception of eNGOs that it was thought stem from a negative media narrative of fishing and conservation interactions. This is an area that relationship building may need to take place at all levels within respective sectors in trust and buy-in to be built.

There were a number of comments concerning how science and technical advice, and policy, are communicated both between different bodies and to the fishing industry and wider public.

Table 1: Barriers that could prevent or confound the development of a strategy

Theme	Barriers to Strategy Development
High level policy and organisational barriers	- International agreement (between administrations) - Commitment to solutions and delivery (Governmental, statutory bodies, science) - No change incentive - Socio-economic incentives (?) - Projects are finite with no connection to policy change therefore lack of industry support to engage
Approach and methodological	- Momentum - Concrete action points - Clarity of purpose - Translation of high level objective into actions
Resource considerations	- Resources - Funding - Funding for industry to participate - No coordinating body
Intra-group relationships	- Relationships - Trust in each other - Perceived policy silos - Personal interests need to be put aside - Project silos - Industry buy-in
Shared vision and understanding	- Lack of understanding of the benefits of partnership – what is the larger thing it will deliver? - Want something real…. Is a strategy real? (Needs to be delivery focused) - Unsure of the incentives for change - Industry buy-in

Table 2: Barriers that could prevent or confound the implementation of a strategy or actions outlined within a strategy

Theme	Barriers to Strategy Development
Cultural or Policy	• Politics. Risk based mentality, not creative or delivery focused. No interest • Cultural effect of Agency staff – scientists • Political will to use industry data • Accessing the right people who make decisions • (Fishermen) Willing to give data, but data not trusted by assessors • Government capacity to deliver and assess against policy • Cultural stigma and management structure work against collaboration • Burden of evidence on fishers but no support to collect it – thresholds • Lack of commitment from National Stat agencies and end users to industry data • The relationship between management/policy and fishers is increasing but the gaps between science and fishers is decreasing • Different languages science vrs fishers • Lack of clear guidance from government about gaps and opportunities • Political changes
Technical and Capacity	• Barrier is not having correct data gathering and sharing process • Data set – not full fleet level but incentives to do so are not there • Need to make sure data collected is credible at right level e.g. UK scale to influence EU policy • Time series requirements of data collection – 5 years data collection not always adaptable enough for fisheries management • Having data collection principles that all trust so confident in data • The information need to be wanted and used. • Staff in regulatory and management bodies have variable levels experience and expertise • (Need for) Science-based and highly valued evidence system • Lack of formal / routine flow of data / data structure for data collection • Science: quality, experience, relationships, local knowledge, purpose/relevance, use.
Resourcing	• Cost of assessing data and time needed to assess • Resources: funding, expertise, equipment, use/analysis, capacity, investment in technology
Trust and Relationships	• Commercial confidentiality – need data agreements • Unclear management objectives, what will data be used for? E.g. MPAs • Trust in release and use of data • Data misuse (trust) • Trust in data sharing – what will it be used for • Wider buy-in, and maintain that buy-in • Expectation management, collecting now does not always mean action straight away • Social acceptance: legitimacy and perception change • Communication: how to communicate science / policy and between different bodies • Bad narrative, perception of fishers in the public and media • Previous bad experiences between groups i.e. Cardigan Bay (fishing industry and eNGOs)

3. Next Steps

3.1   Draft letter of intent/Concordat

As agreed at the workshop, the Celtic Seas Partnership will produce a draft text for a letter of intent or concordat representing an organizational endorsement of purpose to work towards the development of a fishery stakeholder data collection strategy. This draft will be distributed to the attendees for comment with the intention that a final agreed version can be produced.

This letter will enshrine the core objectives and principles of the group underpinning the development of a shared strategy.

Time scale: April 2016 distribute draft with an aim of final draft by June 2016

3.2   Gap and Capacity Mapping

The Celtic Seas Partnership, through BODC, has some resource available to carry out a short-term project to support the development of a strategy. A suggestion was made at the workshop that a gap mapping exercise could be undertaken to map key data gaps within the fishery and conservation management structure to technical and resource capacities within the fishing industry. It was thought that this exercise will provide clarity and direction for the strategy direction and become a reference point in focusing efforts in project development under a strategy.

It has subsequently been highlighted that a "capacity audit" of the bodies and stakeholders throughout the data collection-to-management decision framework would be valuable to enable structural changes if implementation of a strategy is to take place; the group need to know where to apply resources/lobby and what for. This may be included in order that these capacity gaps can be considered in strategy development.

Time scale: Scope of work agreed May 2016 and delivery by August 2016

3.3   Strategy Development Project

Development of the strategy will require resourcing both for animation, delivery and for further group meetings.

Early discussions had highlighted the Seafish Strategic Industry Fund as a potential route for funding but this fund will no longer be opening in 2016. However, other funding sources have been identified and will be targeted to provide animation and meeting costs.

We request that the group members make us aware of other funding opportunities as they arise.

Time scale: Draft scope June 2016 for submission by deadline (likely to be July 2016)

3.4   Second Meeting

The Celtic Seas Partnership has resources for a second meeting to progress and inform strategy development. Although much of the above can be achieved remotely there is a need for group discussion if we are to achieve a consensus and build relationships. We intend to organise opportunities for further discussions to support the strategy development work stream in the near future and are currently trying to identify the best way of doing this to enable engagement.

Further discussions will include:

1. Defining Strategic Actions and Partnerships needed to take forward the Fishing4Data Industry Strategy (the next in the series of the Celtic Seas Partnership process)
2. Working towards a set of Protocol Guidelines for industry-generated data collection (Fishing into the Future - the first detailed technical workshop aiming to devise over-arching protocols for industry-generated data)

Time scale: July/August 2016 TBC

4. Administration and ownership

We would like the group's feedback on the future administration and ownership of this work.

We believe that it is important that the ownership for this work is developed and maintained by the group and this has been echoed by several of the group members.

Short term: Our suggestion in the short term is for the Celtic Seas Partnership to continue to facilitate and support the group up to December 2016 with a view to this role being handed over to another party (agreed by the group) when appropriate.

Medium term: In this initial phase ideally we would like to identify an organisation that can support the group's activity by holding and administering the funds and that enables the group to make the decisions about how any funds should be used and how the work is carried out. Some organisations have already expressed a willingness to do this on the understanding that this is a primarily a supporting rather than directing role. There is a general feeling that this organisation should be from the fishing sector.

Long term: Once the 'consortium' has been established (concordat) and the strategy developed the roles of the group may be reviewed. We envisage that the group will be the vehicle to promote the strategy and become a catalyst for implementation initiatives.

CELTIC SEAS PARTNERSHIP

To find out more and to get involved visit

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