

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING PILOT PROJECT

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The UK Government is in favour of implementing marine spatial planning for UK waters if practicable. This paper will present findings from a research project commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which was designed to research options for developing, implementing and managing marine spatial planning in UK coastal and offshore waters through a pilot study for the Irish Sea.

The study comprised two main elements:

- A review of available literature, evidence and experiences to date on how marine spatial planning and related initiatives have been developed and applied at the national level and overseas, together with more detailed consideration of those experiences and ideas that are most relevant to UK waters; and
- A pilot project that simulates the development of a marine spatial plan at the UK regional sea level, including nested plans at the sub-regional sea level, that involve the full range of stakeholders and includes their views, objectives and concerns in the development of the plan. An initial Regulatory Impact Assessment has also been undertaken as part of the pilot project.

The paper will focus on the recommendations that have been derived from the project including all stages of the plan production process, the content of a plan and subsequent stages of implementation. The potential benefits and drawbacks of marine spatial planning will also be considered.