

Laying the groundwork for marine policy

NERC's marine research has underpinned significant developments in marine policies. We respond to consultations and enquiries from UK, EU and devolved governments on, for example, government consultations or Parliamentary enquiries on a range of issues including the future of the IPCC, invasive species, carbon capture and storage, and the UK and Scottish Marine Acts.



NERC's rigorous, high-quality climate science informs both policy-makers and marine industry. As well as work for the IPCC, a major examination of the vulnerability of the UK coastline and adjacent seas to climate change contributed to the 2009 UK Climate Projections (UKCP09).

Partners: UK and devolved governments, EU, overseas regulators, National Oceanography Centre, British Antarctic Survey

The collaboration

NERC's main current role in UK and European marine science policy is towards implementing and achieving the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. There is also follow-up work resulting from the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) and Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in particular the establishment of a coherent network of marine protected areas, and the gradual roll-out of marine spatial planning in UK waters.

Overseas governments, institutions and scientists are showing interest in the UK's leading example, and NERC is sharing its experiences with both regulator and industrial overseas enquirers. In responding collectively to consultations, NERC has informed major marine policy developments internationally, including the establishment of a protected area in British Indian Ocean Territory, the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and implementation of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

NERC is part of the Marine Science Co-ordination Committee secretariat, which was established

in response to the House of Commons Select Committee Report 'Investigating the Oceans'. It produced the first UK Marine Science Strategy in 2010. Ongoing work is exploring how to better align UK marine science activities, evaluate long-term monitoring programmes and improve science communication to the public and policy-makers.

The NERC marine science community made a major contribution to the new Marine and Coastal Access Act and Scottish Marine Act, which will transform the management and protection of the seas around the British Isles. The Act created the Marine Management Organisation which will oversee marine planning, licensing and conservation in England, and will rely in large part on NERC marine science.

BAS research contributed to the designation of the world's first entirely 'high seas' marine protected area (MPA). The South Orkney Islands southern shelf MPA will enable scientists to monitor the effects of human activities and preserve vulnerable sea life in the Southern Ocean.

Contact: innovation@nerc.ac.uk