

**OPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF NORTHERN
IRELAND'S COASTAL ZONE:**

**SCOPING STUDY
EXAMINING THE POTENTIAL
ESTABLISHMENT OF A
NORTHERN IRELAND COASTAL FORUM**

A Report To The Department Of Environment

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the potential for the formation of a Coastal Forum for Northern Ireland in the context of recent national, international and European developments in the field of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

The report indicates that while several UK initiatives have precipitated changes in coastal management, the European Commission's demonstration programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management and its resultant recommendation regarding the implementation of ICZM provide the impetus for integration of management activities at the coastline. A number of Northern Ireland policy documents already identify the need for such integration.

The European Commission Recommendation identifies eight principles for successful ICZM. These are:

- ◆ A broad holistic perspective (thematic & geographic)
- ◆ A long term perspective
- ◆ Adaptive management during a gradual process
- ◆ Reflecting local specificity
- ◆ Working with natural processes
- ◆ Participatory Planning
- ◆ Support and involvement of all relevant administrative bodies
- ◆ Use of a combination of instruments

A review of existing UK Coastal Fora in England, Wales and Scotland yielded several practical lessons regarding the success of such bodies in contributing to integration of coastal management activity. These relate to the structure, remit and frequency of meeting of the various bodies. A number of recommendations in this report stem from this review.

A questionnaire survey and subsequent seminar involving organisations with an identified interest in the Northern Ireland coastal zone revealed a high level of support for the formation of a Northern Ireland Coastal Forum and several opinions were expressed regarding the structure and remit of such a body.

On the basis of the current policy context, review of existing coastal fora and opinions of local managers, several recommendations are provided in this report regarding the structure, remit and funding of a Coastal Forum. These suggest *inter alia* that:

- a Northern Ireland Coastal Forum should be established
- it should be composed of all representative bodies with an interest in the management of the Northern Ireland Coast,
- it should fulfil an advisory role to government,
- it should be staffed by a project officer reporting to the Forum,
- a secretariat should be provided,
- it should be chaired by an independent (non-governmental) representative,
- funding should be provided by Northern Ireland government at inter- or supra-departmental level

2. Terms of Reference

The objectives of the scoping study are:

- ◆ to review the remit for a Northern Ireland coastal forum in the light of developments since 1995 and the experiences of coastal fora in the rest of the UK;
- ◆ to advise on membership of such a group;
- ◆ to make recommendations on the structure and working practices of the forum; and
- ◆ to determine the working budget needed for the forum and potential sources of funding.

This report aims to:

- ◆ Provide the **background** as to the purpose and objective of the scoping study;
- ◆ Outline **current thinking** on **Coastal Zone Management** by summarising the key concepts;
- ◆ Provide an **overview** of current **UK Coastal Fora** including their history, current status and future development;
- ◆ Analyze the **strengths and weaknesses** of the fora and make preliminary recommendations as to which elements of these fora could be transposed to a Northern Ireland Forum.
- ◆ **Examine coastal management in the Republic of Ireland** and establish any common issues.
- ◆ **Summarise the results of the Stakeholder Interests Survey**. A questionnaire was issued to the main perceived stakeholders in the coastal and marine environment in Northern Ireland. Following extraction and analysis of the information presented in the questionnaires the information has been summarised in this report.
- ◆ **Stakeholder Interests Survey Analysis**. A workshop was held in February 2002 to discuss the results of the stakeholder survey. The aim was to gather further opinion as to the remit, structure and organisation of the proposed Forum.
- ◆ **Review of legislation, responsibilities and relationships** between stakeholders with regard to coastal management in Northern Ireland.
- ◆ **Identification of potential funding sources**.

3. Background

3.1. Integrated Coastal Zone Management

The coastal zone is a national asset that is utilised by citizens and visitors for a wide variety of purposes ranging from habitation through recreation to fishing and waste disposal. Six main spheres of human activity are recognised at the coast (Ketchum, 1972). These are:

- Residential and Recreational
- Industrial and Commercial
- Waste Disposal
- Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fishing
- Nature Conservation
- Military and Strategic

This diversity of activity is typically regulated by a variety of government bodies each with responsibility for a specific range of human activities. Furthermore, each regulating body operates at specific spatial levels that range from the monitoring of international agreements, through implementation of national policy to local and site-level initiatives (Table 1). This fragmentation of responsibility with regard to the coastline, at a time of increasing pressure for its exploitation, has been identified as partially responsible for continuing degradation of the World's coasts as human pressure for their exploitation continues to rise.

Table 1. Levels of Coastal Management and associated responsibilities (after Kay & Alder, 1999)

Level of Management (scale)	Key role
European	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transboundary issues• Creating a common purpose
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative arrangements• Setting national objectives and principles• Focus on priorities
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translating international and national goals and objectives to local outcomes• Aggregate local needs and issues to formulate national and international priorities and programmes
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community involvement in setting management options
Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing well defined problems• Tangible results of all planning levels can be seen

Coastal management and control in Northern Ireland is presently sectorally based, and various issues, at the same location, are often dealt with in isolation by different bodies. This can lead to delay, duplication of effort, lack of co-ordination and considerable confusion. There is also a lack of integration between local, regional and National levels of management.

To illustrate the complexity of statutory coastal zone management, since 1997 several pieces of legislation with relevance to the coastal zone of Northern Ireland have been enacted. These include 6 European Community Directives, 44 UK Statutory instruments, 16 UK Public General Acts, 43

Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland and 2 Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The implementation and administration of these acts rests with a wide variety of Northern Ireland and UK bodies.

The concept of *Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (ICZM) recognises the need to adopt a strategic approach to coastal planning and management by using a cross-sector and cross-interest approach. ICZM thus seeks to provide a mechanism for the co-ordination of management at the coast. It aims to deliver benefits to coastal areas by improving local decision-making processes, increasing awareness of issues, setting priorities and ensuring better co-operation and understanding amongst managing bodies and the wider community.

In achieving ICZM, coast-specific management structures have been established in some countries. In these instances, governance of most aspects of the coastal zone is undertaken by a central agency. For example, in the United States coastal management is the responsibility of the Office for Coastal Zone Management which administers the Coastal Zone Management Act. An alternative means of achieving integration is to establish mechanisms to improve communication and co-ordination between existing, sectorally-based management bodies. The latter option has been favoured by the UK government and has led to the establishment of several coastal groupings (commonly known as fora), at national, regional and local levels.

3.2. Pre-Devolution Developments in Coastal Zone Management

Prominence to the concept of coastal zone planning and management within UK government was given as a result of the House of Commons Environment Select Committee Inquiry on Coastal Zone Planning and Protection in 1992. It produced a number of recommendations aimed at achieving a closer co-ordination of coastal policy. The government, in response, gave further support to the concept and practice of coastal zone management by issuing two consultation papers '*Development Below Low Water Mark*' and '*Managing the Coast – A Review of Coastal Management Plans*'. Both explored ways of achieving good practice in the regulation of development and in the planning and management of recreation at the coast.

In addition, to promote integration of management activity in the coastal zone, a number of bodies (Coastal fora) have been established in England, Scotland and Wales (see below)

In 1994 the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC), a statutory advisory committee to Northern Ireland government on nature and landscape conservation issued the paper '*Coastal Zone Management Policy*' which proposed the gathering of more information on the coastal zone, the establishment of a Northern Ireland Coastal Zone Management Committee and the setting up of additional area based management structures. Existing structures at that time were the Belfast Harbour Forum (since dissolved) and the Strangford Lough Management Committee.

In 1995 Environment Service (now known as Environment and Heritage Service), on behalf of Government, published a consultation paper '*Delivering Coastal Zone Management in Northern Ireland*'. This highlighted the need for increased co-ordination on issues such as landscape, coastal planning and development, coastal water quality, coastal defence, coastal processes, sustainable fishing, and coastal recreation and tourism. The recommendations concurred with those the CNCC made in its 1994 paper including the establishment of a coastal zone forum.

Government in 1995 considered that a Coastal Forum should be established in Northern Ireland. The benefits of a Northern Ireland Coastal Forum, as envisaged in the 1995 paper, would be as follows:

- ◆ to promote understanding of the natural and man-made processes which influence the coastal zone;
- ◆ build on existing liaison arrangements at regional and local level, in particular with local management committees;
- ◆ advise on the development of a Northern Ireland coastal zone strategy as a basis for integrated management; and
- ◆ liaise with other relevant initiatives elsewhere in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

It was proposed that the Forum's main task would be to advise government on the development of a coastal zone strategy. The aim of the strategy would be to identify objectives and priorities for the conservation, management and sustainable development of the coastal zone. However, relatively little thought was given at the time to the precise responsibilities, terms of reference and costs of the body, or to its relationship with statutory and other bodies. No additional resources were earmarked to support the establishment or subsequent work of the Forum. The setting up of the Forum was deferred in the run up to devolution.

3.3. European Initiatives in ICZM

At European level, the need for a strategy to better manage coastal resources has long been recognised. Recognition of the continued deterioration of the European coastline led to the European Commission's Demonstration Programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management launched in 1996 (EC, 1999). This programme was based on around 35 local and regional projects to demonstrate the application of ICZM in a variety of settings. It aimed to provide concrete technical information about the factors and mechanisms, which either encourage or discourage sustainable management of coastal zones and to stimulate a broad debate and exchange of information among the various actors involved in the planning, management or use of European coastal zones. Projects were worked at and led by agencies operating across the full range of administrative levels while reflecting different spatial scales. The UK has been closely involved in the EC Demonstration Programme; seven of the 35 projects were in the UK.

The lessons and principles derived from the experiences of the programme were presented in two EC documents released in April 1999 ('Towards a European Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Strategy', and 'Lessons from the European Commission's Demonstration programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)'). The main parties and interests involved in the use and management of coastal zones were then invited to examine these documents and to comment on possible future action at European, national, regional and local level. In brief, eight principles for successful ICZM were identified (EC, 1999):

- ◆ A broad holistic perspective (thematic & geographic)
- ◆ A long term perspective
- ◆ Adaptive management during a gradual process
- ◆ Reflecting local specificity
- ◆ Working with natural processes
- ◆ Participatory Planning
- ◆ Support and involvement of all relevant administrative bodies
- ◆ Use of a combination of instruments

The European Commission have proposed a recommendation that member States should commit to a common vision for their coastal zones by adopting the principles of good coastal management as identified in the Commission's Demonstration programme on Integrated Coastal Zone management (ICZM). This asks Member States to undertake: a national stock taking exercise of legislation, institutions and actors involved in the management of the coastal zone and, based on this, to develop a national strategy (or strategies) to implement Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The proposal also states that Member States should enter into dialogue with neighbouring countries to establish mechanism for better co-ordination of cross-border issues.

A European Parliament and Council Recommendation concerning the Implementation of ICZM in Europe arose from the Demonstration Programme (EC, 2000a,b). This aims to encourage Member States to undertake a national stocktaking of legislation, institutions and actors involved in the management of the coastal zone and, based on this, to develop a national strategy (or strategies) to implement ICZM. The European Parliament reached agreement on the Recommendation in July 2001 and the Environment Council unanimously adopted a Common Position on 29 October.

The proposed ICZM strategies aim to increase the coherence between the many national, regional and local regulations and initiatives affecting coastal zones. In addition to clarifying the role that the administrative authorities in each country with responsibility for coastal zone management have to play, these strategies should also identify measures to promote bottom-up initiatives and public participation in coastal zone management. The Recommendation, which was adopted on 30th May 2002, requires Member States to report to the Commission on implementation by the end of February 2006.

The ICZM strategies should:

- ◆ Identify the roles of the different administrative actors;
- ◆ identify the appropriate mix of instruments for implementation;
- ◆ develop or maintain policies which address both the marine and terrestrial areas of coastal zones together;
- ◆ identify measures to promote bottom-up initiatives and public participation;
- ◆ identify mechanisms to ensure full and co-ordinated implementation and application of EU legislation and policies that have an impact on coastal areas;
- ◆ identify sources of durable financing for ICZM initiatives;
- ◆ include adequate systems for monitoring and diffusing information to the public about their coastal zone; and
- ◆ determine how appropriate national training and education programmes can support implementation of ICZM principles.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) propose that a steering group, with no executive powers, to discuss how best to take forward the Recommendation is set up comprising representatives from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A joint conference is also planned for November 2002.

The DEFRA document 'Safeguarding Our Seas' published in 2002 welcomes the EU recommendation and sets out a strategy for marine conservation and sustainable development of the marine environment, including coastal zones in the UK. In this document, government sets out its intention to set the regulatory framework for specific coastal issues whilst encouraging a more flexible approach to integrated management of coastal areas. A commitment is given to the development by 2006 of a fully integrated set of strategies for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

3.4. Post-Devolution Northern Ireland Policy Developments

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 '*Shaping Our Future*' (DRD, 2000) aims to guide the future development of Northern Ireland to 2025. The recurring theme of the strategy is sustainability which embraces the protection and management of resources including the coastal fringe. The RDS is a framework that '*seeks to create the infrastructure for competitive and sustainable regional development*'. To achieve this will require government departments, agencies, local authorities, business, the voluntary and community sectors, and individuals to work together within a broad development agenda to benefit the region as a whole. Collaboration through local strategic partnerships will bring together local, area and sub-regional strategies and will provide increased opportunities for people to participate in local decision making processes. The Strategic Planning Guideline relating to the coast aims to '*To protect and manage the Northern Ireland Coastline*'.

Local Agenda 21 is a comprehensive programme of action needed throughout the world to achieve a sustainable pattern of development for the next century recognising the need to reconcile development with environmental concerns. In the UK, local authorities have been charged with producing a Local

Agenda 21 (LA 21) programme for their area. LA 21 involves local people in local action; it has three parts - people, economy and the environment encouraging public participation through education, consultation and consensus building. The forum could act as a focus for the work of LA 21 throughout NI by making a significant contribution to delivering LA 21 at a local level. Local plans initiated by local fora could assist by making its actions and activities responsive to the needs of the local community.

The Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme promotes the concept of Agenda 21 generally and helps catalyse intersectoral collaboration across local authorities, central government, NGO's, the business community and the local community. It helps local groups develop their own action plans for improving quality of life in their own area and aims,

“to ensure sustainable development principles and resulting good practice becomes ingrained in Northern Ireland culture”.

Many NI councils with a coastal remit have taken the initiative of developing local sustainable development plans and these could be co-ordinated across the Province within a structure such as a national forum.

In 2000 the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group published *'Biodiversity in Northern Ireland - Recommendations to Government for a Biodiversity Strategy'* (NIBG, 2000). The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy published in September 2002 states that consideration of the establishment of a coastal forum is an important aspect of the DOE's current workplan.

Northern Ireland Ministers (DOE, DRD, DARD) have acknowledged the potential value of a coastal forum and have asked for work to be carried out on the possible remit and operation of such a body: hence this report.

3.5. Republic of Ireland Initiatives

The European Commission recommendations highlight the need for cross-border collaboration in ICZM strategies. In this regard, initiatives are underway in the Republic of Ireland to establish a framework for ICZM and in terms of the EU Water Framework Directive, which requires the preparation of river basin plans including estuaries and coastal waters, some of the basins may span the NI-ROI border.

A draft policy for ICZM in Ireland published in 1997 (BSM, 1997) remains a discussion document but has not been adopted as official policy. The Department of Marine and Natural Resources (DMNR) addresses a number of coastal issues and in particular in its 2000 Annual Report (DMNR, 2000) lists one of the objectives of its Coastal Zone Administration Unit as 'to develop a National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy'. A variety of coastal issues are also addressed by the DMNR under its marine leisure, aquaculture policy and marine environment units and several strategies have been published in these areas.

The Irish Department of the Environment and Local Government published in 2001, a paper in coastal zone management (DELG, 2001) that identified the urgent need for a Coastal Zone Management policy and in particular the need for co-operation between local authorities.

4. EXISTING UK COASTAL FORA

The concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management gained acceptance in the UK in the early 1990's. A number of key reports were produced, the most significant of which was that of the House of Commons Select Committee on Coastal Zone Protection and Planning (House of Commons Environment Committee, 1992). A number of initiatives followed this including the establishment of national coastal fora in England (1995), Scotland (1996), and Wales (1997). The major characteristics of these initiatives are outlined below and lessons learned from their experiences are summarised.

4.1. The Scottish Coastal Forum

Background

A public consultation paper "Scotland's Coasts - a Discussion Paper" (Scottish Office, 1996) was published in March 1996. The main proposals outlined in the paper were:

- The encouragement of local coastal fora to take forward integrated management of local coastal areas;
- The creation of a Scottish Coastal Forum, bringing together representatives of bodies with a major interest in, or responsibility for, coastal issues to provide a national context for the work of local fora ; and
- The preparation of a series of national guidance and advice publications, drawing upon the work and experience of the Scottish Coastal Forum and of the local coastal fora.

The proposals in the consultation paper received widespread support and the Scottish Coastal Forum (SCF) was formed by Government, under independent Chairmanship, in November 1996. The remit given by the then Minister was to:

- Encourage the formation of local coastal fora providing a point of co-ordination for these as well as acting as a central point for their views and concerns;
- Encourage debate on coastal issues at national level;
- Seek opportunities for better co-ordination of national frameworks and policies; consider the need for further advice and guidance; and assist in its preparation; and
- Gather information about approaches to coastal management and disseminate good practice to local fora.

The SCF held its first meeting in 1997. The members revised the original remit to produce four Terms of Reference as follows:

- Encourage a voluntary, sustainable and holistic approach to the management of Scotland's Coasts through the formation of local coastal fora;
- Act as the national focus for coastal issues and co-ordinate the dissemination of advice on best practice;
- Reflect views and aspirations of local fora for the coast of Scotland and guide a national policy framework within which local initiatives can operate; and
- Advise Government in the development of coastal policies for Scotland.

From September 1999 the SCF has had a dedicated Coastal Project Officer (PO), who acts as the day to day authority on the SCF's Work Programme.

Role of the Scottish Coastal Forum

The SCF is not a statutory body but it does have an advisory function to the Scottish Executive (SE). The role of the SCF is determined by the Terms of Reference as named above but the SCF also:

- advises SE officials and the Minister on both an informal and formal basis;
- responds to consultation documents on a formal level;
- undertakes research on behalf of forum members to the benefit of all members;

- provides an information service on coastal issues for members;
- encourages information sharing on an informal level; and
- acts as a line of communication, through the PO, for local coastal fora.

The SCF has a Work Programme agreed by all the members and the steering group. The views expressed by the SCF do not necessarily reflect government policy and the SCF does not have to conform to the Government line.

Geographical Limit

An early meeting of the SCF adopted the geographical remit of the SCF as extending from 1-km inland to 12-nm territorial sea limit. This functions as a working definition but it is seen as a flexible guideline, which could be adapted, if the issue warranted it.

Funding

The Scottish Executive (SE) maintains an annual base fund for SCF work in the region of £12-15K, which is used to cover the cost of meetings, expenses, the conference and other administration. The SE also provides accommodation and administrative support for the PO.

The SE also provides part of one officer's time (approximately 5-10 %) to act as the secretariat for the SCF. That officer attends the forum meetings to take minutes and also provides some administrative support for the project officer (PO). The SCF can also put a case to the SE for further funds.

Funding for the PO post (overall about £40K per annum) comes from four main financial contributors. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) provides Grant aid of 50%, with £3.5k from the Crown Estate and £500 from the National Trust for Scotland. The SE contributes the remainder of the PO costs in terms of accommodation and any cash shortfall. This was agreed for an initial 3-year term.

Annual running costs of the Scottish Coastal Forum are therefore approximately £55K.

Research

There is no dedicated research budget for the SCF. However, the SCF has access through the SE Central Research Unit to funds that are bid for annually. A difficulty of this approach identified by Forum staff is anticipating what research may be required over 12 months in advance. Research proposals are put to competitive tender following the usual SE processes. The SCF PO usually has responsibility for project management of any research. Some projects have attracted joint funds from SCF members.

Membership

Membership is based on which organisations are likely to best represent coastal interests and were invited to attend by the SE. The current membership draws representation from the following national (Scottish) organisations: Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, British Ports Association, Confederation of British Industry (Scotland), CoastNET, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Crown Estate, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Maritime & Coastguard Agency, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Executive, SEPA, Scottish Fishermen's Federation, SNH, Scottish Quality Salmon, Sport Scotland, Scottish Environment LINK, Visit Scotland. Views are welcome from non-members also. It should be borne in mind that whilst certain organisations such as central government will be obliged to adhere strictly to the corporate line, others who represent large and dispersed groups may be reflecting a more personal view. The SE provides observers.

Steering group

The steering group is composed of the four main funding partners although other members may attend if they wish. It manages the PO and the Work Programme (through a more detailed Action Plan) and is accountable to the Chair. The Steering Group is updated regarding progress between the main meetings of the SCF.

Chair

The SE appoints a Chair to the forum. It was decided that an Independent Chair appointment would be the most suitable, as it would enable the Forum to be more inclusive. A Government representative acting as Chair may be able to provide a better voice within government, however, to sustain the integrity of the SCF it was felt that an independent Chair was more appropriate. The present Chair was recommended by several members and appointed by the SCF. The Chair is considered to play a key role in the continued success of the SCF in that they have been found to be knowledgeable, committed and enthusiastic to the SCF's work.

Project Officer

The SCF's first PO is on a three-year secondment from the Crown Estate. The PO was appointed to take forward the SCF's work by providing technical support and delivering completed work arising from the Work Programme.

The PO manages the day to day work of the forum, producing a bi-monthly newsletter, maintaining the Website, managing research contracts on behalf of the forum, liaising with the Scottish Executive and Forum members and drafting the forum response to consultation papers. The PO is situated within the SE building, which facilitates good levels of liaison and communication with other SE officials. He is line managed by the SE for administrative purposes, but is effectively managed by the Steering Group as it oversees the Project Officer's work between SCF meetings and is accountable to the SCF through the Chair.

The PO's primary responsibilities are as follows:

- Attend meetings of the SCF and its subgroups and liaise with the Secretariat, provided by the Scottish Executive, to ensure that action points are delivered.
- Draft technical papers, consultation responses and prepare briefings on maritime topics in line with SCF priorities.
- Co-ordinate progress and work programmes of ICZM projects around Scotland's coasts assisting with their funding arrangements, report to the SCF, prepare best practice guidance and ensure an efficient exchange of information between initiatives.
- Manage research projects and consultancy contracts for larger tasks required by the SCF.
- Prepare training seminars and workshops for SCF members and ICZM practitioners.
- Maintain awareness of developments in ICZM in UK, Europe and more widely as required, representing the SCF and reporting to it.
- Contribute to the development of a Scottish coastal strategy.
- Collate and maintain a coastal network of contacts in SCF member and partner organisations.
- Raise awareness of the importance of coastal environments and good practice in their management.
- Review Work Programme annually, Action Plan monthly and monitor outputs.

These terms of reference are reviewed annually and at other times when deemed appropriate.

SCF meetings

The SCF meets three times a year at various venues around Scotland and representatives of local Fora or, in their absence, Local Authority officers are encouraged to attend in addition to the COSLA representative. Three meetings a year is thought to be adequate as there is a limit to the time the representatives can spare to attend. The availability of a wider range of alternative representatives would help to ensure that all member organisations are routinely represented.

Work Programme

Sub groups, who meet more frequently than the main group, formulate ideas, which are then drafted into the Work Programme by the PO. Currently there are two: the first developing the coastal strategy and the second examining the next steps in considering the establishment of a Coastal Management Trust. The Work Programme is also translated into a detailed Action Plan for the PO. The PO routinely keeps both the steering group and main forum updated on progress at the SCF meetings. The Work Programme is annually reviewed and any member may submit suggestions for further work at any time.

The Scottish Executive

The SE is not itself a member of the SCF since it is the main beneficiary of the advice given, but officials are invited and encouraged to attend when discussions are relevant to their work. Executive Officials outlined a number of clear benefits that the SCF provided. These are as follows:

- It undertakes/provides a great deal of assistance on, the jobs/work that the coastal policy unit in the Executive would have to complete, with or without the forum.
- It helps them to interact with areas of the Executive that would otherwise be hard to engage with.
- It raises the profile of coastal/maritime issues in Scotland, and provides a ready pool of commercial, scientific and environmental expertise to inform the Executive.
- It helps the Executive with obligations for sustainable development.

Evaluation of the Work of the SCF

A number of strengths and weaknesses of the SCF were identified by its own staff and are outlined here. It is the PO's and Secretariat's view that coastal management is not a short term but a progressive long-term process. It involves changing people's attitudes and the way organisations operate. Significant changes could take 20-30 years. It was also stressed that it is unrealistic to expect the SCF to be able to form a 'consensus' opinion at all times but members are able to discuss views on issues openly. In this way the views of member organisations are known in advance of any formal consultation. It can take a while for members to feel confident enough to express their own views but once convinced the SCF is a useful platform for debate.

Although there is no system to formally evaluate progress that the SCF has made there are several informal indicators:

- the number of partners involved
- attendance at meetings and involvement in sub groups
- the number and quality of published reports and papers
- newsletter with a circulation of 3-400
- widely praised and well maintained Website (www.scotland.gov.uk/environment/coastalforum) which has raised the SCF's profile.

Reasons for these successes can be attributed to:

- the enthusiasm of the members
- committed Chair
- the appointment of the PO
- group is small and focused
- drafting of the work programme
- clear identity of the SCF including the logo

On the negative side, several factors were believed to require attention.

- there is still considered to be something of a credibility gap to senior civil servants who are yet to be convinced why they should take on board the advice of the SCF.
- responding to consultations is hindered by a lack of time. The PO can only respond broadly, summarising those collective views he receives from individual members. The SCF must debate an issue before forming a line.
- a lack of secure funding for the Forum and PO.

Two significant proposals emanating from the work of the SCF are described below:

Coastal Strategy

In 1997 the SCF identified the need for a coastal strategy to include long term management objectives for the management of Scotland's coasts. In summer 2000 a 'coastal strategy sub group' was set up to undertake preparatory work for the development of such a strategy. The methodology proposed by the sub-group was endorsed by SCF and in May 2001 phase 1 "Analysis, Forecasting, And Visioning By Sector" of the process began. This involved a number of task groups preparing position statements on specific issues. These statements will be drawn together into a coherent strategy prior to public consultation and subsequent refinement of the strategy.

Two documents "A Strategy for Scotland's Coasts and Inshore Waters: Statement of Intent" (SCF, 2001) and "Methodology for preparing A Strategy for Scotland's Coasts and Inshore Waters" (SCF 2000) set out the Statement of Intent behind the process and detail of the methodology to be followed. As the process develops updates will be given in the newsletter "Coastline Scotland".

The strategy provides support for the development of a common vision for the management of Scotland's coastal and resources and the consolidation of the achievements of the coastal partnerships to date.

A Coastal Management Trust for Scotland

An underlying premise of the development of Local Coastal Fora (LCF) and the SCF in Scotland has been the Government's wish for a voluntary approach to coastal management. As a result, LCFs have relied on a variety of short-term funding sources, which include significant initial pump-priming funds from SNH; partner contributions from both private and public sectors; sponsorship for specific projects; and in some cases EU LIFE funds. LCFs have not enjoyed any medium-term funding security; often compete against each other for funds and sponsorship; and now have to identify new ways of fund raising. The ideal funding scenario, of all LCFs partners including a provision for partnership funding in their core financial programmes, is regarded as an unlikely goal.

To assist both the SCF and the SE identify the most effective means of ensuring the sustainable continuation of ICZM in Scotland a feasibility study (Roberts, 2001) was commissioned in 2000 to make recommendations on the formation, role, funding and management of a Coastal Management Trust; and to set out an action plan to take this initiative forward through SCF and the SE.

The study identified a clear strategic role and remit for a Scottish Coastal Management Trust to support LCF and ICZM initiatives in Scotland, and an appropriate mission and vision for such a Trust has been devised along with achievable strategic and operating objectives. The prime role for a new Trust would be to create a dedicated capital endowment fund which can then, through professional investment managers, generate a perpetual income stream to fund the core costs and project activities of the LCF throughout Scotland together with other national ICZM initiatives. The study recommended that the SE and SCF further develop the concept of a Scottish Coastal Management Trust.

The Future for the SCF

The PO and Secretariat see this as:

- With a tradition in the Civil service of five yearly review it is likely that the SCF may enter this process soon.
- If so, it is hoped that the continued problem of secure funding may be settled.
- It is also thought that there is a potential for more sub groups to be formed.
- Membership could undergo a review. Expansion is a possibility as there are some omissions. It is felt that the membership could include more industrial and land-owning interests.
- A long-term list of future research should be identified.
- More partners should be contributing to funding. 99% of present funding is public money.

4.2. Partnership of Coastal Interests in Wales

Background

The Welsh Office established the Wales Coastal Forum (WCF) in 1997 with the following objectives:

- facilitating relationships and working partnerships,
- providing a platform for debate; and
- to provide analysis and advice on relevant coastal and maritime issues.

Key outputs of the WCF are seen as:

- the sharing of information and best practice,
- the fostering of positive working relationships and
- the publication of “The Coast and Inshore Waters of Wales - an Inheritance Document for the National Assembly of Wales.” (WCF, 1999).

However, by early 2001 the WCF had not met since 1999. Members of the WCF and government officials are in agreement that although the original forum facilitated networking and information dissemination, it was not structured or managed in a manner that facilitated the provision of such advice to the Welsh Office. This was largely ascribed to the lack of a central forum officer to facilitate communication and drive, and the lack of a structured work programme for the forum.

Review of the Wales Coastal Forum

The Countryside Access and Coastal Policy Unit of the Countryside Division within the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) has been seeking ways to improve the co-ordination of the Assembly's coastal responsibilities.

A scoping study (Uttley, 2001a,b) was commissioned to consider whether a new coastal partnership building on the work of the former Wales Coastal Forum would be useful. The study, which examined both internal and external interests, revealed a strong measure of support for a new coastal partnership with:

- a structured work programme,
- a dedicated partnership officer based in the Wales National Assembly,
- an independent Chair; and
- a remit to provide integrated advice.

There was also found to be general agreement between officials and the membership of the original Wales Coastal Forum as to the main coastal issues relevant to the Assembly and which ideally should be addressed by a multi-disciplinary approach. It was agreed that a new coastal partnership could assist the Assembly at a strategic level to tackle some of these issues.

The study concluded that:

- The overarching function of a maritime and coastal partnership would be to advise the Assembly on the sustainable development, protection and use of the Welsh Sea and coast.
- In an environment where it is often difficult to decide between competing interests, and where strategic approaches are needed, an advisory partnership, in addition to, and assisting an internal working group, both serviced by a dedicated partnership officer could advise the National Assembly and help it to make sustainable decisions.

Following this study, the consensus view of the members of the then WCF, and the officials within the Assembly, was that a new maritime and coastal partnership should concentrate its efforts on a number of specific topics and issues. The aim would be to deliver specific outputs for each one, to advise the NAW, the membership and the wider maritime and coastal constituency in Wales. It is thought that a

partnership would not only provide opportunities for the NAW but it would also provide the members with a unique opportunity to network and build further partnerships.

Role of the New Coastal Partnership

In April 2001 it was recommended to the Welsh Minister for Environment that the proposals set out in the scoping document be implemented. In July 2001 an informal meeting, chaired by the Minister and based on the membership of the WCF, was held at which the scoping study, suggested next steps, discussion of key issues for the Partnership's agenda; draft terms of reference, structure and funding were discussed.

The Draft Terms of Reference are :

- To review, and provide strategic advice to the National Assembly for Wales and its partners on the management and use of the Welsh coast and maritime waters, so as to progress their sustainable development and to support the effective delivery of the Assembly's sustainable development scheme.
- To seek opportunities for better co-ordination of national and local policies for the coastal areas of Wales; consider the need for further advice and guidance; and assist in its preparation;
- To facilitate the building of partnerships; to encourage the exchange of information and good practice; and to act as a forum for debate for commercial, public and voluntary bodies with a stake in the management of the coasts of Wales.

These are currently being amended to take into account the discussions that took place in the first informal meeting.

Geographical Limit

The geographical limit is to be agreed by the Partnership but the scoping document recommended that it include the inland and seaward extent of the Maritime Zone.

Chair

Nearly all the members of the original Wales Coastal Forum favoured a recognised and respected independent chair. Experience in Scotland shows that the commitment required to chair a forum of this kind is extensive. It is essential that it be chaired in an efficient but impartial manner, and by a chair that can offer continuity of attendance, but also with sufficient time to attend meetings and engage with a large constituency beyond the actual forum. Members were asked to forward suggestions for suitable candidates at the July meeting.

Secretariat

The function of the secretariat should be to provide administrative support to the partnership. They would organise meeting venues, take minutes at the meetings and distribute these efficiently afterwards. They would provide support for any additional internal administration required. It was proposed and agreed at the first meeting that the NAW would provide secretariat for the partnership.

Partnership (Project) Officer

This is a role that was not performed or undertaken for the previous Wales Coastal Forum, but was regarded as the essential missing ingredient that partially prevented the forum from reaching its full potential.

The scoping study recognised that an advisory forum must be able to facilitate communication between members, and also communicate well with those it is tasked with advising. A partnership officer could undertake this role and act as the information carrier and liaison between the partnership and the NAW.

The PO would also assist the Assembly and the partnership to structure and take forward a work programme.

Funding

Funding is likely to be a mixture of NAW and partner funding. The NAW has committed to providing the secretariat for the forum from within Countryside Division. Joint funding was deemed by the scoping study to be desirable to cover the cost of a project officer. Potential contributors who indicated willingness to provide financial support included the Crown Estate Commissioners, Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales. Annual running costs have been estimated at £30 K per year.

Meetings

The following recommendations were made regarding the frequency of meetings

- The partnership should meet at least twice a year, with sub groups formed as appropriate to take forward specific issues.
- Continuous non-attendance would result in a review of membership of a particular organisation.
- The partnership should also establish an e-mail network to facilitate dissemination of newsletters, papers and; making documents available for distribution on the web site.
- NAW feels that the meeting should also be rotated around the country to cover north, mid and south Wales. Meetings should be held at least twice a year plus 1 conference type meeting every other year.

Membership

A draft membership list was presented in the scoping document. Recommendations included the following

- All member organisations should nominate a permanent member and an alternate member.
- Any member organisation not attending for 3 consecutive meetings have their membership reviewed.
- To ensure that a future forum is representative of all maritime and coastal interests in Wales, it would assist if the original WCF membership were augmented by the inclusion of representatives from archaeological and academic spheres. Other interests may be invited depending on the subject under discussion. It was also considered that the social interest of the coast in Wales should be an essential feature of a partnership, since the majority of the populations in Wales live on the coast.
- Recreational users increasingly form a major part of the maritime scene in Wales, and their interests should be adequately represented.
- Representatives from the yachting and angling community should be invited onto the partnership.
- All the members would be unpaid.
- Officials from UK government departments with responsibilities that extend to Wales could also be invited to attend and contribute.

Workplan

A common theme in many of the comments from both officials and members was the need for a work plan. To maximise the added value from the partnership, it was recommended that this work plan be agreed as soon as possible after formation. Sub-working groups should also be nominated to take forward specific work as and when required.

Internal Maritime and Coastal Working Group

An internal working group within the NAW is under consideration that will specifically identify and examine cross cutting maritime and coastal issues. An internal maritime and coastal working group could prepare and input work into the partnership and to receive the advice from it. It would also allow

various Divisions to disseminate information and advice to each other and facilitate a level of joint action and approach that is especially crucial for the sea and the coast. The partnership officer could also service this group.

Work Programme

A work programme should be developed and agreed upon by the members and the NAW. The consensus view of the members of the Wales Coastal Forum, and the Officials within the Assembly, was that a new maritime and coastal partnership should concentrate its efforts on a number of specific topics and issues. The aim would be to deliver specific outputs for each one, to advise the Assembly, the membership and the wider maritime and coastal constituency in Wales.

A paper outlining possible issues for attention was given to the first meeting of the WCMP in July.

Evaluation

It is too early to evaluate the work of the new WCMP, however, the weaknesses of the former Welsh Coastal Forum and lessons from this contained within the scoping document provide several valuable indicators of the factors important for success.

4. 3. The English Coastal Forum

Background

The English Coastal Forum (ECF) was set up in 1995 to promote understanding of coastal zone management and disseminate good practice. It does not have a formal advisory function but is convened and chaired by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Meetings are made up of invited representatives of interested groups ranging from English Nature to the Association of Sea Fisheries Committees to the British Canoe Union. Over eighty groups attended the last meeting in October 2000 in Colchester but the feedback was disappointing. Some delegates felt that the ECF had lost its focus and needed a new work programme to ensure that meetings did not just become a networking opportunity.

DEFRA acts as Secretariat and Chair. At present costs are limited to the cost of convening an annual conference (approximately £20K) and the publication costs of the annual newsletter for all UK coastal fora 'Wavelength' (£3k).

Evaluation

No formal evaluation of the English Coastal Forum has been conducted, however, a number of opinions reported below suggest that it has not been particularly effective.

In its current state the ECF is considered by members to be too large a group to ever reach consensus on the more complex issues. However, it is felt that the ECF could provide value as a way of getting a feel for issues and to get an early indication of member organisations concerns before a formal consultation procedure is started.

The Local Government Association's (LGA) Special Interest Group on Coastal Issues (SIG) comprising elected members from coastal local authorities has set itself the task of preparing a "Coastal Strategy to develop a vision and priorities for one of England's most important assets - the coast. Its principal aim is: "...to establish improved governance, management and community well-being to ensure that the UK has the best managed coast in Europe, and to identify appropriate and sustainable funding strategies to support this aim."

The LGA in its discussion paper 'On the Edge' (LGA, 1999) argues that the "*English Coastal Forum should have a greater role in co-ordinating and advising on policy and be chaired independently*". It goes further and calls for a new "UK Coastal Commission" established under ministerial direction and tasked with developing an UK strategy.

For at least the next five years, the EC Recommendations will be a driving force for progress on ICZM at all levels: locally, regionally and nationally. In order to produce the national stocktaking and strategy there will need to be wide reaching consultation and a mechanism to enable this discussion. A new, more focused, forum could provide a practical way of involving stakeholders in the process.

DEFRA believes the EC Recommendation on ICZM provides an opportunity to engage in more active promotion of ICZM. Some of the issues that may need to be considered in consultation with stakeholders include:

- ◆ The format and structure of the national stocktaking?
- ◆ What are the priorities for improving the existing policy framework?
- ◆ How do the regions fit in?
- ◆ How can we help local partnerships share best practice?
- ◆ How can we improve public awareness and participation?

With so many different parties involved in the coastal zone the need for a mechanism to try and identify the key issues is recognised. A smaller, more effective stakeholder group, which could act as a sounding board, could potentially provide this mechanism.

4.4. Analysis of UK Fora

The following table summarises the main elements of the UK fora.

Table 2 Summary of Organisation of UK Fora

	Scotland	Wales	England
Name	Scottish Coastal Forum	Coastal and Maritime Partnership for Wales *	English Coastal Forum
Date established	1996	1997	1995
Membership	Approx. 25	Approx. 35	Approx. 80
Chair	Yes, Independent.	To be appointed. Independent.	Yes. Government.
Meetings	3 times year	At least 2 times a year	Once
Project Officer	Yes	Yes	No
Secretariat	Yes, part-time.	Yes, part-time.	Yes, part-time.
Work Programme	Yes	Drafted	No
Website	Yes	No	No
Funding*	@ 55K	@30K	@23K at present. Options for new Forum range 10-100K

* - excludes research budget, secretariat and overhead costs

On the basis of this review of existing UK coastal fora several potential advantages of such bodies may be identified

These can be summarised as:

- ◆ Providing a sustainable and holistic approach to coastal management
- ◆ Establishing a regional policy framework for local CZM initiatives
- ◆ Providing a regional framework for coastal issues and encouraging their debate
- ◆ Co-ordinating regional and local coastal policies
- ◆ Acting as a conduit for the dissemination of good practice and the sharing of information
- ◆ Fostering positive working relationships
- ◆ Contributing to the delivery of sustainable development objectives
- ◆ Exposing sectors to the concerns of others in a more informal setting than a specific consultation exercise.
- ◆ Acting as an additional resource to Assembly Ministers and officials in order to gain an overview of specific issues.
- ◆ Acting as a conduit to gather and disseminate the views of members of the public.

5. Questionnaire Survey and Consultation

5.1. Introduction

A questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent to 74 organisations with an identified remit in CZM in Northern Ireland. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather opinion regarding the need for, remit, structure, operational aspects of, and benefits of a future Northern Ireland Coastal Forum.

Thirty four respondents completed and returned questionnaires which represents a 46% return. Of the 34 respondents 33% were NGOs. A further 26% were local authorities and 23% were statutory bodies. Responses from the remaining categories (UK Government, NI Government, Industry and Academia) constituted between 5 and 12% each.

The Questionnaire results were presented as an aid to discussion at a seminar attended by 25 representatives of organisations with a coastal remit. The seminar provided an opportunity for additional views to be presented and for additional comments to be recorded.

The main findings of the survey are outlined below

5.2. The need for a coastal forum

88% of respondents believed that there is a need for a Northern Ireland Coastal Forum. 6% believed there is not a need and a further 6% did not know. Open comments offered in response to this question by those favouring a coastal forum are listed below.

- Need for integrated approach to coastal management (built and natural)
- Only when all interested parties are assembled can management and conservation to most effective
- Extensive NI coastline/continuum of habitat – great need for such a forum
- Would improve communication between government and diverse group of stakeholders
- Natural and cultural heritage of coastline tremendous – needs managed appropriately
- Current management uncoordinated and legislation in place needs rationalisation -lacks integrated sustainable approach and strategic planning
- Local authorities and beach managers need consistency in management
- Must comprise cross-section of user/interest groups, chaired and secretariat NOT from environment sector
- Should be the key facility for tourism, leisure, industry, ports and harbours
- Provided it has balanced membership, correct remit and is not too ambitious
- Coastal zone is our prime asset, needs new approach
- Such a forum is useful in other parts of UK, why not NI?
- It would be well placed, through combined expertise, to advise government on issues
- Possible vehicle for cross-border co-operation on CZM issues

Those respondents who did not believe a coastal forum was necessary, commented: (a) that structures are already in place, (i.e. DoE, Planning Service) and rather than a forum there is a need for appropriate legislation and a coastal policy; and (b) past experience indicates that the diversity of views as would be represented in a forum creates chaos. They thus tend to be no more than ‘talking shops’.

5.3. Potential Benefits

A number of perceived benefits were identified by respondents. These relate to benefits to Northern Ireland government, local authorities, industry, the public and others. Comments offered are outlined below.

Benefits to Northern Ireland Government

1. Value for money in developing policy
2. Opportunities for consultation and dissemination of information / information basis for decision making

3. Focussed attention on coast-coherent, holistic advice
4. Advice from stakeholders
5. Appropriate advisory role in creation of legislation/management of NI coastal zone
6. Identification and consideration of relevant coastal issues and policies aimed at designing an ICZM strategy for NI
7. Elevate marine and coastal concerns on governmental agendas
8. Commission studies
9. Disseminate information
10. Two-way communication between govt and all interested parties
11. Coordination of policy / effort / interdepartmental programmes / communication
12. Increase real tourism potential
13. Enhanced credibility / Delivery on conservation objectives
14. Democratic deficit is reduced by 'people' involvement
15. Instant performance indicator, highlighting concerns at local and regional levels
16. Accountability

Benefits to Local authorities

1. Value for money in developing policy
2. Consultation opportunities
3. Appreciation of the importance of the coast
4. Co-ordination of policy / effort
5. Appropriate advisory role in creation of legislation / management of NI coastal zone / availability of expert advice
6. Sharing ideas / good practice / best practice
7. Increase real tourism potential and improve image
8. Apparent raising of their profile in issues of planning

Benefits to Industry

1. Environmental awareness
2. Access to expert advice, information, clear guidance for acceptable use of coastal resource / informed decision making, (e.g. especially for tourism and leisure industry, also fishing)
3. Pro-active approach to use of coast and resource use
4. More coherent protection and management of inshore areas, the result of understanding all the issues involved in coastal zone management and role of industry in it
5. Building trust and relationships with other stakeholders
6. Promote socio-economic advantages of best practice ICZM
7. Prioritising issues
8. Conflict resolution
9. Increase investment awareness
10. Involvement could promote environment-friendly reputation
11. Ensure interests of industry are considered, protected and promoted.
12. Activities regulated and accountable
13. Strategic long-term planning

Benefits to the public

1. Environmental awareness
2. Access to and flow of information / informed decision making, (e.g. re. recreation and education)
3. Encourage understanding and hence utilisation of coastline
4. Environmental protection
5. Improved planning regulation. Forum could be the vehicle through which current piecemeal development issues are addressed.
6. Improved water quality
7. Increased confidence in a coordinated approach to CZM/Reassurance that the coastal resource is being well managed

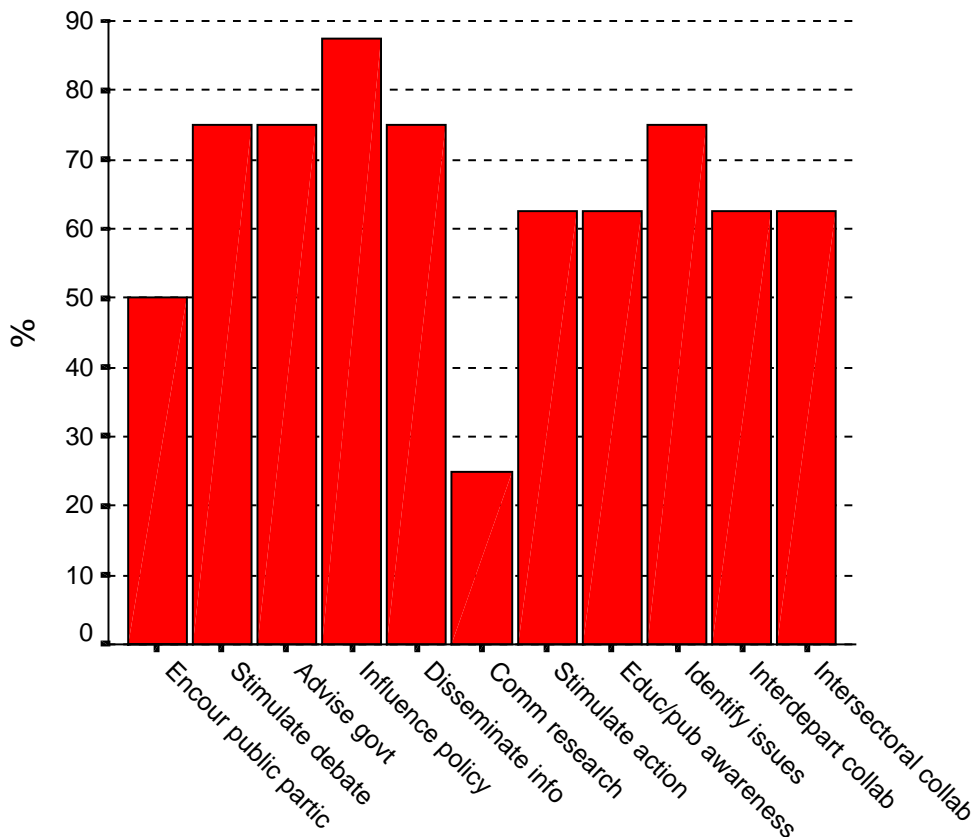
8. Better quality of life /environment /home holidays /tourist amenities /coastal access /beach quality
9. With increased tourist potential could lead to creation of employment opportunities
10. A voice / forum to express concerns/needs

Other benefits

1. Universities – Focussed research
2. Biodiversity – Enhanced protection of wildlife and habitats, etc.
3. Political lobbying, publicity and advertising
4. EU – Forum could provide the mechanism to advance EU’s ICZM strategy for NI
5. Interest groups – provision for participation
6. Single foci to eliminate repetition of work from NGO and pressure sectors
7. Floodwater retention / erosion control / managed retreat / etc. – strategic management of important specifics ...

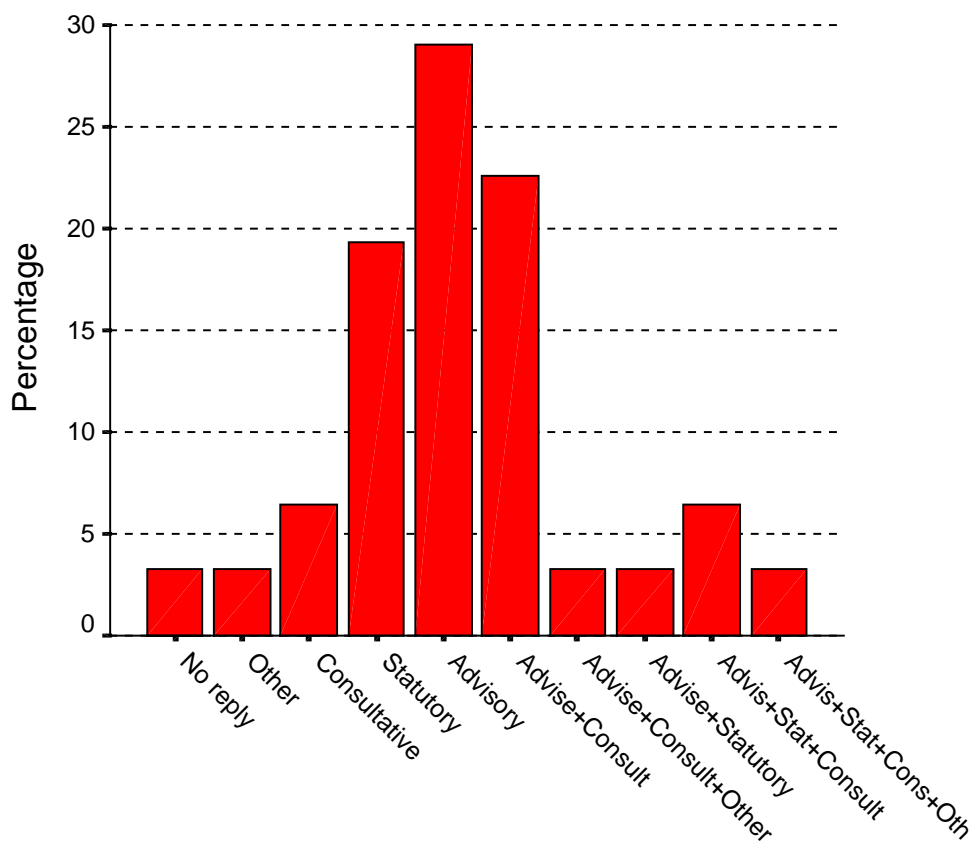
5.4. Remit of a Coastal Forum

Respondents were offered a range of potential roles for a coastal forum and asked to rank them in importance. The most important aspect identified by almost 90% of respondents was to influence policy. This was closely followed by “stimulating debate”, “advising government”, “disseminating information”, and “identifying relevant issues”. However, all of the remaining potential remit areas, i.e. “encouraging public participation”, “stimulating action”, “education and public awareness”, “promoting interdepartmental collaboration”, and “promoting intersectoral collaboration”, were all regarded as important by the majority of respondents.



5.5. Relationship with Northern Ireland Government and Local Authorities

Three options were offered with the freedom to select more than one of the three options. The largest percentage of respondents indicated that a forum should have an advisory relationship with the Northern Ireland government. However, this was closely followed by those who felt it should have both an advisory and consultative relationship. The third most favoured option was that the forum should be a statutory body. A variety of combinations of these three scenarios was selected by small numbers of respondents. Similar findings were uncovered with regard to the relationship of a potential forum to Local Authorities.



5.6. Membership

Membership of a coastal forum as identified by respondents included the following categories: UK Government; NI Government; Statutory Bodies; NGOs/Voluntary Bodies; Industry; and Local Authorities. Almost all of those organisations identified coincide with those listed in Appendix 2.

5.7. Meeting frequency

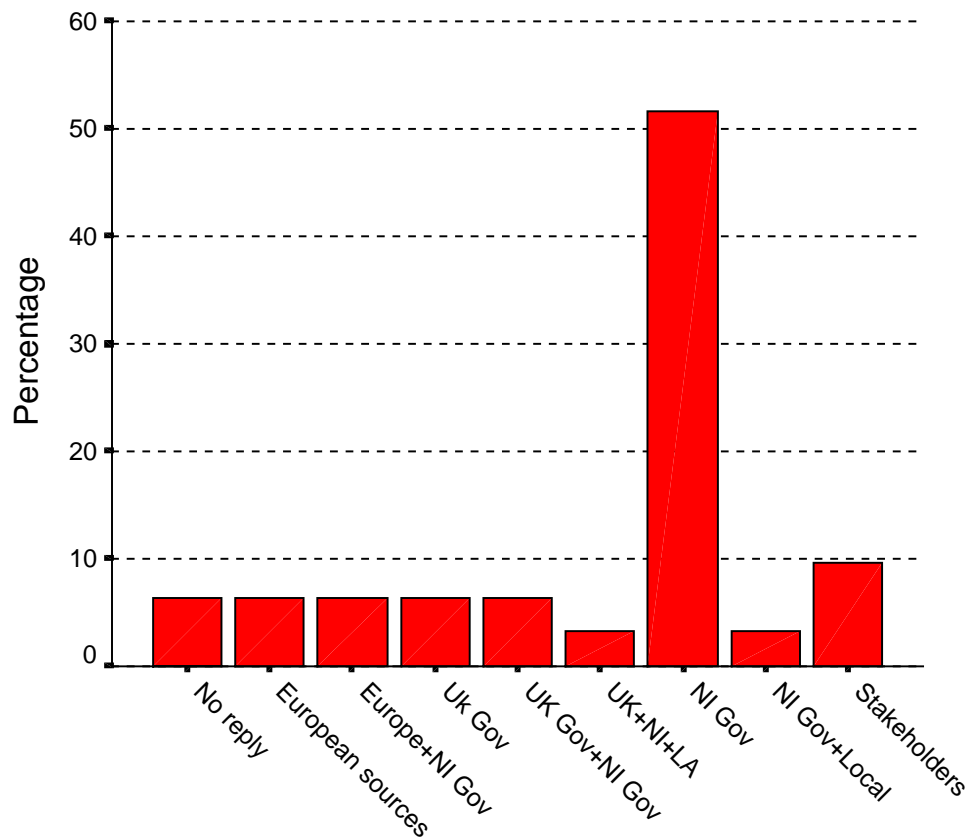
By far the most popular choice among respondents was that a forum should meet quarterly.

5.8. Funding

Over 50% of respondents believed that the Northern Ireland government should fund a coastal forum. No other option attracted more than 9% support. Reasons given for funding responsibility to lie in this area include:

- It is their role/responsibility to achieve sustainable development/CZM & support such a forum
- They are our representatives at a European level and should take responsibility for our coastline
- Executive Programme funds?
- Not one department's responsibility. Financial links must be above departmental control.

- Are in a position to co-ordinate responsibilities of various departments and agencies and can put in place policy and monitoring arrangements
- With DOE to oversee it
- They have responsibility for overall management of the region / Would be a regional body



5.9. Issues that a Coastal Forum might address

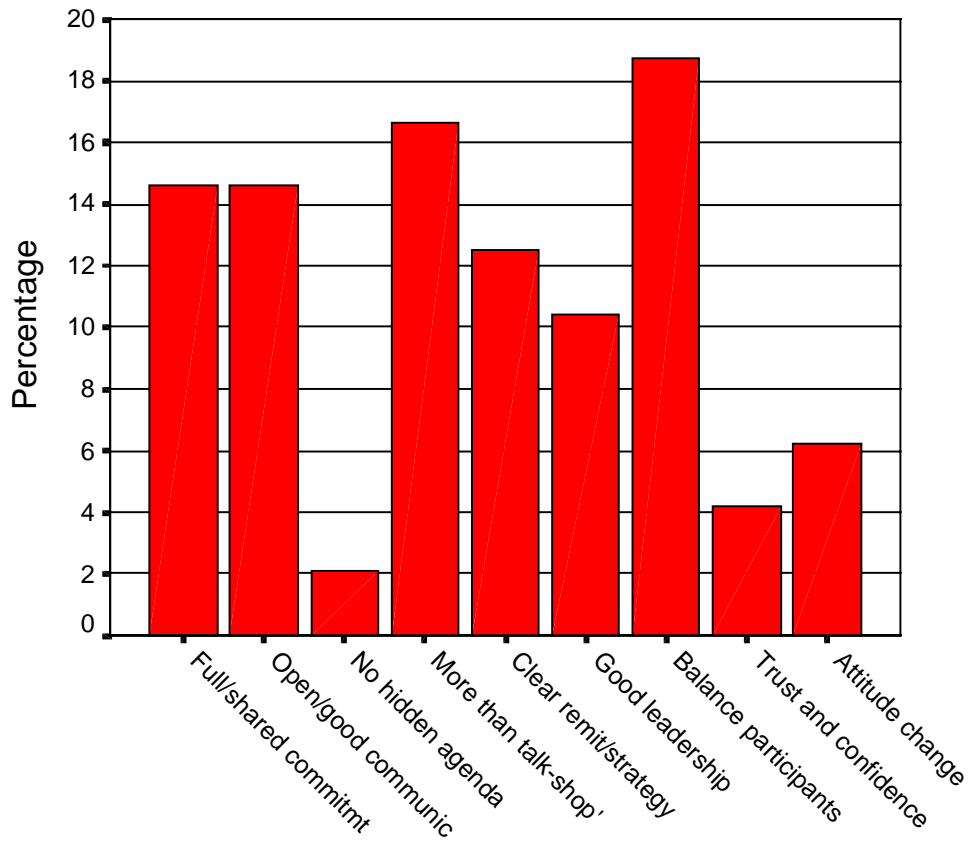
Respondents identified a wide range of issues that a coastal forum might address. The diversity of these issues and the inter-sectoral nature of some may provide evidence for the need for a structure such as a coastal forum. Issues identified are listed below.

- Sand extraction
- Climate issues / coastal erosion / defence / flooding
- Fishing
- Fish farming / aquaculture
- Planning / development issues
- Optimum utilisation of economic resource
- DEFRA Regional Seas Pilot Project
- DEFRA Marine Stewardship Reports
- Conservation/Management v. tourism/recreational use
- Habitat protection / protection of marine and coastal heritage
- Problems associated with access and management
- Raise public awareness / education of public
- Cross-border CZM
- Pollution
- Port Waste Management plans
- Giant's Causeway
- Gocean at Strangford
- Airport extension at Lough Foyle

- Ferry proposals in Carlingford
- Offshore windfarm proposals in Lough Foyle
- Implementation of EU Water Framework Directive in CZ
- Marine SAC Management
- Blue Flag & Seaside Awards / beach safety

5.10 Key to Success

Respondents were asked for suggestions as to what might be the key to success of a coastal forum. A number of suggestions were offered. The most common of which was that the range of participants be balanced. Another widely held view was that the forum should be more than a “talk shop”. Other frequent suggestions related to the need for full and shared commitment, open communication and a clear remit or strategy.



6. Recommendations

On the basis of this review of the context of ICZM, experiences elsewhere in the UK and opinions of representatives of organisations whose remit includes the coast of Northern Ireland, a number of recommendations are presented below with respect to a potential Coastal Forum in Northern Ireland.

REMIT

1. That the Northern Ireland Coastal Forum be established

The creation of a coastal Forum is included as a goal of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and identified as a need in the Regional development Strategy. An overwhelming majority of those consulted during this study also indicated the need for a coastal forum. The recognition in England, Scotland and Wales of the need for a structure for consultation and discussion of coastal issues has seen the establishment of national and regional coastal fora there. Further, the EU recommendation regarding ICZM places an obligation on Member States to co-ordinate activities in the coastal zone. In the context of a lack of coast-specific management structures and government policy to adhere to a sectoral approach to management, a forum provides the opportunity for enhanced integration of sectoral interests. This is also consistent with the recognition of the need for integration of activities within the regional development strategy and biodiversity strategy and with policy laid out in the 'Safeguarding our Seas' document.

2. It is recommended that the Northern Ireland Coastal Forum should have the following remit:

- to advise government in relation to coastal issues;
- to be consulted on government initiatives relevant to the coastline;
- to be a mechanism for sharing of information between members and government;
- to be able to initiate activities and structures deemed necessary for ICZM in Northern Ireland; and
- to contribute to the development of a coastal strategy for Northern Ireland

The advisory and consultative roles of the forum are seen as important means of overcoming the limitations of traditional sectoral approaches to coastal management. In this regard, the forum's ability to facilitate both inter-departmental and government-non-government communication is an important role in achieving ICZM. The ability to begin new initiatives for ICZM is necessary if the forum is to be able to take positive steps rather than being reactive to other initiatives. Such activities might include dissemination of information on good practice, establishment of local initiatives, gathering information etc. The development of a strategy for the management of the Northern Ireland coast might be viewed as an umbrella task within which a number of subordinate tasks could be conducted.

REPRESENTATION

3. The Northern Ireland Coastal Forum should consist of representatives of those organisations with stated interest and/or responsibility for some aspect of the Northern Ireland Coast.

Currently several interest groups, representative groups and statutory bodies exist in NI that have a stake in the coastline. They include development groups, local authorities, port authorities, conservation bodies, advisory groups. A list of organisations or blanket organisations that could represent such interests is given in Appendix 2

4. Representatives of those Northern Ireland government departments with responsibility for coastal activities (DCAL, DTR, DARD, DOE) should be observers at the NI Coastal forum.

The independence of the coastal forum from government is necessary as there may be occasions when its views may differ from official policy of one or more government departments. For this reason, the role of government departments would be in the provision of information regarding initiatives, and in the dissemination of information from and to the Coastal Forum. This structure has been found to be

effective in Scotland and avoids the two-tiered system that characterises the Lough Neagh committee for example, and which has given rise to suspicions between the tiers.

5. The forum may have discussions with representatives of UK government departments regarding aspects of reserved elements of government.

While many aspects of statutory coastal management have been devolved, several are reserved (for example, those related to defence, maritime transport and oil and gas exploration). It is envisaged that from time to time information may be required on these aspects and that UK government departments may seek opinion from the NI Coastal forum on these issues. In order for opinions of the Northern Ireland Coastal Forum to be conveyed to the relevant departments, they should be circulated with Forum documents.

6. The coastal forum may have discussions with representatives of Republic of Ireland Government departments on aspects of Coastal Zone Management in the Republic relevant to Northern Ireland.

The cross-border agency, the Loughs Agency as a member of the Coastal Forum provides a mechanism for sharing information regarding Carlingford and Lough Foyle, however, other issues of coastal management may have a cross-border dimension. These include fishing, marine pollution, implementation of the Water Framework Directive, tourism and leisure etc. Consideration of the cross-border dimension of coastal zone management is explicit in the EU recommendation.

STRUCTURE

7. The Northern Ireland Coastal Forum should have an independent chairman

Experience in other coastal fora suggests that the ability of a chairman to act independently of government is a key element for success. Such a situation would permit the forum to express views freely and to act as a system of checks and balances for government action in the coastal zone. Ideally a chairman should be knowledgeable about coastal issues and ICZM and should not be regarded as partisan.

8. The Northern Ireland Coastal Forum should be staffed by a dedicated project officer

A dedicated coastal officer has been shown to be essential to the effectiveness of a coastal forum. The project officer would carry out the work of the forum, gather information as directed and present necessary documents. The project officer position should be tenable at an independent organisation outside government in order to enhance the independence and link to a specific government department. A tendering process could be used to obtain best value for money in the provision of a project officer outside government.

9. A secretariat should be provided

A secretariat is essential for the efficient operation of the Coastal Forum in arranging meetings, handling formal communication and administration. The location of the secretariat is relatively unimportant. Staff might be allocated from a government department, or employed independently. A secretariat for statutory bodies such as the CNCC, HMC and HBC is based in EHS. A secretariat for the Coastal Forum could be added to this contract.

STRUCTURE AND WORKING PRACTICES

10. The Coastal Forum should meet quarterly

A quarterly meeting was considered sufficiently widely spaced as to not provide an untenable load on members but sufficiently frequent to be able to address issues timeously. Most respondents favoured the quarterly option. This is similar to practice in Scotland where the SCF meets three times a year. The frequency of meetings could be reviewed periodically by the Forum members

11. The coastal Forum should be consulted on all aspects of government policy in relation to the coastline of Northern Ireland

A coastal forum would provide a ready means of gaining a multi-sectoral view of proposed initiatives relevant to the Northern Ireland coast. As such, it would be able to comment on, for example, issues of potential conflict between policies, and to provide considered comment on potential implementation measures. This would not detract from the ability of members to independently provide comment on behalf of the organisations that they represent.

REVIEW OF FORUM WORK

12. The Coastal Forum should undergo regular review.

It is suggested that the forum be reviewed on a five-yearly basis. The review should include (1) an assessment by members and observers of the perceived strengths, weaknesses and utility of the forum, and (2) an independent assessment of the role of the forum in facilitating ICZM in Northern Ireland. The importance of early successes as identified by the SCF would assume greater urgency under such a scenario.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

13. A budget should be provided for the establishment and operation of a coastal forum by Northern Ireland Government

A working budget is necessary for the Forum to operate rather than just meet. The experiences of other UK Coastal Fora indicate the need for action if they are to be effective. The necessary annual budget for the establishment of a coastal forum comprises mainly the costs for a project officer, (salary, accommodation and running expenses), secretariat expenses and costs of meetings and administration. The annual cost is estimated at c. £100,000. Costs incurred in undertaking additional activities might be sought from the programme funds of a variety of government departments involved in the forum. Experiences in other UK Coastal Fora indicate that without sustained funding, much effort is spent by the members on fundraising rather than the work of the forum itself. Sustained funding would also indicate that the forum's work was taken seriously and would enhance its credibility among stakeholders.

The benefits of a coastal forum will accrue to the public in the form of enhanced integration of activities, co-ordination of public policy, sharing of information and improved coastal management practice. The costs of a Coastal Forum should therefore be borne from the public purse. Clearly there are several Northern Ireland Government departments with a sectoral responsibility for the coast. In view of the benefits that may accrue to each department and in order that no single sector be seen to dominate the forum, the costs of operation might be shared between DOE, DCAL, DTI, DRD and DARD. This would render the cost to each department very small.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

A COASTAL FORUM FOR NORTHERN IRELAND?

A number of bodies (coastal fora) have been established for regions in Europe to attempt to introduce cross-sector consultation and participation in coastal management. Presently, government is considering the possible establishment of a coastal forum for Northern Ireland. As an organisation with an identified interest in coastal issues, your views are valued and are being sought on important aspects including, *inter alia*, the need for such a forum, its potential remit, composition, and relevant current issues that might be addressed. This survey is being undertaken on government's behalf by the Coastal Research Group of the University of Ulster, Coleraine. You are invited to respond as fully as possible to the questions posed. Confidentiality of your responses is assured. No comment will be individually attributed. Thank you for your participation.

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO:

Dr. JAG Cooper, Head, Coastal Research Group, University of Ulster, by **11/2/2002 LATEST.**

A. NEED FOR A COASTAL FORUM?

1. **Do you think Northern Ireland needs a coastal forum?** *Please tick only one box.*

i Yes

Please elaborate.

.....
.....
.....
.....

ii No

Please elaborate.

.....
.....

.....
.....
iii Don't know

Please elaborate.

2. **If a forum was to be established, what if any potential benefits do you believe might accrue to the following?**

i N.I. Government?

ii Local Authorities?

iii Industry?

iv The public?

v Other? Please specify

B. THE REMIT OF A COASTAL FORUM

3. **What should be the role of a potential coastal forum?** *Please rate the importance of the following suggested roles using the scale provided.*

	Very important	Important	Marginally important	Totally Unimportant
Encourage public participation				
Stimulate debate				
Advise government				
Influence policy				
Disseminate information				
Commission research				
Stimulate action				
Education/public awareness				
Identify relevant issues				
Promote interdepartmental collaboration				
Promote intersectoral collaboration				

Other/s? Please give details

.....

.....

.....

4. **What relationship should any forum have with Northern Ireland government?**
Please tick one or more boxes.

- i Advisory
- ii Statutory
- iii Consultative
- iv Other? Specify

.....

Comment

.....

.....

5. **What relationship should any forum have with Local Authorities?** *Please tick one or more boxes.*

- i Advisory role
- ii Statutory powers
- iii Consultative
- iv Other? Specify

.....

Comment

.....

.....

.....

C. MEMBERSHIP / REPRESENTATION

6. **Several categories of participant might be involved in a coastal forum. Please identify from the following categories those whom you consider should or should not be involved in a Northern Ireland coastal forum.**

Potential Participants	Should be represented	Should not be represented	Don't know
U.K. Government Departments			
<i>Please name them:</i>			
N.I. Government Departments			
<i>Please name them:</i>			
Other Statutory Bodies			
<i>Please name them:</i>			
Local Authorities			
<i>Please name them:</i>			
NGOs / Voluntary Bodies			
<i>Please name them:</i>			
Industry			
<i>Please name them:</i>			

University Academics			
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Others? Please specify.

.....

D OPERATIONAL ISSUES

7. **To achieve optimum effectiveness, how often should a coastal forum meet?**

- i Monthly
- ii Bi-monthly
- iii Quarterly
- iv Every 6 months
- v Annually
- vi Other? Please specify.

.....

8. **Who do you think should fund such a forum? Please specify.**

.....

9. **Why do you believe the responsibility belongs to the body you specified above?**

.....

E IN CONCLUSION

10. **Can you identify current issues which a coastal forum might have a role in resolving? If yes, please elaborate.**

.....

11. **On the basis of your experience with regard to coastal issues, what do you consider to be the single most important key to the success of any future coastal forum?**

.....

Appendix 2. Organisations with a coastal remit in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Government departments and agencies with a coastal and maritime remit:

- **DOE**

Environmental Policy Division
Environment and Heritage Service
Planning Service

- **DRD**

Regional Planning Division
Roads Service
Water Service
Ports and Airports

- **DARD**

Fisheries Division
Agricultural and Environmental
Sciences Division
Rivers Agency
Countryside Management Division

- **DCAL**

Inland Fisheries

- **DETI**

NI Tourist Board

- **UK government departments and agencies with a coastal and maritime remit including:**

Dept for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
Dept of Trade and Industry
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Ministry of Defence

- **NI Coastal local authorities**

- **Other statutory bodies:**

Loughs Agency
Commissioners of Irish Lights
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Port and Harbour Authorities
Crown Estate Commissioners
Strangford Lough Management Committee
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
Historic Monuments Council
Historic Buildings Council

- **Voluntary bodies :**

National Trust
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Ulster Wildlife Trust
WWF
Tidy NI

Northern Ireland Environment link
Royal Yachting Association
Countryside Access and Activities Network
Fishermens' Organisations
Farming Organisations
BASC
Friends of the Earth
NI2000

- **Industry**

Du Pont
Richardsons Fertilisers
Power Stations
Northern Ireland Seafood Ltd