



Marine Planning Policy Statement Submission

Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities, Trinity College Dublin

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The Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities (TCEH) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Marine Planning Framework Consultation Draft (NMPF), albeit in the unexpected context of a global pandemic. We acknowledge and appreciate the level of engagement to date from the Marine Planning Policy and Development Division and look forward to continuing this engagement in the future.

Key Recommendations

- **Acknowledge the societal upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on how this is shaping/should shape the national approach to planning and managing our marine environment.**
- **Address how the current framing of our marine environment as “Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth”, dominated by market-driven logic, can incorporate and operationalise societal values of solidarity, equity, empathy and care.**
- **Explain why ideological alternatives to the Natural Capital approach (such as the Blue Commons) are not considered in the NMPF, and why the Natural Capital approach has been chosen.**
- **Carry out a gender analysis of the NMPF and commit to implementing SDG 5 (Gender Equality) as an integrated part of the marine planning process on national and regional levels.**
- **Consider the report of the Marine Protected Area Expert Advisory Group and revise the section on Marine Protected Areas to reflect the socio-ecological nature of Marine Protected Areas.**
- **Recognise the existence of maritime intangible cultural heritage within the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

- **Include the concept of ‘building back better’ in Planning Policies and Key Issues for Marine Planning for Rural Coastal and Island Communities.**
- **Take steps to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication by including an objective to achieve SDG Target 14b (access to resources and markets), measured by Indicator 14.b.1.**
- **Include more explicit recognition of the material realities of rural and island community practices (such as artisanal fishing).**
- **Include fisheries and aquaculture within the remit of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.**
- **Continue to engage with local communities to seek out and identify opportunities for community-led co-management approaches and partnerships.**

Background

During these unprecedented times, we are being forced to reflect on the values that are needed to underpin the kind of society we want to live in, and the inadequacies of the current status quo. In Ireland, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the values that come consistently to the fore include solidarity, equity, empathy and care for fellow citizens. The recent Programme for Government 2020 echoes this in its commitment to building their approach “*on the fundamental values of community and solidarity. These are the values which have been central to our shared national response to this Emergency and they must be the values that drive the work of the next Government*”. The Fine Gael-Fianna Fáil response to the Green Party’s ‘17 points’ on the Programme for Government includes a commitment to review the National Development Plan within the first 100 days of a new government, in order to meet the new social contract goals and climate change targets. It also includes a proposal to develop a plan for marine resources which will inform both the new social contract and the new national economic plan, embedding the marine environment in this wider context.¹

The big picture questions that we are currently reflecting on are not limited to our economy and healthcare system. They are permeating every single aspect of our lives. These reflections are therefore directly relevant to the framework we choose to manage our marine environment. While we welcome the positioning of climate change as a central consideration throughout the NMPF, we would like to see the principle of “building back better” and global pandemic preparedness integrated as related, cross-cutting

¹ Response to questions 11 and 14 in letter from Leo Varadkar TD and Micheál Martin TD to Eamon Ryan TD, 28 April 2020.

considerations. A recent report² from the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board pointed to climate change as one of the factors in heightening our vulnerability to infectious pathogens and warned that we are more and more susceptible to “global, biological catastrophic risks”. We recommend that the introduction to the NMPF acknowledge the societal upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on how this is shaping/should shape the national approach to planning and managing our marine environment.

In our submission on the Marine Planning Policy Statement in August 2019,³ we wrote about the importance of creating space for imagining other, possible worlds:

“It is more important than ever to provide space, at all policy levels, for imagining new ways of being in the world, and, indeed, for imagining a world that contains many different worlds, as opposed to the world that our policy systems are embedded in, a world where only one world fits. Unless this window for imagining a “world in which many worlds fit”, a pluriverse, is written into policy-making practices and processes, we will remain limited by the idea that we must take “the world that is responsible for the plausible destruction of the planet as the exclusive starting point in a conversation about the current condition of the planet”.⁴ We need to create space for different starting points.”

In the context of COVID-19, this potential imagining of new worlds has gained prominence. Journalist Peter Baker recently wrote that “disasters and emergencies do not just throw light on the world as it is. They also rip open the fabric of normality. Through the hole that opens up, we glimpse possibilities of other worlds.”⁵ Over a decade ago, in her book on the societal potential of disasters and emergencies, *A Paradise Built in Hell*, author Rebecca Solnit observed that “In the moment of disaster, the old order no longer exists, and people improvise.... Thereafter a struggle takes place over whether the old order with all its shortcomings and injustices will be reimposed or a new one, perhaps more impressive and perhaps more just and free...will arise.”⁶

Setting aside any cynicism around an aspirational document that has been crafted to entice the smaller, left-wing parties into government with Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, the new Programme for Government appears

² Global Preparedness Monitoring Board. A world at risk: annual report on global preparedness for health emergencies. Geneva: World Health Organization; (2019) Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. https://apps.who.int/gpmb/assets/annual_report/GPMB_annualreport_2019.pdf

³ Brennan, R. (2019) Marine Planning Policy Statement Submission of the Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities <https://bit.ly/2kDY44G>

⁴ Blaser, M. and de la Cadena M. 2018. *Pluriverse: Proposals for a World of Many Worlds*. In: De la Cadena, M. and Blaser M. (eds). *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

⁵ Baker 2020 ‘We can’t go back to normal’: how will coronavirus change the world? *The Guardian*, 31 March 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/31/how-will-the-world-emerge-from-the-coronavirus-crisis>

⁶ Solnit R. (2010) *A Paradise built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster*, Penguin, p16

to be tapping into this potential for a new order. It acknowledges that there is “*no going back to the old way of doing things*”, commits to working together to achieve a “*stronger, more inclusive Ireland*”, and declares that the spirit of people and communities coming together to help each other “*must guide any new Government that is formed. These are the values which have been central to our shared national response to this Emergency and they must be the values that drive the work of the next Government*”. Of course, there is politicking involved in these carefully chosen words. But we also see these words as opening a door to shaping other, possible worlds.

We note, for example the clearly stated intention to move beyond solely economic indicators to measure progress and well-being: “*To assess the performance of a new Government, we must look beyond economic indicators. We will create new, credible, quality-of-life measures of individual and societal well-being and progress.*” This is one of the questions we should be asking in relation to the NMPF: what revisions and reframings are possible, and desirable, if we look beyond economic indicators and if we move beyond a framing of “*Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*” dominated by market-driven logic? This logic assumes, for example, that growth is the best way to measure sustainable economic policies, and that framing the biophysical environment as natural capital will achieve a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable marine environment. We consider this in the next section by reflecting on the definition of the Ecosystem Approach set out in the NMPF.

Recommendation

- **Acknowledge, in the NMPF, the societal upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on how this is shaping/should shape the national approach to planning and managing our marine environment.**

The Ecosystem Approach

On a practical level, we could ask whether the definition of the Ecosystem Approach adopted by the NMPF will be adequate in a COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 world. The NMPF has chosen to use the definition of the Ecosystem Approach adopted by the Regional Seas Conventions of OSPAR and HELCOM: “*the comprehensive integrated management of human activities based on the best available scientific knowledge about the ecosystem and its dynamics, in order to identify and take action on influences which are critical to the health of marine ecosystems, thereby achieving sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and maintenance of ecosystem integrity.*”⁷ In our submission on the National Marine Planning Framework Baseline Report, we recommended the definition of the ecosystem-based approach endorsed by the Fifth

⁷ OSPAR 2003

Conference of the Parties to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that explicitly refers to both cultural diversity and equitable implementation of the approach:

*“The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.... An ecosystem approach...recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of many ecosystems.”*⁸

We understand that the OSPAR definition was adopted for the NMPF due to the regional seas focus of OSPAR, and that the CBD definition was considered not to be suitable due to lack of a regional focus.⁹ However, the difference between these definitions seems to turn more on a market-based environmentalism focus rather than on a regional seas focus. Thus, the focus of the OSPAR definition is on the economic aspect of the human link to ecosystems as it frames the environment exclusively as a resource that provides goods and services to humans. There doesn't seem to be space for another worldview within this definition of the Ecosystem Approach. In contrast, the CBD definition has more of an emphasis on equity, diversity and humans as an integral component of many ecosystems. On this latter point, we were concerned to note an unarticulated assumption (in paras 3.37, 3.38, 3.39, 3.42 and 3.43) that an ecosystem is limited to a biophysical or ecological ecosystem. This may have far-reaching consequences, if we recognise that our conceptualisation of ecosystem (just like our conceptualisation of the ecosystem approach) is a specific way of looking at or framing nature and at human-nature relationships. Different frames can lead to different outcomes. Paras 3.44, 3.45 and 3.46 make clear the embeddedness of the market-based environmentalism or natural capital approach in the NMPF, in alignment with the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021. We note that the natural capital concept is considered to warrant *“a sound footing in regulation to enable the understanding it provides to play its part in an ecosystem approach to marine management”* (para 3.44).

Rather than recommend (again) an alternative definition of the Ecosystem Approach, we invite serious consideration of whether a definition embedded in the natural capital approach is appropriate in a post-COVID19 world. As the crisis has revealed failures across current systems, how might these systems, and the concepts, values and assumptions underpinning them, need to be transformed in order to pandemic-proof the future? If we consider that the societal values, mentioned at the outset, that have emerged as vital

⁸CBD 2000: n.p. COP 5 Decision V/6, Annex A, paras 1 and 2.

⁹ This was the response from the Marine Planning Policy and Development Division when this question was asked by the author at a NMPF consultation event, TU Dublin, 17 February 2020.

in the context of the global pandemic - solidarity, equity, empathy and care - it would be wise to consider what kind of a framework can incorporate and operationalise these values on the ground.

Recommendation

- **Explain how the current framing of our marine environment as “Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth”, dominated by market-driven logic, can incorporate and operationalise societal values of solidarity, equity, empathy and care.**

Blue Growth and The Blue Commons

In our submission on the NMPF Baseline Report in December 2018¹⁰, we wrote about the concept of Blue Justice. We reiterate here our concern that “Blue Growth” and “ocean wealth” form the dominant narrative around the marine environment in the NMPF. As currently articulated, this may not leave space for other understandings of, and relationships with, the marine environment.¹¹ As the second edition of Ireland’s Integrated Marine Plan, Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW) is currently underway, we flag this as an opportunity to rethink the dominant natural capital framing. Concepts such as natural capital and ecosystem services reframe non-human nature in economic and financial terms alone. This is too narrow when this is the only framing considered to warrant “*a sound footing in regulation to enable the understanding it provides to play its part in an ecosystem approach to marine management*” (para 3.44). Framing the environment only (or predominantly) as providing services does not capture or do justice to the complexity of the intrinsic value of the marine environment, its intertwined bio-cultural diversity and, in particular, its intangible cultural heritage. This is not adequately captured by framing culture as a “service”. The metaphor of nature as a provider of benefits to humans only partially accounts for the broad spectrum of human-nature relationships.

Being explicit about the value systems underlying marine planning approaches and choices brings considerations of social equity as well as environmental sustainability into the Blue Growth picture. For example, thinking about marine planning within the (dominant) frame of Blue Growth, leads to a focus on privatization, commodification and industrialization of the oceans, instrumental values, individual sectors jostling for marine territory, and market-based mechanisms to price ecosystem services. If this is the only, or dominant, frame, there is a risk of excluding other, possible ways of imagining our marine environment which could lead to alternative futures. An example of possible, alternative futures can be found in the Slow Fish network’s 2019 gathering. Their aim was to come up with a framework for fisheries reform, based on the idea of the oceans as a common good for all humankind, in contrast to the privatisation

¹⁰ Brennan, R. 2018. National Marine Planning Framework Submission of Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities <https://bit.ly/2QveV3m>

¹¹ See Flannery, W., Healy, N., & Luna, M. 2018. Exclusion and non-participation in Marine Spatial Planning. *Marine Policy*, 88, 32-40.

inherent in the Blue Growth framework. (By ‘privatisation’, we include management strategies and frameworks that reconfigure human-environment relationships so that benefits and power are consolidated in the hands of a few). The discussions at this meeting are helpful when thinking about marine planning through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic and the values of solidarity, equity, empathy and care that have been brought centre-stage. The Slow Fish gathering acknowledged that the aims of Blue Growth appear benign – to promote environmentally friendly economic growth and development of ‘underdeveloped’ oceans and seas and to use that ocean wealth to achieve socially inclusive growth. However, the means of achieving these aims is largely through private investment, making ‘nature’ and natural resources visible as commodities on balance sheets and in financial markets by attaching monetary values to ecosystem goods and services and consulting stakeholders that are deemed relevant. There is a dominant assumption that growth is the best way to measure sustainable economic policies. All of this provides private interests with a privileged seat at the Blue Growth table, where concepts such as climate justice, blue justice, equity and wealth distribution rarely (if ever) enter the conversation.¹²

An alternative to the Blue Growth frame is that of the Blue Commons, which understands the ocean and marine resources as a common good, to be protected, restored and managed as a shared commons, that is accessible for all, including small coastal communities. This shifts the focus from privatization and profit from nature, to collectivization, social cohesion and belonging to nature - quite a different jumping off point for thinking about marine planning. Acknowledging the existence of these different frames for marine planning, and the political nature of the choice as to which frame to adopt, increases the transparency of the planning process. It also forces explicit consideration of the consequences of choosing a particular frame.¹³ How aware is the public that the NMPF is making a deliberate choice of market-based environmentalism? How aware is the public of the alternatives? We acknowledge and understand that the NMPF is nested within the wider European marine planning and management framework, and the dominance of the Blue Growth narrative at European level. We understand that the language of the NMPF has been chosen to ensure coherence with other legislation, that alignment with the European Blue Growth narrative is a rational policy choice, and that the NMPF aligns with the Blue Growth trajectory for the marine environment set out in *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*. Nonetheless, we recommend making this explicit within the NMPF, in the interests of transparency. We consider this particularly

¹² Slow Fish (2019) Blue Growth or Blue Commons: Interview with Andre Standing <https://slowfish.slowfood.it/en/blue-growth-or-blue-commons-interview-with-andre-standing/>; Slow Fish (2019) Fishing for Alternatives: The Blue Commons. Proceedings of the 9th edition of Slow Fish: The Sea: A Common Good, Genoa, May 2019.

¹³ Moss, T. (2014). Spatiality of the commons. *International Journal of the Commons*, 8, 457–471. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.556>

important given that we are in the middle of a national conversation about the kind of society we wish to live in.

Recommendation

- **In the interests of transparency, add a new para 3.47 that makes clear to the public that an ideological choice has been made, that there are alternatives (such as the Blue Commons) which have not been chosen, and why.**

UN Sustainable Development Goals

In our submission on the National Marine Planning Framework Baseline Report in December 2018, we recommended explicitly aligning the NMPF with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We therefore welcome the reference in para 2.49 to national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs in the broader context for marine planning. However, as noted in our previous submission, the SDGs relevant to the marine environment are not limited to SDG 14 (Life Below Water). With regard to SDG 14, we are particularly concerned that the draft NMPF refers only to Targets 14.1, 14.2 and 14.5 of SDG 14. We would like to see Target 14.b included (Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets) along with Indicator 14.b.1 (Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal / regulatory / policy /institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries).

As the SDGs emphasise the need for policy coherence in implementation of the interlinked goals, we believe that the NMPF should directly address and provide for (or, in the absence of adequate data, at least aspire towards) the implementation of other, relevant SDGs for marine planning. These include SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 13 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). An explicit grounding of the NMPF in the broader SDG framework would serve to foreground the importance of fair, equitable and inclusive treatment of all marine resource users. The NMPF indicates that different Departments are responsible for implementing individual SDGs. We suggest drawing on the experience and insights of the Departments responsible for implementing the SDGs relevant to marine planning, beyond SDG 14 (for example, the Department of Justice and Equality in relation to implementation of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) via a gender analysis of the NMPF).

Recommendation

- **Draw on the experience and insights of the Departments responsible for implementing the SDGs relevant to marine planning, beyond SDG 14.**

Gender

Research shows that an understanding of gender and gendered spaces is important for better marine planning and management. It also shows that marine planning, to date, has been largely androcentric or focussed on the activities of men and that democratic and equitable decision making can be hampered by gender bias.¹⁴ The marine environment (together with its natural resources) is a gendered space. For example, work roles are allocated and assumed according to gender, with women more likely to be found in shore-based and lower paid (or unpaid) roles. Mapping activities according to gender leads to questions about why the map looks the way it does, and this feeds into a larger discussion around gender equality (SDG 5) and management objectives, targets and indicators to achieve it. Management approaches can be improved by understanding the implications of a lack of gender balance in decision-making roles, and by implementing strategies to achieve gender balance. This is also relevant on a broader scale – for example, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board recommends involving women in planning and decision-making to ensure that policies and interventions are accepted.

The European Fisheries Area Network (FARNET)¹⁵ team leader, Gilles Van de Walle, recently illustrated how important it is for women to be at the decision-making table and not just in management roles when it comes to Fisheries Local Action Groups. At the AKTEA Women in Fisheries event in Brussels in February¹⁶, he reported on the first coherent study accounting for women in fisheries at all levels of the workforce, including unpaid work.¹⁷ The European female workforce accounts for 27% of the seafood sector employment, broken down into 57% of processing jobs, 36% ancillary jobs (such as sales, administration, netmaking), 26% in aquaculture and 13% in fisheries. The study reported a significant gender imbalance at the FLAG decision-making table (three times more men than women), where the FLAG board takes decisions on which projects to support. There is a direct correlation between

¹⁴ De la Torre-Castro, M., Fröcklin, S., Börjesson, S. Okupnik, J. and Jiddawi N.S. 2017. Gender analysis for better coastal management—increasing our understanding of social-ecological seascapes. *Marine Policy* 83: 62–74; Flannery, W., Healy, N. and Luna, M. 2018. *Marine Policy* 88: 32-40; Diamond, N.K., Squillante, L. and Hale L.Z. 2003. et al., Cross currents: navigating gender and population linkages for integrated coastal management, *Marine Policy* 27: 325–331

¹⁵ FARNET - the European Fisheries Areas Network - is the community of people implementing Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). This network brings together Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), managing authorities, citizens and experts from across the EU.

¹⁶ Brennan, R. 2020. Women in fisheries fly their flag in Brussels. *The Skipper*, April 2020.

¹⁷ FARNET Support Unit 2018 Technical Report. FLAG Support to Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/library/technical-report/flag-support-women-fisheries-and-aquaculture_en

this imbalance and the percentage of projects directly supporting women in fisheries. In other words, increasing the percentage of women on FLAG decision making boards would result in more projects being funded that directly support women in fisheries.¹⁸

Closer to home, we note that the new Programme for Government makes a commitment to “Prioritise gender equality, by involving more women in decision-making roles.”¹⁹ It is also worth noting that former MEP Liadh Ní Riada’s Charter for Fishers, Coastal Communities and the Islands, launched in January 2019, includes as a key point of action the encouragement of “young people and women to participate in maritime work and fisheries.”²⁰

This month’s edition of *The Skipper*, a fishing industry journal, ran an article on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on the seafood industry,²¹ which highlighted a 2018 report on gender equality in the seafood industry (fisheries and aquaculture).²² A stark finding of the report is that SDG 14 will not be attained if 50% of the population it affects is not taken into consideration. The report attributes various aspects of marine resource mismanagement to overlooking the gender dimension, including wrong marine resource diagnosis (ignoring activities led by women), wrong economic assessment (policies and tools created in the absence of data disaggregated as to gender), wrong uses of knowledge and intelligence (absence of women during management policymaking) and wrong outcomes of decision-making (when women’s knowledge is ignored, they can be inadvertently excluded).²³ To achieve the goals of SDG 14, gender must be embedded in all elements and targets of SDG 14 policy.

There is a distinct absence of gender considerations in the NMPF. The word ‘gender’ does not feature in the document. While we acknowledge that regional and local level plans may be more appropriate for detailed strategies related to gender, such strategies are less likely to be considered if the national framework is altogether silent on gender. Although this is not within the control of the Marine Planning Policy and Development Division, a glaring example of this androcentric focus can be found in the naming all four of our Naval Service ships since 2010 after Irish male literary figures (para 6.7) – as if

¹⁸ Van de Walle, G. 2020. FLAGS: Supporting women at local level. PowerPoint presentation, EESC, Brussels, 24 February 2020.

https://lifeplatform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Aktea_Farnet_Gilles_Van_de_Walle.pdf

¹⁹ Programme for Government 2020. Mission: A New Social Contract, para vii.

²⁰ Ní Riada, L. 2019. Charter for Fishers, Coastal Communities and the Islands.

<https://www.facebook.com/TheSkipperOnline/posts/2499623983443966/>

²¹ Ní Aodha, L. 2020. The gendered impacts of COVID-19 on the seafood industry. *The Skipper*, 7 April 2020 <https://theskipper.ie/the-gendered-impacts-of-covid-19-on-the-seafood-industry/>

²² Briceño-Lagos, N and Monfort, N.C. 2018 Putting Gender Equality on the Seafood Industry’s Agenda. International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry. <https://wsi-asso.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WSI-Global-survey-2018-english-1.pdf>

²³ International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry. <https://wsi-asso.org/2020/01/29/sdg-14-will-not-be-attained-if-50-of-the-population-it-affects-is-not-taken-into-consideration/>

Irish female literary figures do not exist. What if the naming of our naval vessels alternated, like the naming of storms, between male and female? Or, even more progressively, what about including non-binary names? We recommend a gender analysis of the NMPF and an explicit commitment to implementing SDG 5 (Gender Equality) as an integrated part of the marine planning process on national and regional levels.

Recommendation

- **Carry out a gender analysis of the NMPF and commit to implementing SDG 5 (Gender Equality) as an integrated part of the marine planning process on national and regional levels.**

Marine Protected Areas

Although paragraph 3.59 recognises that “MPAs may also incorporate measures to protect localised social, cultural or economic activities that are deemed important...”, this is not reflected in the Planning Policies for MPAs on pp 40-41 of the NMPF. A much narrower definition of MPAs (limited to the biophysical environment) is implied on pp 40-41. This is evident from the definition of ecosystem as purely biophysical (“the dynamic complex of plant and animal communities and the surrounding non-living environment that supports them” - para 3.37) and the references to “features” and “ecological coherence” (p41). These terms do not appear to include socio-ecological features or socio-ecological coherence in addition to ecological features and ecological coherence. As such, the provisions requiring proposals to avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts appears to be limited to a narrow definition of biophysical MPAs. The Marine Protected Area Expert Advisory Group recommends a more nuanced definition of MPAs, that recognises concepts such as bio-cultural diversity, intangible cultural heritage and socioecological systems thinking.

Recommendation

- **Revise the section on Marine Protected Areas following consideration of the report of the Marine Protected Area Expert Advisory Group so that the socio-ecological nature of Marine Protected Areas is clear.**

Social – Engagement with the Sea

We would like to see an objective to establish robust governance, policy and planning frameworks to enable and promote the development of vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal and island communities. Why are such frameworks only included in the objective related to the growth of the ocean economy while the development of vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal and island communities is

simply to be promoted? Social and cultural development surely deserve robust frameworks too, not just promotion.

Recommendation

- **Reword the objective to “Establish robust governance, policy and planning frameworks to enable and promote the development of vibrant, accessible, resilient and sustainable coastal and island communities.”**

Heritage Assets

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht added *marcanna na talamh* (fishing marks) to Ireland’s intangible cultural heritage inventory, pursuant to the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ratified by Ireland in December 2015). We recommend adding the following Key Reference in recognition of Ireland’s maritime intangible cultural heritage: Ireland’s National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (<https://nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie/marcanna-na-talamh/>).

We also recommend adding a new para 3.197 that recognises the existence of intangible cultural heritage in the marine and coastal environment. Suggested text:

“Maritime cultural identity, and its related intangible cultural heritage, is a key feature of many coastal and island communities in Ireland. The intertwining of our intangible cultural heritage with the marine environment can be found in people’s living knowledge of the sea: of its place in their stories, histories and legends; of how they have made a living from the sea; of how they have named and renamed it to suit their needs on and from the sea; of how it has helped to shape their conduct and beliefs; of the change that technologies have brought to their relationships with it, the intergenerational transfer of a particular way of knowing the sea, through storying it. Evidence of past and present naming (often in Irish) in relation to the sea illustrates the depth of local people’s connections to their marine environment with place names often charged with historical and legendary associations. This intangible cultural heritage is intertwined with the biophysical marine environment, creating a sense of belonging to, and responsibility for, place

In December 2015 Ireland ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their

cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.” In July 2019 the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht approved the inscription of *marcanna na talamh* (fishing marks) on Ireland’s permanent National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (<https://nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie/marcanna-na-talamh/>).”

We also recommend matching the ambition of National Policy Objective 61 of the National Planning Framework to develop a National Landscape Character Map by including in the NMPF a national policy objective to develop a National Seascape Character Map that includes intangible cultural heritage. This could involve an additional layer to Ireland’s Marine Atlas as well as more creative approaches such as art-science-community collaborations to map local intangible cultural heritage, engage society and strengthen a community’s sense of stewardship over their marine and coastal environment.²⁴

Recommendations

- **Add as a Key Reference: Ireland’s National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (<https://nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie/marcanna-na-talamh/>).**
- **Add a new paragraph 3.197 that recognises the existence of maritime intangible cultural heritage within the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**
- **Include a national policy objective to develop a National Seascape Character Map that includes intangible cultural heritage.**

Rural Coastal and Island Communities

Maritime cultural identity is a key feature of many rural coastal and island communities and it deserves explicit recognition. We recommend including this concept in the final bullet point of para 3.205: *“proposals generally that would...contribute to the sustainability and/or maritime cultural identity of rural coastal and/or island communities.”*

Para 3.152 (Climate Change) identifies the impact of climate change on maritime activities as including *“damage to vessels and infrastructure, gear loss and boats being tied up for lengthy periods of time due*

²⁴ A Scottish example of such an art-science-community collaboration can be found at mappingthesea.net/barra. See also Brennan, R. 2018. Restoring marine conservation: Integrating art and science to explore and articulate ideas, visions and expressions of marine space. *Ocean & Coastal Management (Special Issue: Coastal Systems in Transition: interconnecting the social dimensions in response to coastal change)* 162: 110-126 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2018.01.036> (open access link: <https://marxiv.org/wmbzgj/>).

*to increased storm frequency and intensity” and para 3.203 notes that rural electoral districts “at the coastal level tended to be worse off than urban suggesting that coastal areas in Ireland have still not returned to pre-recession affluence levels.” Rural coastal and island communities are therefore entering the COVID-19 related recession without having fully recovered from the previous recession and, as a result, are likely to suffer disproportionately from the impact of climate change. We recommend incorporating the goal of ‘building back better’²⁵ into the Planning Policies and Key Issues for Marine Planning for Rural Coastal and Island Communities. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The concept of ‘building back better’ aligns with the “*overriding focus*” of the new Programme for Government “*to improve the wellbeing of Irish people and society*” and with the commitment to “[d]eliver a strong Just Transition, which ensures that no citizen or region is left behind.”²⁶*

Para 20 of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is directly relevant to island communities and should be highlighted as a Key Reference. Para 20 provides that “[s]mall offshore islands which are dependent on fishing should, where appropriate, be especially recognised and supported in order to enable them to survive and prosper.” We recommend including an additional Planning Policy: “*Proposals should be supported that contribute to the recognition and support of small offshore islands which are dependent on fishing in order to enable them to survive and prosper.*”

We recommend adding the following reports as Key References:

Fisheries on the Gaeltacht Islands of Ireland: sustaining island traditions (Comhdháil na nOileán 2007)

A Review of fisheries on Ireland’s offshore islands: Sustaining island livelihoods (Comhar na nOileán Teo. 2010)

Recommendations

- **Include concept of ‘building back better’ in Planning Policies and Key Issues for Marine Planning for Rural Coastal and Island Communities.**
- **Include a Planning Policy based on para 20 CFP.**
- **Add Key References on island fisheries.**

²⁵ The recommendation to ‘build back better’ draws on the FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: “9.7 States should understand how emergency response and disaster preparedness are related in small-scale fisheries and apply the concept of the relief-development continuum. Longer-term development objectives need to be considered throughout the emergency sequence, including in the immediate relief phase, and rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery should include actions to reduce vulnerabilities to potential future threats. The concept of ‘building back better’ should be applied in disaster response and rehabilitation.”

²⁶ Programme for Government 2020, Mission: A New Green Deal, para v.

Social Benefits

There are several references to indirect social benefits gained from maritime area-related employment (para 3.212, 3.214, 3.217). Social benefits such as cultural identity and a sense of place (identified in para 3.219) are more appropriately described as direct benefits if we consider employment such as fishing which is an integral part of the social fabric of many coastal rural and island communities. We recommend identifying these social benefits as direct and indirect, in recognition of the importance of these benefits.

In para 3.219, we recommend recognising intangible cultural heritage in addition to heritage assets: “*Heritage assets, including intangible cultural heritage*”. We have discussed earlier the importance of the intangible cultural heritage in our marine environment.

We recommend including fishing practices as an activity that provides social benefits: “*Fishing businesses and practices and historical associations through past activity.*”

We recommend making explicit that displacement of activities should not diminish cultural identity and sense of place, and should not impose additional economic burdens in relation to any alternative access mechanism to minimise and mitigate reduction of social benefits. This should be reflected in para 3.219 and para 3.223, where “*alternative access*” and “*alternative areas*” are referred to.

Recommendation

- **Include more explicit recognition of the material realities of rural and island community practices (such as artisanal fishing) that generate social benefits both directly and indirectly.**

Fisheries and Aquaculture

The objectives narrowly frame fisheries as mainly concerned with profit, competitiveness and growth. Although there is a reference to protection and enhancement of the social and economic fabric of rural coastal communities, this does not reflect adequately the values (discussed earlier) that have come to the fore in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, such as solidarity, equity and support for marginalised

communities.²⁷ Including an objective to achieve SDG Target 14b (access to resources and markets) would help to foreground these values. It is also directly relevant to the competition for space for inshore fisheries, noted as a Key Issue for Marine Planning (para 12.16). Indicator 14.b.1 (Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal / regulatory / policy /institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries) is a concrete way of measuring such progress towards achieving the access rights aspect of SDG Target 14b. The indicator is a composite indicator calculated on the basis of the efforts being made by countries to implement selected key provisions of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (*SSF Guidelines*). SDG Target 14b is directly relevant to Fisheries Policy 1, 3 and 5 in the NMPF. The wider context of fisheries is illustrated by ‘The Charter for Fishers, Coastal Communities and the Islands’ which sets out 24 principles designed to protect the Irish fishing sector, coastal communities, islands and marine biodiversity, with a particular reference to a community focused approach, small scale fisheries and fisheries-dependent island communities.²⁸ We recommend adding this to the Key References in this section.

Recommendations

- **Take steps to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication by including an objective to achieve SDG Target 14b (access to resources and markets), measured by Indicator 14.b.1.**
- **Add to Key References for Fisheries:**
The Charter for Fishers, Coastal Communities and the Islands 2019
- **Add to Key References for Aquaculture:**
Food from the Oceans. How can more food and biomass be obtained from the oceans in a way that does not deprive future generations of their benefits? (European Commission 2017)²⁹

Coherent governance and the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill

²⁷ See Fitzpatrick M, Brennan R and Jackson E. (forthcoming, 2020). *From protest to participation: Learning from experience in Irish inshore fisheries management*. In Pascual-Fernández J.J, Pita C and Bavinck M (Eds) *Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance*. Springer: Dordrecht.

²⁸ Afloat.ie. (2019, 25th January). Call for Political Parties to Unite Behind Coastal Communities. Afloat Magazine. Retrieved from <https://afloat.ie/marine-environment/coastal-notes/item/41602-call-for-political-parties-to-unite-behind-coastal-communities>

²⁹ European Commission 2017. Food from the Oceans. How can more food and biomass be obtained from the oceans in a way that does not deprive future generations of their benefits? https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/pdf/sam_food-from-oceans_report.pdf

We are concerned that fisheries and aquaculture fall outside the remit of the Marine Planning Development and Management Bill, as this Bill will be the primary legislation underpinning the NMPF. Although we understand that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will have obligations under the NMPF, it is difficult to see how coherent governance can be achieved if fisheries and aquaculture will not be underpinned by the new development management system to be contained in the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill. We understand that the NMPF and Marine Planning and Development Management Bill are intended to be coherent with other legislation, including the Common Fisheries Policy. We do not understand how or why the Common Fisheries Policy should preclude fishing from falling within with remit of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill. The NMPF does not address this issue. To ensure coherent governance we would like to see the competencies of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine brought within the legislation that will underpin the management and development of the marine environment.

Recommendation

- **Include fisheries and aquaculture within the remit of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.**

Regional and local approaches to marine planning

We are hugely encouraged that the Marine Planning Policy and Development Division have indicated that they favour, where appropriate, community-led co-management approaches to marine planning and management such as regional and local coastal partnerships. We support the idea of pilot local coastal partnerships in the near future. We advise retaining flexibility as to what kind of approach is appropriate for different contexts, as certain areas will have the cohesion and desire to engage that is needed for community-led approaches, while others may not. Local coastal partnerships will, however, need to be properly resourced in order to enable adaptive management over time.

Recommendation

- **Continue to engage with local communities to seek out and identify opportunities for community-led co-management approaches and partnerships.**

Conclusion

The management of our marine environment involves difficult decisions and trade-offs that must be made explicit, not least with regard to recognising the existence of a variety of, at times, irreconcilable ideologies. These difficult decisions will now take place against the unexpected backdrop of a global pandemic and a global recession. There are clear indications from the political parties that management of our marine resources will be linked to both the new social contract and the new national economic plan. Assuming that

the new social contract will be underpinned by “*the fundamental values of community and solidarity....which have been central to our shared national response to this Emergency*”, these values should also clearly underpin the National Marine Planning Framework. We have endeavoured to provide concrete suggestions on how these values could be brought to the fore – for example, through a commitment to ‘building back better’ for rural coastal and island communities; ensuring a wider grounding of the NMPF in the interlinked Sustainable Development Goals (such as SDG 5 Gender Equality); bringing fisheries and aquaculture within the remit of the legislation underpinning the NMPF; working towards implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and reflecting on how the societal upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is shaping/should shape the national approach to planning and managing our marine environment. The bigger picture of the pandemic has unexpectedly opened a window for imagining other, possible, more equitable and more sustainable worlds. We hope that this opportunity will be grasped in the National Marine Planning Framework to ensure planning and management of our marine environment in a coherent, sustainable and socially inclusive manner.

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