

Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on evidence-based marine management

This guidance is given in accordance with section 153 (3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

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1. Introduction

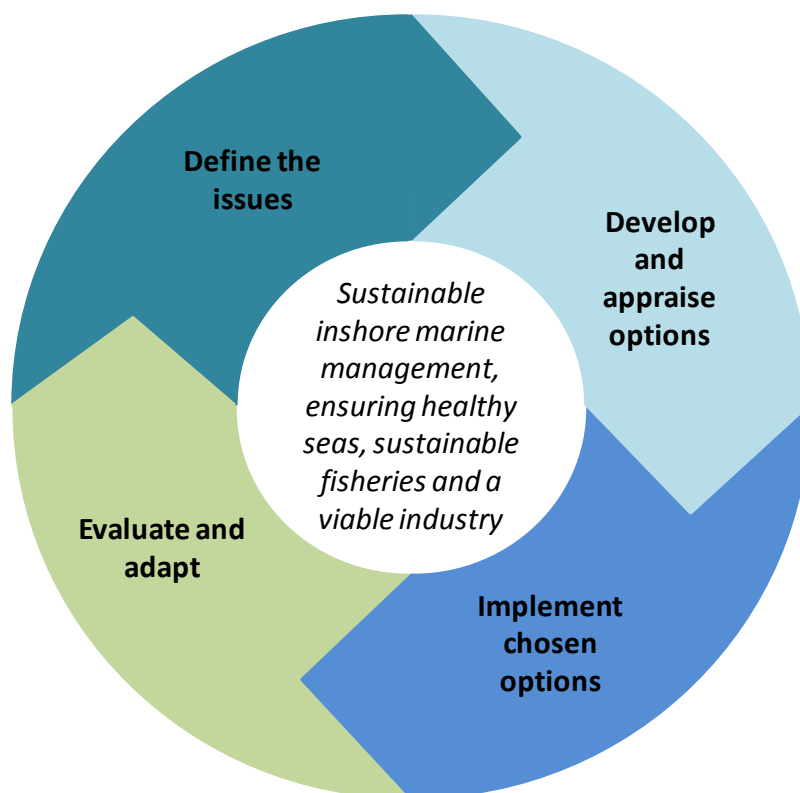
- 1.1 This guidance outlines how Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) can use best practice principles of evidence-based decision making in sustainably managing sea fisheries resources within their Districts and in running their organisations. This guidance aims to bring together the key aspects of good decision making and management practice and direct IFCAs to more detailed information they might find useful.
- 1.2 This guidance has been developed after taking into consideration IFCAs' functions and resources and issued after consultation with IFCAs and other interested organisations and individuals. IFCAs must have regard to this guidance in carrying out their functions.
- 1.3 This is one of several documents¹ that offer best practice guidance on the work of IFCAs. These documents will be reviewed regularly and, if necessary, reissued in the light of any changes in marine management or other Government policy.

2. Evidence-based decision making and effective marine management

- 2.1 In order to fulfil their main duty and sustainably manage sea fisheries resources, IFCAs will need to make effective decisions on how to manage their districts. They will also need to have a consistent approach to their decision making and be able to articulate clearly to stakeholders why they have chosen a certain approach.
- 2.2 The evidence-based marine management cycle outlined below provides a common framework for decision making by IFCAs. It is a common sense, best practice approach and is similar to the policy cycles that are widely, and successfully, used across central Government. The cycle below focuses on decision making within marine management but the principles can be used for any kind of management process, including people management and personal performance appraisal.

¹Best-practice guidance to IFCAs can be found at: <http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/ifca/>

Evidence-based marine management cycle



2.3 This cycle, together with the use of good programme and project management principles, can ensure that IFCA's are high-performing organisations who are delivering their goals.

2.4 The following pages explain in detail what each of the stages of the evidence-based marine management cycle involves.

Define the issues

Objectives of this stage: This is the beginning of the cycle and is also known as the 'concept stage' in Project and Programme Management. The following steps should be carried out at this stage:

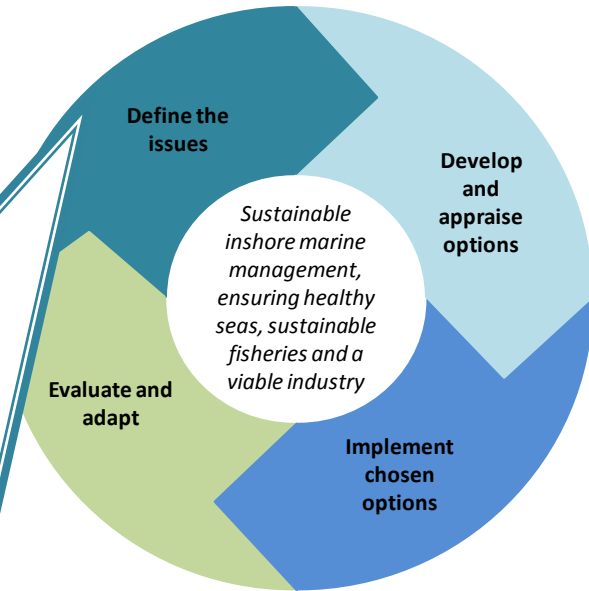
1. Consider what IFCA should be doing to influence and drive forward the issues that they are strategically committed to doing
2. Prioritise the issues you have decided to address
3. Set out objectives for the work that is to be done and the associated costs, benefits and effort it will take to deliver
4. Gather evidence about the issues you wish to take forward
5. Consider the evidence from previous evaluation work on the same or similar areas
6. Understand what is working and what is not in existing plans
7. Work with stakeholders to understand the existing evidence and the nature of the issues you are planning to address
8. Set out what you want to achieve by tackling the issue (outcome statement)

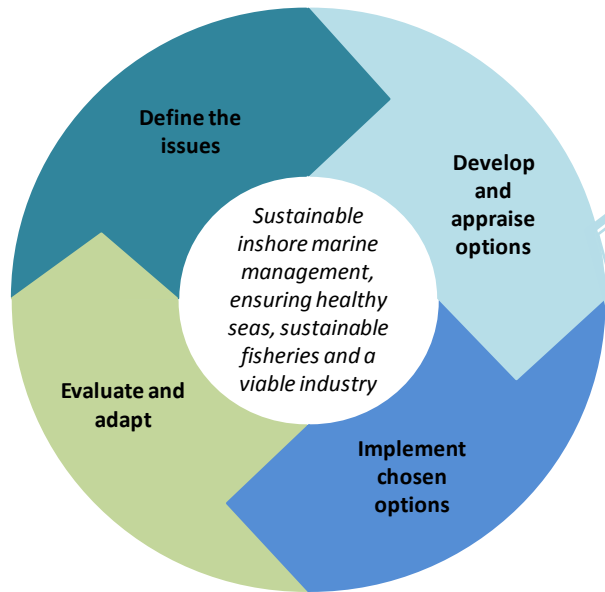
Questions this stage should answer:

- What issue are we trying to address and why?
- How will we know when we've achieved success?
- How is this aligned to our priorities?
- Do we understand what is happening and why (past, present, future)?
- What constraints are we facing?
- Is there a rationale for intervention?

Key activities:

- Collect evidence to test assumptions;
- Gather stakeholder input to developing evidence base;
- Assess delivery and management options;
- Define and draft the rationale for intervention and what success will look like
- Set out objectives and plans for delivery in an annual plan





Develop and appraise the options

Objectives of this stage: This is known as the 'initiation stage' in Project and Programme Management. The following steps should be carried out at this stage:

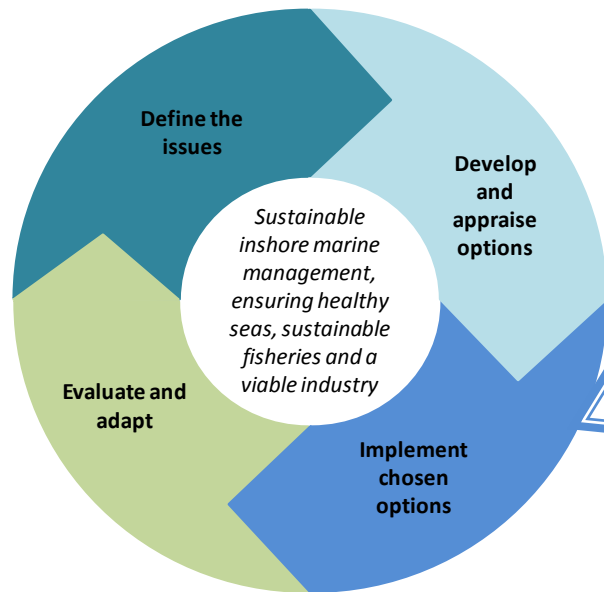
1. Use your evidence base to identify the potential regulatory (e.g. byelaws) and non-regulatory options that could deliver your intended outcome
2. Understand how the options you have chosen will impact on those being regulated (Impact Assessments)
3. Consider the alternatives to byelaws and look at what others are doing to deal with similar issues/activities
4. Consider how the options will be implemented and enforced
5. Plan how the work will be monitored and evaluated
6. Define roles and responsibilities with delivery partners, being clear about who is responsible and who is accountable for aspects of the delivery
7. Engage with customers and stakeholders to communicate your possible options to seek their input on detail of delivery (including any guidance that might need to be issued)
8. Consult on your options and use the Impact Assessment and consultation processes to establish costs, benefits and risks in order to build your evidence base

Questions this stage should answer:

- What options are available (regulatory and non-regulatory)?
- What are the views of customers and stakeholders?
- Which is the preferred option?
- Is the preferred option feasible and does it adhere to IFCA and Government's principles?
- Can the preferred option be delivered within your budget?
- Could you enter into delegation arrangements with a delivery partner to achieve the preferred option?
- How can we implement the chosen option as effectively as possible?
- Who needs to be responsible and accountable for planning implementation?

Key activities

- Prepare Impact Assessment (if appropriate)
- Undertake formal consultation of options and Impact Assessment (if appropriate)
- Select a preferred option
- Agree delivery arrangements with partners
- Undertake pilot studies (where appropriate)



Implement chosen options

Objectives of this stage: This is known as the 'delivery stage' in Project and Programme Management. The following steps should be carried out at this stage:

1. Be clear about benefits you want to achieve
2. Understand how implementation will take place in terms of resources and working with others.
3. Have a clear evaluation plan in place
4. Allocate resources for collecting and analysing data
5. Communicate commencement dates with your stakeholders and publish any associated guidance
6. Implement your chosen option
7. Record any lessons learned from implementation problems and 'tweak' your approach
8. Update your delivery plan and your Impact Assessment

Questions this stage should answer:

- Is implementation on schedule?
- What needs to be done to improve the likelihood of success?
- Are emerging issues being managed effectively?

Key activities:

- Oversight of implementation
- Formal agreement with delivery partners
- Ongoing engagement with customers and stakeholders to ensure your options are 'bedding in' correctly
- Monitoring progress

Evaluate and adapt

Objectives of this stage: This is known as the 'close project and post evaluation stage' in Project and Programme Management. The following steps should be carried out at this stage:

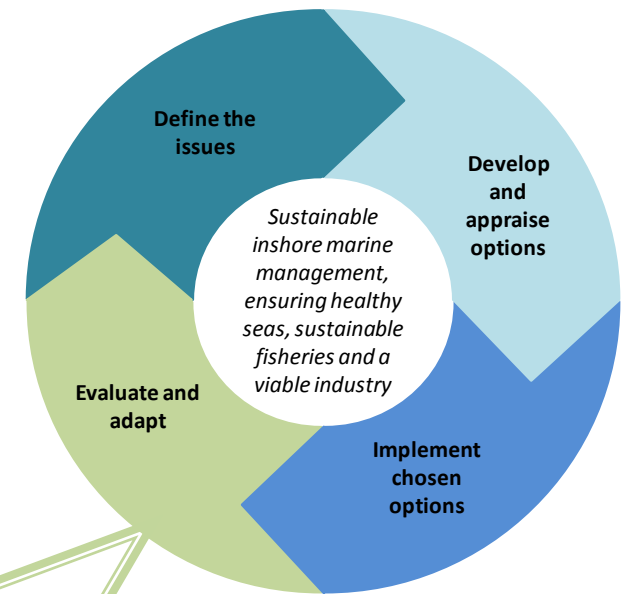
1. Evaluate whether the implementation of your chosen option has been successful
2. Review Impact Assessment to establish actual costs and benefits
3. Engage with customers and stakeholders to seek views on the success of the chosen option in meeting their need.
4. Decide whether the original reasons for intervention have significantly changed and whether your chosen option is still appropriate
5. Report your findings to the Committee and other stakeholders
6. Feed evaluation results into next year's annual plans

Questions this stage should answer:

- How well is the chosen option working?
- Have the original reasons for intervention changed?
- What should happen as a result of the evaluation findings?

Key activities

- Review of monitoring data and other evidence
- Review impact assessment
- Capture and disseminate any lessons learned
- Report evaluation results
- Recommend areas for further work



3. Overarching themes

There are a number of themes that are critical to every stage of the cycle. These are:

- Evidence
- Risk
- Engagement
- Outcome focus





Evidence

Evidence is key in making effective decisions. It enables you to:

- Understand the issues and look at causes and not just symptoms
- Identify the potential impact of any options for intervention, including costs and benefits, and choose the best option
- Influence stakeholders and delivery partners in helping to deliver your chosen options
- Evaluate whether any intervention is a success
- Use any lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of existing and future interventions
- Communicate the reasons for decisions, including any changes to chosen options, based on evaluating evidence effectively

Evidence can come from a wealth of sources, including detailed academic research, monitoring data, published reports, stakeholder surveys and consultations.

IFCA's should gather, interpret and use the best available evidence to inform their decisions. By reviewing interventions regularly and communicating their effectiveness, IFCA's can continuously improve the way they manage and deliver their work.

Further guidance on types of evidence and evaluation and monitoring can be found here: <http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/ifca/>



Risk

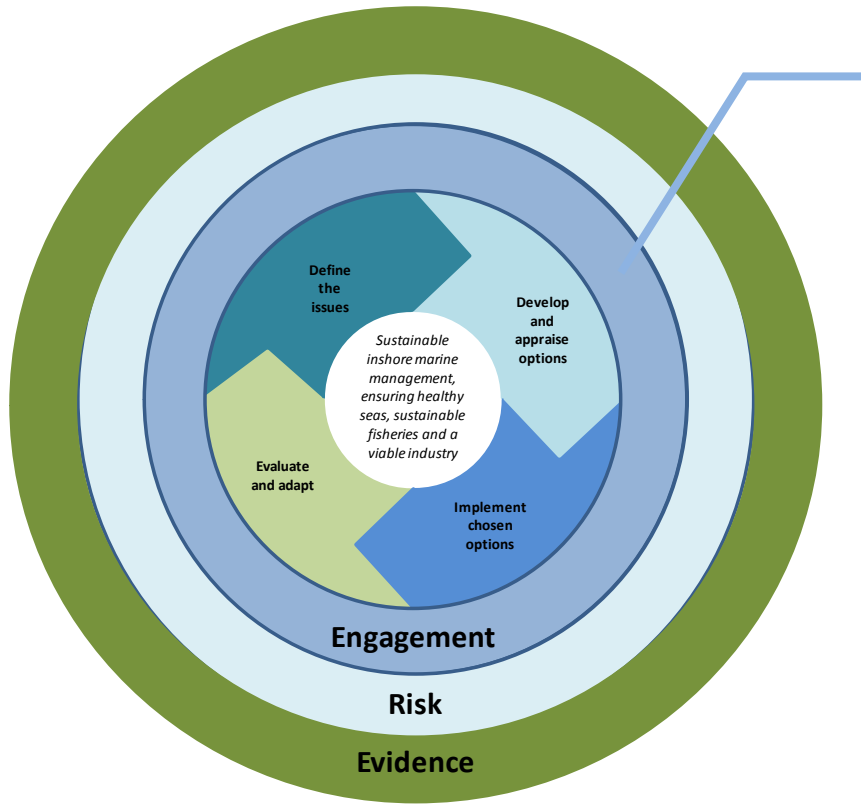
When making decisions, IFCAs should also considering what risks may be involved in making that decision or in implementing certain options (or not).

IFCAs should have a consistent approach to understanding, assessing and managing risk. They should:

- Identify risks (threats) inherent in their work and the approaches that are already in place to manage such threats
- Have a good understanding of the weaknesses (if any) in existing working practices
- Think about the future goals of their IFCA Districts and manage the risks to attaining such goals as part of their role as strategic managers of the inshore environment

Further guidance on managing risk can be found here:

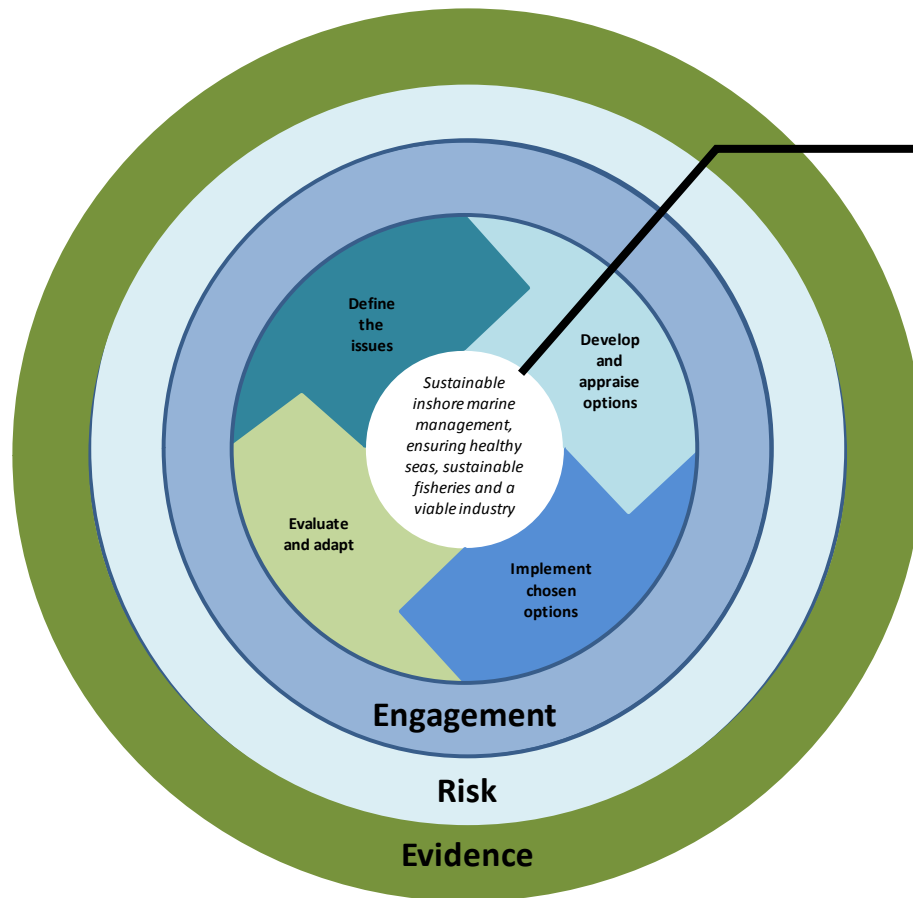
<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/ifca/>



Engagement

It is important to identify those who have a stake or interest in the work you are doing, and build relationships with them to:

- Get their perspective on the issues you're dealing with and understand their perceptions and reactions
- Gather evidence from them to support your understanding of situations
- Use their expertise and ideas to help identify and develop options for intervention
- Get their buy-in to the preferred option(s)
- Get support for the option(s) and its (their) implementation
- Meet moral or ethical responsibilities where your actions may directly affect others (e.g., closing fisheries)
- Flag up opportunities to join up with others to share resources and reduce burdens on other stakeholders
- Avoid or reduce conflict (current or potential)
- Help you get feedback on existing policy to inform better policy making in the future



Outcome focus

The outcome that you are trying to achieve is at heart of the cycle and should give:

- A clear vision of what success will look like
- An idea of the behaviour you want to change on the ground
- A clear link between your policies and your strategic objectives
- A reference point to return to throughout the cycle, to evaluate your proposals and final intervention against your success criteria

Further information

Programme and Project Management

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/ppm_resource_toolkit.asp

<http://www.best-management-practice.com/>

Stakeholder engagement

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=7816307#contents-4>

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=16639575>

Risk management

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/Introduction_to_Risk.pdf

<http://www.best-management-practice.com/Risk-Management-MoR/>

Related guidance

Guidance to IFCA's on evaluation and monitoring and enforcement is at:

<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/ifca/>