

## **NET GAIN REGIONAL HUBS: ROUND TWO BRIEFING**

**From the engagement team: Jeff Bishop, Steve Smith and Cathy Williams**

Much has happened since the Hubs last met in March – one reason for putting the next round off until June. A lot of important information has now come in to the Net Gain team and, although some is still delayed, there is plenty there to make the next sessions into the genuine 'first lines on paper' days that we promised.

This note aims to give you a quick update, some background information, and an outline of your June sessions. **If there is any way you can share all this with colleagues in your sector or group before the day, that would be great.**

### **Update: Information and Issues**

The Net Gain team have now received a lot more map data from national sources. They have combined this information into their own Regional Profile, also using ideas you raised last time about better colours and scales, etc. There is a lot now ready, and although we certainly don't recommend studying them all, you – and colleagues – will shortly be able to access them via Net Gain's FTP web site. Some maps won't mean much (we had to have them explained to us) but some will, and this is a good opportunity to try to familiarise yourselves with them before we meet again. We are impressed with the efforts the Net Gain team are putting in to make things understandable.

Some information, however, is not yet available due to delays at a national level. That includes information on how much is already protected in designated areas and what sort of 'impacts' need to be considered from various activities. We can live without this for a while. More importantly, although the Net Gain team have now carried out over 250 interviews with sea users (many thanks to those who helped), there is still not really enough to map activities such as commercial fishing without prejudicing the confidence in which the information was provided. **This is a pity, so please do all you can to arrive at the next session with as much idea as you can about what those in your sector do in the Net Gain area and especially where they do it.**

As well as all of the above, there has also been a meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel (StAP). Each Hub has at least one representative on the StAP and they will be able to report back when you meet if required. Draft minutes from the StAP meeting have already been circulated. There are two key points to note: first, they have developed Terms of Reference that knit well with yours. Secondly, you will see in the minutes that some StAP members used their wider experience of the other MCZ projects across the country to offer advice on how best to present material to you for the 'lines on paper' work. We've used those ideas in planning the days.

Before moving on to outline the next meetings, we have attached two other notes. **It would be really helpful for you to read (and perhaps share) these before we meet:**

1. Scope and Impacts:  
For those still worried that MCZs will impose blanket bans on all your activities in huge areas forever, this note explains that it is very unlikely to be like that.
2. Ecological Network Guidance:  
There was a presentation about this last time, but we ourselves struggled with it, so Net Gain staff have put together a summary version. Important to know about when you start looking at 'lines on maps'.

## **June Hubs: An Outline**

By the time of your next Hub session, the Net Gain team will have used a very clever piece of mapping software, called Marxan, to – in effect – overlay all their ecological data with the user information they have so far, add in all the guidance criteria (e.g. sizes of areas, distances between, and so forth), press a button and generate a number of strictly 'work in progress', very much initial, first stabs of MCZs for you area. And we wrote 'initial' very deliberately because **that is all those maps will be until you work on them** to rule in, rule out, amend, add information, etc. Then, once much more of your user information is available (fingers crossed for September), the lines will change again (then probably again). We may even put a big sign up on the day saying "work in progress"!

We are working this way because the advice from Hub and StAP members involved in other MCZ projects was that it was best to offer a 'straw man' version for you to then 'knock down' (or not). We also received a great deal of feedback during our last Hub meetings that it was important to make the best use of everybody's time and that by offering a starting point it would really help kick start discussions in our next meetings.

The Marxan maps will only act as a starting point and we hope that you will draw your own lines during our next meeting. Given our 'amateur' description above of the mapping process, we'll start with a careful explanation from the Net Gain team of how they were produced, and all the original maps and background information will be there and available to help you see how it all works.

The Net Gain team will also be producing more than one set of initial proposed MCZs, based on different ways of combining the information. As before, we will arrange mixed groups and you will work together to (ideally) reach an agreed view on as many of the proposals that you can live with (with some notes about why) or perhaps one person or group will raise a query over one or more proposals (again with notes on why). All the time, the technical team will be there to help. The final stage will be to see how all group results fit together or if not, where, why and perhaps what to do about it.

That's the main focus, but the Net Gain team also want us to start you thinking more specifically about what the impacts might be on your activities and lifestyle (your job, your spare time, etc.) if Zone X or Zone Y went forward. The ecological material is all real 'evidence'; the team needs equally strong 'evidence' about the social and economic issues as well, not just "I'll lose out" but how, how much, in what way, etc. **It's probably also worth thinking in advance about that.**

Finally, we will outline all the next stages for you (the next Hubs will be in mid-September) and introduce a 'proforma' for you to use (with Net Gain's help if you wish) to share the emerging 'lines on paper' with your colleagues, and provide some feedback.

***We've quite rightly spent a lot of time setting things up so far.  
These next Hub sessions are when it all gets real!  
We look forward to working with you in June.***