



Regional Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference

June 2010

1. Responsibilities of the Regional Stakeholder Group

- 1.1 The Net Gain Regional Stakeholder Group is comprised of a Stakeholder Advisory Panel and four Regional Hubs. It is the collective responsibility of the Regional Stakeholder Group to make MCZ recommendations to Government by 1st June 2011. The Stakeholder Advisory Panel and Regional Hubs will have different roles in the recommendation process as outlined in these Terms of Reference.**
- 1.2** The RSG will work within the following parameters:
- Date by which recommendations have to be submitted to Natural England and JNCC (1st June 2011).
 - The regional MCZ project boundaries which have been delineated by the MCZ Project.
 - Net Gain will need to plan with adjacent projects (Balanced Seas and the Scottish MPA project).
 - The location and features of existing and proposed Marine Protected Areas (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar and SSSIs).
 - In accordance with the Ecological Network Guidance and other guidance from Natural England, the JNCC, the Science Advisory Panel and other economics and social science experts
 - The Terms of Reference. These Terms of Reference have been developed with advice from RSG members with agreement from the Net Gain Regional Project Board. Should any future amendments to these Terms of Reference be necessary it will be done in consultation with the RSG and members will be notified in writing.

2. Membership of the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG):

- 2.1** Membership will include representatives of groups and organisations with a range of possible interests in MCZs and who are able to speak on behalf of those groups or organisations.
- 2.2** It will not be possible to have every individual stakeholder group represented on the RSG so members should do all possible to actively represent and liaise with their stakeholder sector as a whole outside the meetings to ensure everyone's views and concerns are raised. Between meetings, members supported by the regional and national project teams are expected to liaise with the sector they are representing in order to:

- Provide their sector with updates on the work and must feedback the views of their sector in relation to recommendations developed.
- Provide information on all potential effects of proposed MCZ options. This will include information on the potential for sectors to adapt their activities where necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for features in the proposed MCZs.
- Disseminate information on the MCZ recommendation process and workshop outputs to their sector.
- Act as the point of contact for establishing a two-way dialogue to ensure their sectors' aspirations for the MCZs are represented at workshops. Members should give consideration as to how this is best managed for their particular sector.

2.3 All effort should be put into ensuring that the same people attend each meeting. A deputy may be nominated but it is the responsibility of the RSG member to fully brief the deputy on progress prior to any meeting attended. If deputies attend they too will operate within these Terms of Reference.

2.4 Members should engage positively in the process and the meetings associated with it.

2.5 At least one member from each Hub will act as a representative on the StAP for transparency and accountability and contribute there on behalf of all Hub members and (clearly separated) their own sector.

2.6 StAP members should be knowledgeable about the wider sector that they are representing and should have an awareness/understanding of other sectors engaged in the Net Gain process.

2.7 To support stakeholders who may find attendance difficult, Net Gain has a stakeholder remuneration policy (available on request).

2.8 Where appropriate, Net Gain staff will join in and contribute to sessions and discussions in an advisory role.

3. Operation of Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings

3.1 Meetings will take place as appropriate and possible during each of the main 'iteration' stages of the national MCZ recommendation process.

3.2 Apart from during the first round, meetings will be timetabled and located as fully as possible with the agreement of RSG members and appropriate notice will be given.

- 3.3** Members are expected to have read papers circulated and be appropriately prepared. This will be complemented by Net Gain circulating material with appropriate time for reading and preparing.
- 3.4** All present will contribute as fully and openly as possible (while respecting, for example, commercial confidentiality). Members must be willing to listen, understand, communicate and respect other members.
- 3.5** All will be treated as equal 'in the room' and all views will be respected.
- 3.6** To encourage free expression in meetings, no comments made or noted will be attributed to any particular person, group or organisation, except in particular and agreed circumstances, e.g. for clarity in the record.
- 3.7** Decisions will be reached by consensus. When they arise, insurmountable differences of view will be clarified and recorded (including attribution where necessary).
- 3.8** The facilitation team and Net Gain staff will aim to note all key points correctly. Members need to help by ensuring all possible correctness at the time.
- 3.9** Smaller, task-focused sub-groups may be needed from time to time in order to carry forward any work of the RSG between full meetings of the Hubs/StAP.
- 3.10** The facilitation team and Net Gain staff will do all possible to support RSG members in their role.
- 3.11** Full reports will be made from each meeting and circulated to all participants (and any sending apologies) as soon as possible after meetings. As appropriate, short, summary reports may also be produced. Reports will be sent in the most appropriate format for each RSG member.
- 3.12** It is the responsibility of each member to check the meeting minutes for accuracy and raise any concerns as soon as possible with the Project Manager. If additional information is requested to be included within the report after an event, it will be included but clearly differentiated as 'post event'.
- 3.13** Final and agreed reports will be available to anybody via the project website and/or on request.
- 3.14** Regional Hub meetings will be organised and run by the facilitation team on behalf of Net Gain and all Hub members. They will suggest and manage agendas based on an understanding of what the group has requested, what is necessary at that particular stage and what is feasible to cover in the agreed time. The facilitation team will not take a view on issues under discussion.

3.15 Stakeholder Advisory Panel meetings will be organised and run by the Net Gain team and Chaired by Trevor Jameson. They will suggest and manage agendas based on an understanding of what the StAP has requested, what is necessary at that particular stage and what is feasible to cover in the agreed time. The Net Gain team and Trevor Jameson will not take a view on issues under discussion.

4. Communications

4.1 All members agree to work together to ensure that communication of the RSG's business to any others is clear, consistent and accurate and in no way attributes views, ideas, information etc. to any other individual, group or sector. In this spirit, all members agree:

- not to talk on behalf of the RSG unless mandated to do so;
- to notify the Project Team in advance of any intention to communicate widely¹ on Net Gain and the RSG's business so that communication opportunities can be coordinated and maximised;
- to use existing forms of words or other agreed text where possible to describe the RSG's business in their own communications;
- to make the RSG aware of inaccurate communication or reporting by others, so that the RSG's view(s) can be clarified;
- and that the Project Team has the mandate to manage urgent communication issues on behalf of the RSG, for example responding to media requests etc and may call upon members of the RSG for further information or support.

4.2 Net Gain may produce Summaries and Press Releases on RSG events. These should, where appropriate, be shared with RSG members. However, as timescales are such that it may not be possible to share drafts of these with all RSG members all care will be taken to respect the outcomes of the events.

4.3 In the same context, it is understood that some RSG members, and/or their organisations, may wish to produce their own Press Releases and so forth. Similar care and respect for the process, for others and for confidentiality will be expected in these.

¹ For instance, speaking at a conference or mailing their sector or organisation

5. Regional Hubs Role and Remit

- 5.1** Four Regional Hubs have been established in the Northeast, Yorkshire and Humber, Lincolnshire and The Wash and the East of England. The Regional Hubs do not however operate within fixed boundaries; whilst planning in each Hub will focus on the Hub area, members will have access to information on the entire project area to facilitate interpretation of the ENG.
- 5.2** The overall objectives behind the formation and operation of the Hubs are to:
- engage with regional and local communities of interest (stakeholders) who may be impacted by the recommendations;
 - ensure that all stakeholder interests are understood and considered;
 - access stakeholders' experience and knowledge;
 - maximise areas of agreement;
 - acknowledge and clarify areas of outstanding disagreement;
 - establish and maintain an open and transparent working process including information sharing, reporting and communication.
- 5.3** The Hubs will plan:
- The location, size and shape of MCZs.
 - The features to be protected within the MCZs.
 - The conservation objectives of the MCZs.
 - An assessment of environmental, economic and social impacts of the proposed regional MCZs, presenting the results in a formal impact assessment document.
- 5.4** As work develops to suggest specific locations for MCZs, additional representatives with relevant local interest may be invited to join the Regional Hubs. They will be fully briefed and be required to operate within these Terms.

6. Stakeholder Advisory Panel Role and Remit

- 6.1** The Net Gain team will collate outputs (maps, feedback and commentary) from the Regional Hubs during each iteration to pass to the Stakeholder Advisory Panel.

The Stakeholder Advisory Panel will support the Regional Hubs in the planning process by considering the collated outputs and will:

- Provide suggestions for how additional sites might be included in the network to better achieve the ENG criteria. It is anticipated that discussions will be of particular importance for offshore sites recognising the collective expertise of StAP members in the offshore area.
- Provide advice and feedback on how amendments could be made to proposed sites in adjacent Hubs to better achieve ENG criteria such as connectivity.
- Provide advice to the Hubs where there are any inconsistencies or insufficiencies in meeting the ENG.
- Ensure fairness across the Regional Hubs by checking that each Hub is aware of the emerging network and advise where additional sites may need consideration so that the ENG criteria of replication and Representativity are met across the whole of the project area
- Ensure consistency in the approach being taken across the Regional Hubs.
- Advise on sectoral issues which extend beyond or cross over individual Hub boundaries.
- Consider the feedback from Named Consultative Stakeholders. To ensure a consistent approach, StAP members will make recommendations to the appropriate Regional Hub on how to incorporate Named Consultative Stakeholder comments during the subsequent round of planning. The Regional Hubs will have access to all comments for information.
- Provide data to inform the ongoing impact assessment, and advise on all potential effects of proposed MCZ options across the whole Net Gain project area. This will include information on the potential for sectors to adapt their activities where necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for features in the proposed MCZs.
- Advise on cross boundary issues between Net Gain and other regional MCZ projects and the Scottish MPA Project.

6.2 The Stakeholder Advisory Panel will not

- Duplicate the planning process undertaken at the Regional Hubs.

- Alter the outputs of the Regional Hubs. Only comment and feedback will be provided to the Regional Hubs to inform the subsequent round of planning. The regional profile will be used to facilitate the StAPs discussions and inform their advice.

6.3 The Stakeholder Advisory Panel will

- Maintain an overview of the progress being made at the Regional Hubs.
- Advise the project team whether the right people, organisations or sectors are being involved at the right time.
- Have a good representation from different sectors and allow those sectors which have an interest in more than one regional MCZ project or Net Gain Regional Hub to maximise the efficiency of their input.
- Support the Chair in signing off the recommendations of the Regional Stakeholder Group for submission to the SAP and JNCC & Natural England

7. Links between the Regional Hubs and Stakeholder Advisory Panel

- 7.1** In summary, this is about **working together to recommend to Government Marine Conservation Zones that have the widest possible support and are based on the best available evidence.**
- 7.2** Although each Regional Hub will work on proposals for MCZ sites, only one collated suite of MCZs will be presented to the StAP and SAP for the whole of the Net Gain project area at each iteration.
- 7.3** It is the responsibility of the Regional Hubs to do all possible to ensure that their proposals presented to the StAP and SAP are sound and supportable.
- 7.4** The Stakeholder Advisory Panel may raise questions and seek amendments in order to ensure appropriate consistency across the 4 Regional Hubs and to satisfy the ENG.
- 7.5** Amendments, recommendations, queries or concerns raised at the StAP about Regional Hub proposals will be returned to the Hubs for consideration. The Hubs will take such feedback seriously in light of the collective responsibility of the Regional Stakeholder Group in submitting sites which satisfy the ENG and contribute to an ecologically coherent network in accordance with 1.2.

- 7.6** In the event that the Hubs choose not to take account of the StAP's advice they must articulate very clearly the reasons for not doing so to the StAP at each iteration.
- 7.7** It is essential that the Chair of the StAP can sign off the final recommendations on the 1st June 2011 with agreement from the StAP members. It is the Chair's role to make sure that any outstanding concerns or objections from the Regional Stakeholder Group are logged and included in the final recommendation report. In light of this:
- The final recommendations passed to the StAP will include a consensus log of any outstanding objections from the Regional Hub members at the final iteration.
 - Should any of the StAP members have outstanding objections or concerns with any of the final recommendations, this too will be recorded in the consensus log which will accompany the final recommendations on June 1st 2010.
- 7.8** Each Hub will be kept up to date with progress and outcomes from the other Hubs and the StAP via Net Gains website and communications.