

## **Knowledge Exchange within the Shelf Seas Biogeochemistry Research Programme: Making links with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-UK)**

Third Sector (or “Civil Society”) organisations are having a growing major and political, economic and social influence in the UK. Environmental third-sector organisations can play a very strong role in public engagement and influencing how people, governments, businesses and industry think and act in relation to the world around them. They require independent environmental science to shape their communications and policies.

NERC, in its [Delivery Plan 2011-2014](#) identifies Third-sector organisations as potential partners and beneficiaries of its strategic research programmes.

As such, links have been made between the SSB Research Programme and two projects being run by WWF-UK. The following information demonstrates how SSB can work within such programmes to maximise the impact of NERC-funded science of the Shelf Seas (in accordance with the policy-focussed overarching objective of the Research Programme):

**(i) The PISCES – Partnerships Involving Stakeholders in the Celtic Sea Ecosystem – programme:** the WWF PISCES programme is a three-year, European Commission LIFE+ funded project which aims to develop a set of practical guidelines for the delivery of an ecosystem approach to marine management in the Celtic Sea and Western Channel. The guidelines are being developed through a ‘bottom-up’ approach with a multi-sector, multi-national group of Celtic Sea marine users to inform day-to-day management of marine activities. The lessons learnt through the PISCES project will be used to influence future stakeholder engagement on European Union (EU) and national legislation and their implementation. PISCES has a core management team and also an advisory team to provide expertise and support.

The PISCES project is focussing on three main areas:

- Developing practical guidelines for the ecosystem approach that will translate legal requirements (e.g. in the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive) into practical actions
- Demonstrating the opportunities and an example of best practice for working at a regional level both within the Celtic Sea and across Europe
- Evaluating the best way to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process.

**Relevance to NERC:** An advantage of working with a programme such as PISCES is that it provides opportunities to engage with an *existing* multisectoral group of stakeholders including representatives from shipping, ports, fishing, coastal tourism and recreation, mariculture, environmental statutory agencies, marine aggregates, renewable energy and undersea cables, in the Celtic Sea. WWF-UK’s Marine Team has a proven track record in large scale project management involving stakeholder engagement and has expertise in facilitating engagement and dialogue. By linking with such a project NERC scientists can use these communication platforms and contribute to the scientific evidence base that underpins such a project, providing increased knowledge of the shelf seas and potentially more accurate predictions of future change, all of which can be used to develop guidelines for effective management of UK waters. For example, the current NERC-funded [FASTNET consortium](#) (within the Ocean Shelf Edge Exchange Research Programme) has made links to the PISCES project as a conduit to informing the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

For further information please visit the PISCES project website at <http://www.projectpisces.eu/>

Note: Although the PISCES programme will only run to late 2012 a bid has been submitted to the European Commission LIFE+ programmes, with input from NERC, to fund its successor; The Celtic Seas Partnership which (if funded) will run to 2016 and will contribute to the overarching Knowledge Exchange activity of the Shelf Sea Biogeochemistry programme :

## **(ii) The Celtic Seas Partnership (CSP)**

This WWF-led programme is concentrating on the OSPAR III region (referred to below as the Celtic Seas Marine Region), which is essentially all the European Shelf to the west of the UK.

A bid has been made to the European Commission LIFE+ funding scheme to fund this programme. An indication of the outcome is due in January 2012 with the 4 year programme starting in October 2012.

Building on the experience and outcomes of the PISCES programme (above), the CSP programme will engage stakeholders from sectors across the Celtic Seas to contribute to the development of marine strategies for supporting the implementation of EU environmental and maritime policy, in particular the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**, for the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of marine waters.

The CSP programme has 2 specific objectives:

Objective 1: Development of stakeholder engagement mechanisms for the Celtic Seas Marine Region (CSMR): *By 2016 effective engagement mechanisms will have been established with key sectoral interests and the most appropriate scales/mechanisms for engagement (eg Celtic Sea Forum, Irish Sea Platform) recognised to support delivery of ecosystem- based and integrated management.*

Objective 2: Demonstration of Ecosystem-based management approaches: *By 2016 successful ecosystem-based management techniques and methods to support integrated marine management have been developed and demonstrated through multistakeholder collaboration, to guide practical implementation of European maritime policy including the MSFD.*

**Engagement with the NERC community:** During the CSP programme, platforms for facilitating exchange and collaboration between marine resource users, scientist and policy makers at the regional and transboundary level will be provided. These include conferences, workshops and communication networks and should strengthen links between national administrations and sectors to raise awareness and understanding of transboundary MSFD implementation.

Three Celtic Seas Conferences will be run throughout the lifetime of the programme bringing together marine users/sectors, policy-makers and scientists. This provides a significant opportunity to NERC to maximise its knowledge exchange impact arising from its marine Research Programmes in shelf-sea and marine ecosystem research by ensuring their contribution to the management of the marine environment (specifically by providing better evidence and knowledge to inform the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive on areas such as the definition of Good Environmental Status and the optimisation of monitoring strategies).

These communication platforms offered through CSP will enable scientists to engage with directly with stakeholders to:

1. Ensure that the types of data and analyses and products being collected and developed are of most use to the different sectors using the region:
2. Ask for feedback on scientific developments within the programmes
3. Discuss potential partnership opportunities with stakeholders eg potential NERC 'CASE' PhD studentships to encourage collaboration between the research community and the end-users of research, and placements to enable knowledge exchange in the work-place. These will help develop best practice for collaborative working, including an appreciation of each other's needs and limitations.

Additionally, under Objective 2 (above) NERC science can be used to develop a Celtic Sea Web Portal, presenting data and information tailored towards the end-user (facilitated by the British Oceanographic Data Centre). This tool and its development can be demonstrated via the communication platforms offered by CSP.

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