



Marine
Management
Organisation



3rd Annual Marine Industry Conference & Exchange

MMO SUDG Industry Workshop: May 2 & 3 2018, Gateshead

Background

The annual conference in its third year, offers an ideal opportunity for the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Licensing Team to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and marine industry. The conference provides a forum to identify areas for best practice, exchange views on the pressures faced by industry and enhance regulation of the various marine sectors that contribute to the Blue economy.

Over the course of the conference presentations were delivered from various industry sectors, including The Crown Estate as the landlord for much of the sea; an innovative approach to drafting best practice guidance to help better understand marine licensing requirements for the cabling sector; and, updates from some **better regulation** initiatives developed in **Licensing**. These include improvements to the MMO Licensing function that will both streamline the service we provide and save money for customers.

A key objective of the Industry conference is to identify the key issues facing marine industry, share best practice and to encourage knowledge transfer in order to improve efficiency and reduce regulatory barriers/ uncertainty. The MMO strives for continuous improvement and this conference highlights mutual areas for improvements to the way we manage and regulate our marine area.

An important outcome of the conference is also that people from MMO and industry get to meet each other personally, which is recognised by everyone present as an important aspect of people working together better at distance when dealing with licence applications and is a recognition that we are all working towards the same objectives which are effective regulation and a better economy.

The event was held 2 and 3 May 2018 at the Royal Navy Reserve Base HMS Calliope on Gateshead Quayside and was attended by more than 70 delegates each day.

The event was chaired by Dr Shaun Nicholson (MMO) and Peter Barham (SUDG).



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Conference 2018

Over the course of the conference, presentations were delivered from various industry sectors and different areas of the MMO.

Day 1 - The conference was opened by MMO Chief Executive Officer John Tuckett, Presentations were given by the Crown Estate, National Grid, the marine aggregates sector, carbon capture storage sector, the subsea cables sector, MMO marine planning; and updates from some better regulation initiatives developed in MMO marine licensing team.

Day 2 - The conference included presentations from the MMO's technical advisors Cefas, the ports sector, Offshore Renewable Energy, the Society for Underwater Technology (guests), the nuclear energy sector and the MMO Marine Pioneer Project.

The conference was closed by Director of Marine Licensing Trudi Wakelin and Peter Barham of SUDG. Trudi highlighted a key achievement had been the subsea cables MMO desk note which had been produced jointly with industry, an innovative approach to drafting best practice guidance to help better understand marine licensing requirements for the cabling sector.

Group Discussion Sessions

During the workshop there were a number of breakout sessions for MMO staff and industry representatives to work together over both days. Conference attendees were divided into smaller discussion groups to identify key issues and opportunities.

The group discussions were structured around specific questions. The feedback from these are summarised below and creates a number of opportunities for further discussion and work.

What is going well?

- Self-service marine licensing.
- Monthly billing is welcomed.
- SUDG workshops and Licensing Improvement Project meetings, industry interchange between MMO licensing and industry.
- Operational Projects such as Offshore Wind Farms are quickly processed.
- Evidence of some stringent marine licence conditions being removed.
- Adaptability and willingness to change by both MMO and industry is positive.
- Marine Case Management System (MCMS) MMO licensing portal improvements.



- Approachable MMO case officers and good relations with industry contacts.
- Regional Monitoring (for marine aggregates) provides real, tangible benefits.
- Pre-application engagement (NSIPs) is worthwhile.
- Dedicated MMO Director of Licensing now in place.
- MMO Coastal Concordat awareness is gradually improving.

What can be improved?

- Reduce fees for smaller projects.
- Communication during 'On hold time' – KPIs, MMO should manage expectations, processing timeline and prompts, clarity with case updates.
- MMO could make contact points available and ensure continuity of contact – MMO recognises the issue of high staff turnover and is trying to improve this.
- SNCB advice isn't always evidence based/up to date and MMO needs to be more robust in assessing SNCB advice.
- Upfront advice on multiple licences – e.g. applicants may find out further down the line they require wildlife licence (discussed that this is after initial assessment) further work is required.
- MMO could increase file capacity on application systems to enable easy submission of documents.
- Application guidance notes – all technical assessment documents made available e.g. marine plan policy assessment.
- Use history on long term projects into training to assist creating vital team awareness.
- MMO should critically review of consultation responses – subject matter experts, empower case officers via specialised training.
- Online sign up process for interest in various sectors for consultation.
- Improve search function on public register to be more user friendly.
- Better use/reuse of data by applicants.
- Transparency of costs/charges i.e. recoverable costs from MMO.
- SNCB advice can differ if offered through discretionary advice or via MMO.
- Improved communication during consultation periods - send through consultation comments early.
- Having more LPAs to adopt coastal concordat.
- MMO licensing staff should have relevant degree in science or planning/industry experience (more technical expertise in MMO rather than

CEFAS) – matrix of skills can draw on this to determine application costs if expertise needed is identified (consultancies charge less per hour with more qualified staff).

How does industry perceive the appetite for risk in the Marine Licensing team?

- Sometimes over precautionary post consent monitoring.
- Occasionally risk averse e.g. even with simply advising if a licence is required or not.
- Perception of minor points as big risks. The need to close out every single issue raised. Not confident in regulatory powers e.g. re-consulting on small changes.
- Need to address at the larger case project level if a Defra group approach is being taken (e.g. EA leading).
- Stated that risk is often dependent on project.
- MMO could better consider the practical commercial impacts on the licence holders from the position of some SNCBs.

What attributes would an ideal regulator have?

- Evidence based/Ability to commission (or highlight) evidence where evidence gaps are identified.
- Understand requirements of sectors being regulated – in house expertise.
- Experienced and knowledgeable.
- Non-prejudicial.
- Enthusiastic.
- Independent decision maker.
- Excellent efficient systems.
- Find the right balance/Apply weighting to all sides – impartial.
- Standard approach across the organisation.
- Clear escalation – visible connections.
- Strategic – recognising longer term benefits of non- cost recoverable activities.
- Be open to more industry engagement (advice, training, working together).
- Professional.
- Clear and concise.

Looking ahead to the next 1 – 5 years, what are the main challenges we face (industry and MMO)? What can we do together to help address any of those challenges?

- Forward planning – timing issues, front end loading of consent in project process is vital.



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- Variables – timing, method statements, designation of new marine protected areas adds to uncertainty.
- Industry intelligence can be shared with MMO to help with MMO resourcing.
- Question on Marine Plans – uncertainty of how useful they are/will be.
- Financing – data analysis – requires more action from trade bodies.
- Plan for worst case scenario, assume changes will be for the better so can be accommodated in variation.
- Financial uncertainty, ongoing austerity affecting regulator.
- Brexit – transposition of environmental regulations.
- Work together to agree opportunities/regulatory landscape – engage with government, potential for streamlining/improvements.
- Big Data – Data sharing/transparency, opportunities therein.

How can industry and MMO better understand each other's needs?

- Clear and consistent communications.
- Industry interchange to be continued and expanded.
- Conferences, joint attendance of MMO and industry enables more dialogue.
- Work shadowing, either in industry interchange or longer arrangement.
- Workshops on particular issues which may or may not involve case studies.

If you have any views on the conference and its outputs please contact either of the co-chairs Peter Barham SUDG- (peterjbarham@googlemail.com) or Dr Shaun Nicholson at the MMO (shaun.nicholson@marinemanagement.org.uk).



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