

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: vision, success criteria and high-level objectives

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This document is available on the Defra website:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/fisheries/marine/fishman/ifca.htm>

Published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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London SW1P 3JR

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Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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1 Introduction

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 strengthens and modernises the powers to manage inshore fisheries and the marine environment. It allows for the replacement of Sea Fisheries Committees with Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). They will have a range of duties including ensuring the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within their districts.

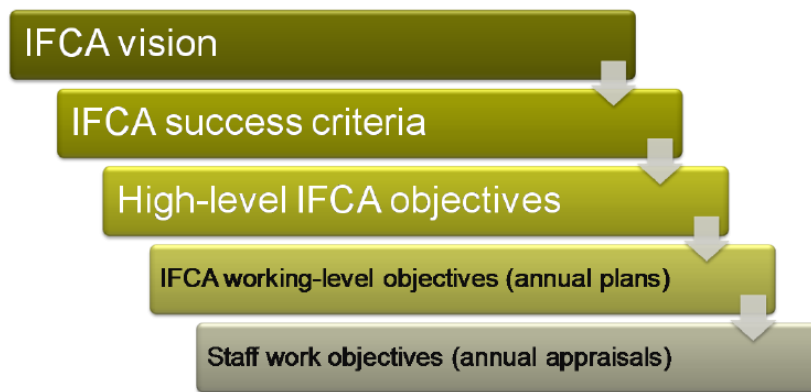
Implementation will be phased in over a six-month period. The intention is to establish ten IFC districts and corresponding shadow IFCAs from **1 October 2010**.¹

Existing SFCs will operate alongside Shadow IFCAs until the Sea Fisheries Regulations Act 1966 is repealed on **31 March 2011**, abolishing SFCs and establishing IFCAs, with all the new powers under the Act, to manage inshore fisheries and conservation matters in England with effect from **1 April 2011**.

2 IFCA vision and success criteria

The vision for IFCAs encapsulates the core role of the new organisations; and the success criteria outline what might be expected of IFCAs in achieving the vision. IFC Officers' own work objectives should have a clear link back to these high-level objectives, as is shown in the following diagram:

¹ Shadow IFCAs will operate alongside existing SFCs until IFCAs are fully vested 1 April 2011. Their role will be to develop their annual business plan and budget for 2011-12. SFCs will continue to manage the day-to-day fisheries business-as-usual until they are abolished with the repeal of the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1966 on 31 March 2011. This approach allows shadow Committees the time to plan for the 1st of April 2011, when IFCAs will be vested with their new duties and powers. Defra will be making some transitional funding available to support the establishment of Shadow IFCAs.



The vision for IFCAs and success criteria were discussed at a workshop in September 2009, hosted by Defra and attended by representatives of Sea Fisheries Committees, local and central government, fishing industry representatives and environmental organisations. During January and February 2010 we sought input on the high-level objectives for IFCAs from a range of key stakeholders.

3 Why have we produced this document?

This document brings together the vision, success criteria and high-level objectives that have been developed for IFCAs. It will form part of a suite of documents that will be produced to help IFCAs to deliver their new duties set out in the Act and the delivery of the vision, success criteria and high-level objectives.

There are two main reasons for producing this document:

- the vision, success criteria and high-level objectives help to create a shared understanding of the aims and objectives of IFCAs among themselves and those interested in the work that IFCAs will do;
- From the date when the first Order creating an IFC district comes into force every four years after that the Secretary of State must lay a report before Parliament about the conduct and operation of the IFCAs in existence during the whole or part of that period. Achievement against these success criteria will be one of the main influences on the first report.

4 Vision statement for IFCAs

A vision for an organisation is defined as 'an image of the future we seek to create'. In other words, a vision describes the best possible outcome. Vision statements should be timeless and, if successful, are remembered and become synonymous with the organisation.

In consultation with local and central government and non-governmental organisations, Defra worked with Sea Fisheries Committees to develop the following vision statement for IFCAs:

“Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.”

An exemplary IFCA will aim to embody this vision.

5 Success criteria for IFCAs

If the vision for an organisation is defined as 'an image of the future we seek to create' then the success criteria are the tangible aspects that underpin the vision. We have developed seven success criteria, which are set out below.

Success Criterion 1: IFCAs have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected

Staff feel proud to work for their IFCA and have the training and skills to deliver their Authority's objectives in a professional, fair and consistent manner. They are supported by excellent leaders and managers, working alongside engaged and effective committees. These committees are representative of the communities they serve and wider stakeholder interests; they have the backing of constituent local authorities and provide the strategic direction to ensure the long-term sustainability of the marine environment in and around their districts.

Success Criterion 2: Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within the district

The decisions to introduce, amend or repeal byelaws are evidence-based, timely, based on appropriate consultation and can be shown to have a positive impact in line with their intended effect to manage, protect and promote the recovery of sea fisheries resources from the effects of exploitation.

Success Criterion 3: A fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime is in place

A risk-based enforcement regime is in place, which is in line with the Regulators Compliance Code, legislative requirements, and which makes IFCAs an efficient and fair enforcer, managing the exploitation of sea fisheries resources, using a range of alternative enforcement methods and sanctions whose impact and effectiveness is regularly assessed and continually improved.

Success Criterion 4: IFCAs work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders

IFCAs will work across boundaries, engaging effectively with local and central government, other government bodies, other delivery bodies, industry and other NGOs, recreational users and individuals in the work that they do. Through this partnership approach to working IFCAs will deliver the socio-economic and environmental outcomes they were created under the Marine and Coastal Access Act to deliver.

Success Criterion 5: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

IFCAs, by acquiring and sharing their own internal data and by seeking and sharing those generated and recorded by others (including the MMO, Environment Agency, Natural England and Cefas), will have access to the necessary scientific, statistical and socio-economic information relating to inshore fishing and the marine environment to enable effective delivery of their duties.

Success Criterion 6: IFCAs support and promote the sustainable management of the marine environment

IFCAs will deliver responsive and flexible management of sea fisheries resources to meet local needs, in line with the legislative and other frameworks set by Central Government and others, such as the High Level Marine Objectives, Marine Policy Statement and Marine Plans. In doing this, IFCAs will be able to show that they are having a positive impact, leading to more sustainably exploited sea fisheries resources in their districts.

Success Criterion 7: IFCAs are recognised and heard

Each IFCA, and IFC authorities as a group, have a vision and plan for future management of inshore fisheries and conservation. This will help them to be a recognised 'brand', managing their public voice so that they are respected and trusted for the expertise they offer.

6 Overview of high-level objectives for IFCAs

The high-level objectives are outlined in Annex A. Although the vision and success criteria are 'timeless' the high-level objectives are likely to change over time, those at Annex A cover the period April 2011 (when IFCAs are vested) to April 2015, when the first of the Secretary of State's report into the operation of

IFCAs will be laid before Parliament. Each IFCA must decide for itself how the high-level objectives will be delivered and Defra will work with the IFCAs to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. The IFCA Committee's members should be closely involved in shaping how these objectives are delivered, approving and overseeing the process as part of the IFCA's business.

In order to achieve these high-level objectives, IFCAs will need to develop working level objectives, which should be clearly outlined in their annual plans and form the basis of their own annual performance evaluation.

Annex A –High-level objectives for IFCA 2011-15

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 1: IFCA Authorities have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected

1. By April each year, publish an annual plan that meets minimum standards as set out in Defra guidance, setting out the authority's main objectives and priorities for the year.
 2. As soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, prepare a report on the IFCA's activities in that year, in line with Defra guidance.
 3. Demonstrate a long-term, strategic approach to sustainable marine management, in line with duties in the Marine and Coastal Access Act, clearly articulating how the IFCA will do this through annual plans and/or longer-term strategies. Delivery is ongoing, with the first formal review in 2015.
 4. Staff management systems are in place that include:
 - an annual staff performance monitoring system, which sets clear work objectives for every member of staff that are linked to the organisational objectives described in the annual plan and monitors their performance against a set of agreed criteria; and
 - a performance improvement procedure.
- IFCAs must show progress in this objective by April 2011, for example by having gained Committee agreement to introduce such a system, with fully-functioning staff management systems in place by April 2012.
5. Develop and deliver a people capability strategy, which ensures that staff can deliver the organisational objectives as set out in annual plans, aided through training, mentoring and new skills development. The strategy should be developed by April 2012; IFCA's should demonstrate ongoing delivery, with the first formal review in 2015.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 1: IFC Authorities have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected

6. By September 2012, demonstrate that staff are engaged with the objectives of the organisation, can influence the direction and development of the organisation and are free to constructively challenge decisions without reproach.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 2: Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within the district

1. By September 2012 demonstrate that:

- key issues likely to impact on the sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC district are identified and evaluated using the best available evidence and a range of management options is considered;
- the impacts that different courses of action might have in managing those key issues are thoroughly evaluated;
- proportionate regulation (for example introducing a legal mechanism such as a byelaw) is used as a last resort;
- the effectiveness of interventions to improve the delivery of beneficial outcomes is continuously monitored; and
- there is a clear IFCA Committee process for dealing with agreed interventions quickly, efficiently and effectively, particularly for emergency byelaws.

2. By April 2015, all legacy byelaws have been reviewed and evaluated against current evidence base; redundant and duplicate byelaws have been removed and gaps covered.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 3: A fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime is in place

1. By April 2012, demonstrate the use of a transparent, risk-based enforcement framework that meets the minimum standard set out in government guidance and is continuously reviewed and improved.
2. By April 2012, develop and apply a code of conduct for inspections that aligns IFCA activity and procedures with national standards.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 4: IFCAs work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders

1. By April 2011, develop Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or Service Level Agreements with key partners, including Cefas, MMO, Natural England and the Environment Agency, that outline agreed ways of working and sharing information and, by April 2012, demonstrate that they are being utilised. Consideration should be given to having a Service Level Agreement with a lead local authority within the IFC district.
2. By April 2012, develop a stakeholder engagement and communication strategy with corresponding plans that:
 - demonstrate transparency and a balanced approach to dealing with key stakeholders; and
 - enables consideration of stakeholder views when making decisions.
3. By April 2014, review MoUs and stakeholder engagement and communication strategy/plans and implement any necessary improvements by April 2015.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 5: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

1. By April 2012, put procedures, plans and appropriate records systems in place that demonstrate that the best available, quality-assured evidence, whether acquired in-house or externally, is used appropriately in decision-making at all levels. These procedures, plans and records systems must meet minimum standards as set out in government guidance and EU legislation.
2. By April 2012, have an agreed action plan of how key, mutually-beneficial information will be shared between IFCAs and with key delivery partners to improve efficiency and the delivery of beneficial outcomes.
3. By April 2013, demonstrate that there is the in-house capability to collect, analyse and interpret evidence to inform management policy decisions and meet the minimum requirements laid out in government guidance on evaluation and monitoring.
4. By April 2014, review evidence and knowledge sharing procedures and implement any necessary improvements by April 2015.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 6: IFCAs support and promote the sustainable management of the marine environment

1. By April 2012, with partner organisations develop shared objectives for the sustainable management of the District's marine environment and ensure that they are reflected in annual plans.
2. By April 2013, develop and implement action plans for communicating and educating coastal communities about sustainable management of the marine environment.
3. By April 2015, demonstrate adoption of the principles of best practice in sustainable management of marine environment for the District, as exemplified using tools such as Strategic Environmental Assessments.
4. By April 2015 at the latest, but showing progress from April 2011, demonstrate adoption of minimum standards (for example in line with government guidance on sustainable development) and a precautionary approach for the management and protection of sites of special scientific interest, national nature reserves, Ramsar sites, European marine sites, and/or Marine Conservation Zones within the IFC district.

High-level objectives and targets in support of Success Criterion 7: IFCAs are recognised and heard

1. By April 2012, demonstrate ability to effectively engage with Local and Central Government and key partner organisations at a national level, to the benefit of IFCAs as a whole.
2. By April 2013, develop a strategy and corresponding plan for promotion of the work of IFCAs and the benefits that they offer to the local community, and demonstrate implementation of the plan by April 2015.