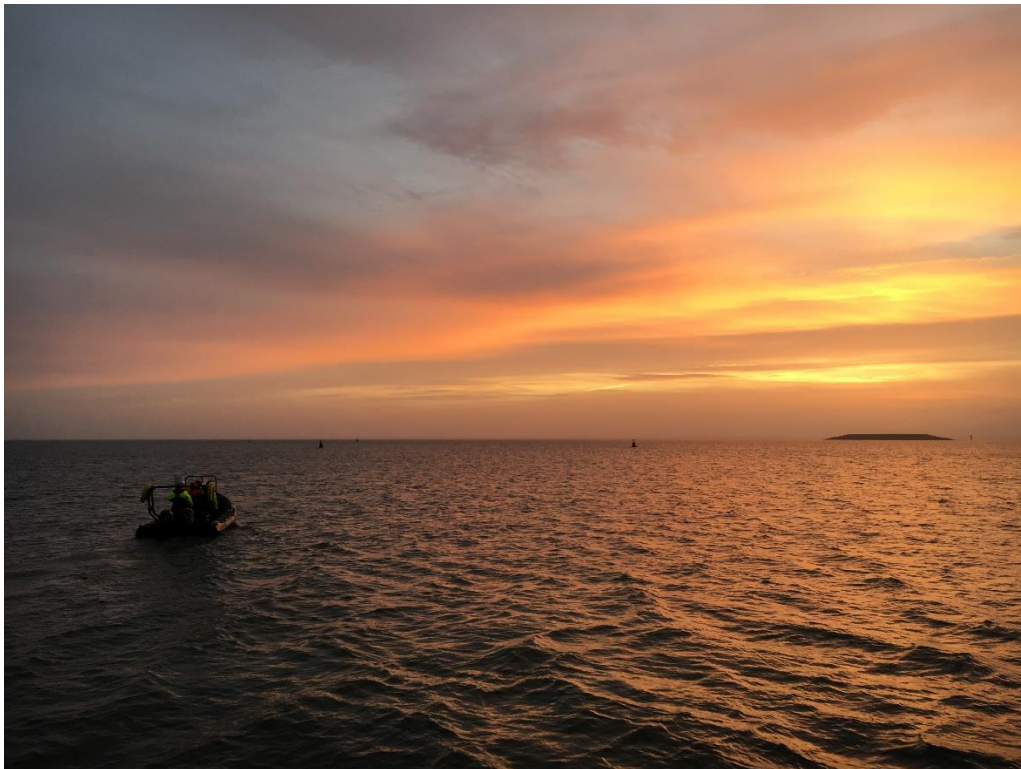




Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Business Plan 2023-2028



March 2023

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Abbreviations	
Bass Nursery Area	BNA
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	Cefas
Common Fisheries Policy	CFP
Community Voice Method	CVM
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Defra
Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	Eastern IFCA
Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee	ESFJC
Environment Agency	EA
European Marine Site	EMS
European Union	EU
Fisheries Act 2020	FA
Fisheries Improvement Project	FIP
Fisheries Management Plans	FMP
Fish Health Inspectorate	FHI
Geographic Information System	GIS
Habitats Regulations Assessment	HRA
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	IFCO
Inshore Vessel Monitoring System	IVMS
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	ICES
Joint Fisheries Statement	JFS
Landing Per Unit Effort	LPUE
Length Converted Catch Curve	LCCC
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009	MaCAA
Marine Conservation Society	MCS
Marine Conservation Zone	MCZ
Marine Management Organisation	MMO
Marine Protected Area	MPA
Marine Science Officer	MSO
Marine Stewardship Council	MSC
Marine Strategy Framework Directive	MSFD

Maritime and Coastguard Agency	MCA
Maximum Sustainable Yield	MSY
Minimum Conservation Reference Size	MCRS
Minimum Landing Size	MLS
Monitoring and Control Plans	MCPs
Monthly Shellfish Activity Report	MSAR
Natural England	NE
New Burdens Funding	NBF
National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group	NIMEG
Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic	OSPAR Convention
Recreational Sea Angler	RSA
Relative Fluorescence Unit	RFU
Renaissance of East Anglia Fisheries	REAF
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	RNLI
Royal Yachting Association	RYA
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI
Size of Maturity	SOM
Special Area of Conservation	SAC
Special Protection Area	SPA
Statutory Instrument	SI
Study of the Wash Embayment, Environment and Productivity	SWEEP
Sustainable management of rays and skates	SUMARIS
Tasking and Coordinating Group	TCG
Vessel Monitoring System	VMS
Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership	WNNMP
Wash Fishery Order 1992	WFO 1992

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Introduction

The purpose of this Business Plan is to inform funding authorities (County Councils and Defra), local communities, local bodies and key delivery partners of the statutory duties and priorities of Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) and how it intends to carry them out on time and within budget.

Eastern IFCA is a statutory regulator created under Section 150 of MaCAA 2009 as a successor to the Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (ESFJC). It is responsible for the sustainable management of sea fisheries resources and protection of the marine environment in inshore waters i.e. to six nautical miles from coastal baselines. District boundaries and IFCA membership are set out in SI 2010 no.2189. Eastern IFCA became fully operational on 1 April 2011. The Authority's duties, as set out in MaCAA are enshrined in the IFCA vision statement which is to:

'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'

The Challenge

Throughout history the marine environment has been a relatively unregulated and un-exploited space. Some activities, particularly fishing, have been able to continue without substantial interference through the ages. Whilst there have been industrial developments in the oil and gas sector, most have occurred offshore and, due to their typically small footprint of production infrastructure, have not impacted significantly on other marine users.

In recent years, the growth of marine environment exploitation through the installation of renewable energy infrastructure, aggregate dredging, coastal protection, and other coastal developments is now challenging the ability for all marine users to successfully co-exist, especially in the inshore sector where there is typically more activity. This challenge is likely to come to the fore with the pending Marine Spatial Prioritisation Program which is understood to be in development. In addition, the impacts of smaller-scale inshore fishing practices are under greater scrutiny, including their potential to reduce the resilience of habitats and species in the context of the UK's MPA network and global climate change. The challenge is one of balancing the complex demands of the inshore marine area and of reconciling global threats with meaningful local actions. The penalty of not doing so is that the smaller business models are liable to fall by the wayside. This, in turn, may irreversibly alter the tapestry of a region noted for its marine heritage.

The Strategic Landscape

Although Eastern IFCA is not a Defra body, much of its work services Defra policy objectives. In delivering output at the regional level it is essential that those responsible for the governance and leadership of Eastern IFCA appreciate and understand the strategic landscape.

The Fisheries Act 2020

In 2021, The Fisheries Act 2020 replaced the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the end of the EU Exit transition period. The Act presents high-level objectives for the management of fisheries, which are as follows¹:

- a) the sustainability objective,
- b) the precautionary objective,
- c) the ecosystem objective,
- d) the scientific evidence objective,
- e) the bycatch objective,
- f) the equal access objective,
- g) the national benefit objective, and
- h) the climate change objective.

The Joint Fisheries Statement (a further output from the Fisheries Act 2020) was published in November of 2022². This sets out the policies for achieving the 8 objectives and enables Defra to develop fisheries management plans (FMPs). Together, the Fisheries Act 2020 and the outputs from it establish the strategic direction for the future of UK fisheries, which will influence the work of Eastern IFCA.

Eastern IFCA will play a role in the development of the FMPs, providing advice and context as well as facilitating dialogue with the fishing industry.

Our Part in the Defra Outcome Delivery Plan

In July 2021, Defra published the Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-22. This plan identifies the key priority outcomes to be achieved. Once the next Outcome Delivery Plan is published, this plan will be updated.

The **four priority outcomes** from the Defra Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-22:

- Improve the environment through cleaner air and water, minimised waste, and thriving plants and terrestrial and marine wildlife.

¹ The Fisheries Act 2020 c.22. Fisheries objectives, accessed at:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/section/1/enacted>

² Joint Fisheries Statement. (2022) Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government & DAERA, accessed at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-fisheries-statement-jfs>

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage in the agricultural, waste, peat, and tree planting sectors to help deliver net zero.
- Reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding and coastal erosion on people, businesses, communities, and the environment.
- Increase the sustainability, productivity and resilience of the agriculture, fishing, food and drink sectors, enhance biosecurity at the border and raise animal welfare standards.

Eastern IFCA can contribute to three of the four priority outcomes:

1. Improve the environment through cleaner air and water, minimised waste, and thriving plants and terrestrial and marine wildlife.

The health of the inshore marine environment is integral to the delivery of this outcome. Working together with partner organisations, Eastern IFCA is responsible for the development of management of fishing activity within MPAs to ensure fishing activities align with conservation objectives. Across the district, Eastern IFCA has a duty to maintain biologically diverse and healthy fish and shellfish stocks through effective management and the delivery of enhanced fishing opportunities. Our work to support national marine planning and licensing activity will assist in delivering economic benefit in line with, rather than at the expense of, natural processes.

2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage in the agricultural, waste, peat and tree planting sectors to help deliver net zero.

Eastern IFCA's regulatory remit empowers it to support the fishing industry in efforts to achieve the highest standards of sustainability, for example through supporting the implementation of fisheries management that meets international accreditation standards. Additionally this can include, in policy and management decisions, encouraging transitions to reduce emissions towards the delivery of net zero. This is critical as Eastern IFCA adapts to meet the objectives of the Fisheries Act 2020, particularly the "climate change objective" and the "sustainability objective".

3. Increase the sustainability, productivity and resilience of the agriculture, fishing, food and drink sectors, enhance biosecurity at the border and raise animal welfare standards.

Regional fishing and fish processing businesses contribute to a national food and drink industry and the UK economy. Eastern IFCA has a remit to support the viability of fishing enterprises across the diverse scale of business models across the district. This includes developing management to support the viability of fishing businesses into the future, for example, the work towards the replacement of the WFO 1992 aims to take an ecosystems-based approach to the consideration of factors in developing new management. Where possible within our remit, Eastern IFCA also engages with regional efforts to monitor biosecurity risks within key fisheries alongside partner organisations such as Cefas, and local councils.

25 Year Environment Plan

HM's Government's 25 Year Environment Plan³ was published in 2018 and sets out a long-term environmental approach towards agriculture, forestry, land use, and fishing that prioritises the improvement of the natural environment. In its first revision to the plan, the 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan⁴ (EIP) builds on the vision set out by the new plan and sets out some interim targets to monitor progress. The Environment Act 2021 and the 25-Year Environment Plan, alongside the provisions of the Fisheries Act 2020 are a part of the transition for UK fisheries policy and legislation post EU Exit, to an extent replicating the effect of previous EU legislation.

In the initial years of the plan, Defra created four pioneer projects to inform its development and implementation. One of the four pioneers was a Marine Pioneer, which was led by the MMO. Eastern IFCA were instrumental in the pioneer being in the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and remained closely involved through membership of the Steering Group and participation in a Saltmarsh Group. The project concluded during 2020 and the evaluation of all pioneers is ongoing to inform future policy⁵.

There are elements of the 25 Year Environment Plan to which Eastern IFCA will contribute through fulfilling its duties. Chapter 5 of the plan—Securing clean, healthy, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans—relates specifically to the core functions of Eastern IFCA and is therefore reflected in the priorities outlined in this business plan. In addition, the goal 1 as set out in the 2023 EIP, which seeks to achieve 'thriving plants and wildlife' includes several relevant elements relating to marine spatial prioritisation, renewable energy, protection of cetaceans and seals, MPA management and sustainable fisheries. There is a clear emphasis in the EIP for progress towards achieving the vision of the 25 year Environment Plan which has had (in the case Inshore VMS for example) and will have (for example, in the case of additional protections within existing MPAs and FMPs) implications on the management of inshore fisheries.

Of particular emphasis this year is working towards implementing management measures to mitigate risks to conservation objectives to MPAs to contribute towards the Government's target of achieving 48% of MPAs being in favourable conditions by 2024 and 70% by 2042. It is anticipated that this will be achieved if damaging activities are halted by 2024^{6,7}.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>

⁵ The Marine Management Organisation 2019, Guidance: Marine pioneer projects. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-pioneer/marine-pioneer-achievements> Last accessed: 21st January 2022

⁶ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-01-24/debates/BE258E23-1CA7-4607-804B-FD42A0EC3DEE/EnvironmentalTargets\(MarineProtectedAreas\)Regulations2022](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-01-24/debates/BE258E23-1CA7-4607-804B-FD42A0EC3DEE/EnvironmentalTargets(MarineProtectedAreas)Regulations2022)

⁷ environmental Improvement Plan 2023

The Marine Policy Statement and the East Inshore Marine Plan

MaCAA 2009 provided for a new planning system for the spatial management of sea use. The Marine Plans, along with the Marine Policy Statement⁸, underpin this planning system and seek to deliver the Government's vision to deliver 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas'.

The East Inshore Marine Plan⁹ sets out a vision for the area in 2034 in addition to the objectives and policy to achieve this. Nine policy areas (including biodiversity, fisheries, social and cultural) are considered directly relevant to Eastern IFCA work and are a consideration in decision making about Eastern IFCA's own activities (such as developing management) and as Eastern IFCA provides advice to the MMO and the Planning Inspectorate on proposed marine developments. For example, Eastern IFCA considers applications against the East Marine Plan policy FISH 1 that requires developers wherever possible to avoid preventing fishing activities or access to fishing grounds; policy FISH 2 that seeks to protect fish spawning and nursery grounds; policies ECO1 (consideration of cumulative impacts), BIO1 and BIO2 (consideration of biodiversity, including the need to enhance biological and geological interests); and policies GOV 2 and GOV 3 (consideration of co-existence opportunities and of displacement of activities).

Our District

The Eastern IFCA District was established by Order¹⁰ under Section 149 of MaCAA 2009 and extends seawards six nautical miles from the Haile Sand Fort off the coast of Lincolnshire to Felixstowe in Suffolk, encompassing the counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

The area includes The Wash embayment and various river estuaries including the Stour and Orwell in Suffolk. The full breadth of UK and EU forms of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are encompassed by the district, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Special Protected Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, as well as Ramsar sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a Marine Conservation Zone; around 96% of the district is covered by at least one MPA designation.

The commercial fisheries within the Eastern IFCA district are socially and financially important to the local and national economy, with some serving continental European and Asian markets. There are many active fishing communities and fishermen along

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>

⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/312496/east-plan.pdf

¹⁰ The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 (SI:2010/2189)

the district coastline that have existed for generations, and their environment and activity is key to their sense of place and experience.

From an economic perspective, key fisheries in the district include crustacean (crab and lobster), shrimps, cockle and whelk fisheries. During 2021 and 2022, the crustacean fisheries had a first sales value of circa £1.9M annually ¹¹, a figure that is likely to be an underestimate as it does not account for those that sell catch direct to the public. The sale of shellfish; crabs, mussels, lobsters, and oyster directly to the public from independent fish shops, cottages and cafes is a historic and celebrated practice along the North Norfolk Coast and forms much of the local identity and heritage of the area as well as contributing to tourism.

Further north around the coastline, the brown shrimp fishery in The Wash was awarded an MSC accreditation in January 2020 and consistently accounts for circa 94% of total UK landings of shrimp. Cockle fisheries in The Wash are prosecuted by up to 61 vessels, supporting a wide range of employment including three separate port-side processing factories that export to the EU. Whelk, which established itself as a key fishery in 2014 as a result of an emergent Asian market, had a first sale value of £1.1M¹² in 2022, which represents a significant decline since 2020 (of circa £3.1M).

The Eastern IFCA's district is also a popular destination for recreational fishing. In particular, the Suffolk coast is renowned amongst sea anglers, and both Norfolk and Suffolk coasts are popular destinations for bird watchers. The 'Participation, Effort and Catches of Sea Anglers Resident in the UK in 2018 and 2019' report published by Cefas in 2021¹³ highlights that recreational sea anglers fished for over 6 million days each year in 2018 and 2019, contributing to the economic and material health and wellbeing of the individual anglers and the communities that their activity supports. Eastern IFCA fully recognises both the value and potential of recreational sea angling.



¹¹ MMO landings data provided in January 2023. Filtered for all Crustacea species and for ICES statistical rectangles 33F1, 34F0, 34F1, 35F0, 35F1.

¹² MMO landings data provided in July 2021, 2020 figures. Filtered for Whelks and for ICES statistical rectangles 33F1, 34F0, 34F1, 35F0, 35F1.

¹³ Hyder, K.; Brown, A.; Armstrong, M.; Bell, B.; Hook, S.A.; Kroese, J. Radford, Z.; 2021, Participation, effort and catches of sea anglers resident in the UK in 2018 & 2019, Cefas.

The recent 'cost of living crisis' has compounded the impacts of COVID-19 leading to further uncertainty and volatility for many businesses and operations. In addition,

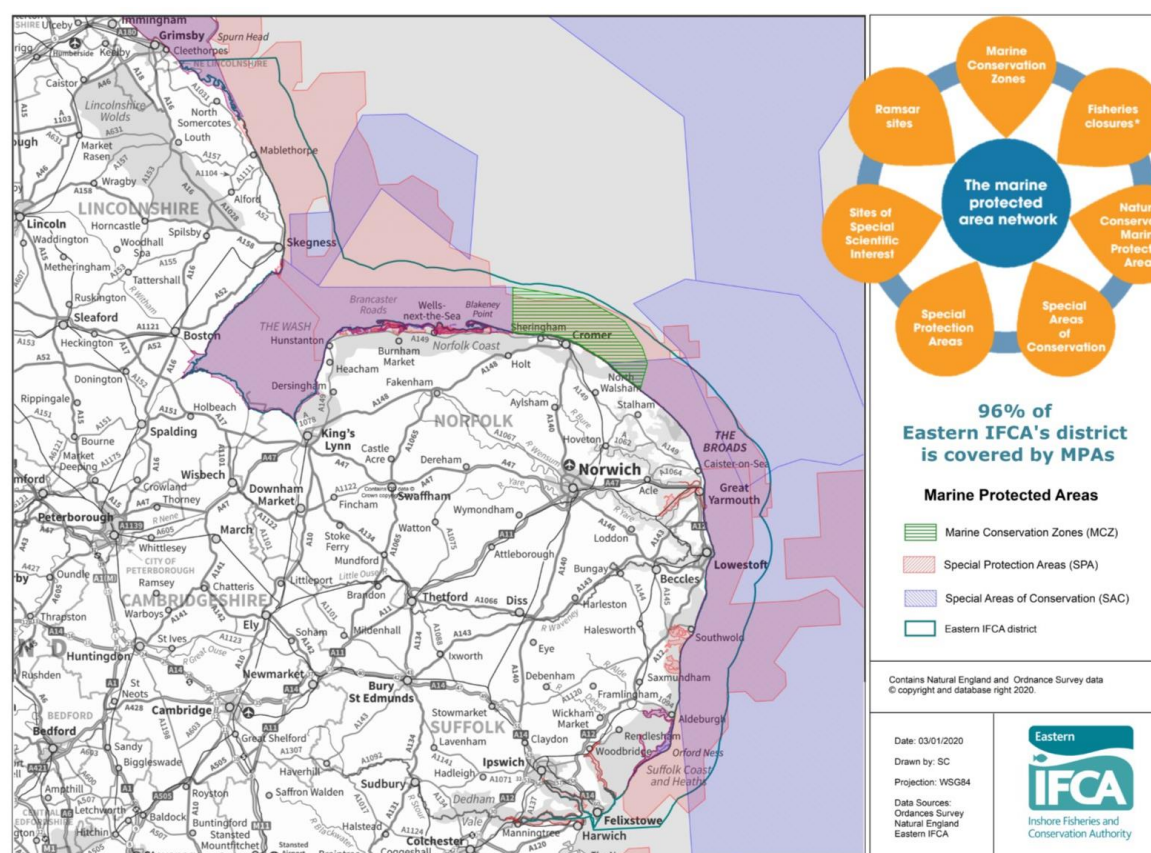


Figure 1. A map of the Eastern IFCA District showing the 96% coverage of Marine Protected Areas

realising the opportunities of EU Exit and further focus on climate change (including both limiting its extent and the longer-term impacts of it) are likely to mean that the next five years will be a period of change for inshore fisheries and the industry as it comes to terms with a different economic and legislative landscape.

Our Function and Duties

Eastern IFCA's primary duties are set out within MaCAA 2009 and are:

1. To manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:
 - a. seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way,
 - b. seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation,

- c. take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion, are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development, and
 - d. seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.
2. To seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Zone in the district are furthered.

Eastern IFCA is deemed a Relevant Authority and a Competent Authority for marine areas and European Marine Sites (EMS), under the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In comparison to the ESFJC, the duties and obligations set out in MaCAA 2009 require Eastern IFCA to collect and analyse greater quantities of data (s.175 MaCAA 2009) and exercise management for the protection of some marine plants and animals, not just for commercially exploited fish species.

In effectively discharging its duties, a key part of Eastern IFCA's operation is the responsibility to protect MPAs from damage through development of appropriate fisheries management measures up to and including byelaws. Any activity that Eastern IFCA undertakes or authorises within an MPA must be assessed to ensure that it will not hinder the site's conservation objectives. This requires significant resources to gather and scrutinise the evidence to deliver rigorous fisheries assessments, and subsequently to support the development of management measures and ensuring compliance.

As a reflection of its broader duties, Eastern IFCA's byelaw making powers are also comparatively broader and more flexible than those of its predecessor and include additional powers for managing fishing activity within MPAs in what is a dynamic environment.

Our Funding

The overall Authority revenue budget is £1,658,740 (2023-24) which includes a capital contribution for asset replacement (of £168,827). These amounts are contributed in a pre-agreed proportion by levy charged to the sponsoring local authorities: Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

In recognition of the revised and additional duties the Authority assumed in transition from ESFJC to Eastern IFCA, New Burdens Funding (NBF), equating to c.25% of the overall budget, was allocated from Defra for an initial 4-year period from 2011. This funding has been 'rolling' over annually unchanged since then. Defra have also allocated additional workstream funding of which it is anticipated that Eastern IFCA will receive £150,000 in relation to three separate workstreams for the financial year 2023/24.

Some additional revenue is generated from fees charged for permits, shellfish sampling and contracted research work on behalf of both public and private bodies. Additionally, a small amount of revenue is generated from bank interest on general reserves (often accrued over several years to fund replacement of Fisheries Patrol Vessels and Research Vessels). Recovered court costs awarded from successful prosecutions also appear as revenue.

Our Governance

The Authority comprises 21 members from a variety of backgrounds, which is intended to bring a range of skills and experience to debate and decision making. The breakdown of membership is as follows:

- 7 councillors appointed by the respective constituent Authorities namely, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.
- 1 officer each from Natural England, Environment Agency and Marine Management Organisation.
- 11 Volunteer members of the public appointed for their experience and/or expertise in marine related subject, such as the following categories:

Commercial fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile gear finfish (e.g. trawling, netting) • Mobile gear shellfish (e.g. dredging) • Static gear finfish (e.g. lines and nets) • Static gear shellfish (e.g. traps and pots) • Seafood development • Other (e.g. aquaculture, bait diggers)
Recreational fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational sea fish angling; • Interests in designated conservation sites (e.g. MCZs, SACs, SPAs, SSSIs) • Special wildlife interests (e.g. bird or sea mammal groups); • Underwater archaeological and historic environment interests
Marine environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal process (e.g. flood and coastal erosion risk); • Independent local marine science (e.g. conservation, fisheries, social science); • Access to the coast; • Estuarine interests; • Maritime-related organisations (e.g. Harbour Masters, RNLI, Maritime and Coastguard Agency); • Leisure and yachting interests; • Sub-aqua or commercial diving interests; • Other marine industries (e.g. offshore)

Our People

The CEO and Clerk to the Authority is a former senior Police Officer with 26 years' experience in a variety of disciplines. He has significant senior leadership experience including partnership working, stakeholder engagement and strategic change management as well as operational delivery. In addition to this he also has maritime experience gained from service in the Royal Navy and through personal interests. He has been in the role since September 2015.

The Authority has a complement of 26 staff. All staff are given appropriate training for their role and receive regular supervision relevant to their roles, which includes performance management, personal development and wellbeing.

Marine Science Officers (MSOs) have or at least one degree-level qualification in marine biology or associated marine sciences, and include officers with over 20 years' experience as well as relatively recent graduates. The Marine Protection team also comprises of a mixture of very experienced IFCOs (more than 20 years' experience) and newer members of the team. The team has a wide range of previous experience, including in the Police Service, commercial fishing, and further education.

Members of the Marine Protection team undertake formal training as enforcement officers through attendance at IFCA Competent Officer and Advanced Officer courses. Additional training is delivered by the MMO and the IFCA's via a suite of courses which are tailored to meet the needs of Eastern IFCA. Officers are warranted once they have attended a formal training course and/or have been assessed as competent operationally. Refresher training is ongoing, focusing on various areas as identified through the management and executive teams as well as the IFCA training lead. The Marine Protection team is currently operating with an additional IFCO (i.e. 1 over compliment) on a temporary basis which was accommodated within existing budgets.

Within the Marine Protection team, two Project Officers (POs) provide additional resource for development of management measures, acting as a conduit between the Marine Science team and Marine Protection Team under the supervision of a Senior IFCO. POs typically lead on engagement (including consultation for byelaw development), development of fishery-related policy and management measures as well as other regulatory and legislative matters (e.g. Data Protection).

Formal training is provided for officers required to undertake the role of vessel Skipper or crew. This is undertaken at an RYA approved training centre and officers are required to achieve the RYA qualification relevant to their role up to and including Yachtmaster (Offshore). In addition, all seagoing officers are required to successfully complete the STCW95 suite of courses (First Aid, Fire Fighting, Personal Survival and Personal Safety & Social Responsibility) to ensure that they can operate safely at sea. They are also required to hold an ML5 medical certificate to ensure that they are fit to work at sea.

Key Personnel

The Executive team comprises the CEO, Head of Operations and Head of Finance & HR. The CEO and Head of Operations work full time, whilst the Head of Finance & HR works 3 days per week. The Head of Operations leads both the Marine Science and Marine Protection teams and has responsibility for all operational outputs and service delivery. The CEO role provides overall command and strategic direction, senior stakeholder engagement throughout the district and operational quality assurance.

Chief Executive Officer

Julian Gregory



As CEO Julian leads the Authority's officers and is responsible for the delivery of all Eastern IFCA outputs. He is the Responsible Financial Officer and Clerk to the Authority. He is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, holds a first-class honours degree in a law related discipline and has extensive senior management and law enforcement experience in both the Police Service and Eastern IFCA. He is a warranted IFCO and an RYA Yachtmaster (Offshore).

Head of Operations

Jonathan Butler



Jon has an extensive management background having previously work for a Local Authority in several different roles. He is a graduate of the University of East Anglia where he gained an honours degree. He holds a post graduate qualification in management and has extensive management experience. He is a warranted IFCO, a volunteer crew member of the RNLI, and an RYA Yachtmaster (Offshore).

Head of Finance & HR

Andrew Bakewell



A qualified management accountant with 40 years' experience in a wide variety of private and public-sector organisations at a senior level. Andrew in the past enjoyed an active role in local politics and was honoured to serve as Mayor of Boston in 2005. He brings financial, people and general management skills to Eastern IFCA.

**Senior Marine Science
Officer (Research)**

Ron Jessop



After graduating from Newcastle University with a Zoology degree Ron worked in the local fishing industry for 14 years fishing for cockles, mussels, shrimps and sprats from the port of Boston. He joined ESFJC in 2000 as a fishery officer and has been in his current role of Senior Marine Science Officer since 2003. In this role, he is responsible for a small team of officers, whose task is to provide the scientific evidence used to support the Authority's management decisions.

**Senior Marine Science
Officer (Environment)**

Judith Stoutt



Holding degrees in Environmental Science (BSc) and Biological Science (MSc) from the University of East Anglia and the University of Hull respectively, Judith joined ESFJC in 1996 as a Research Assistant and became the organisation's first Environment Officer in 2000. She has overseen the expansion of Eastern IFCA's environmental work, particularly in the field of fisheries management in MPAs and in providing advice to marine regulators for marine planning and consenting.

**Senior IFCO
(Compliance)**

Simon Lee



Simon joined ESFJC in 2000 and is an experienced enforcement officer and seafarer. He is responsible for planned and targeted enforcement and vessel operations to meet the objectives set out in the Annual Enforcement Plan. He has played a key role in the development and implementation risk-based enforcement and the TCG process as well as the introduction of smaller, faster and more reactive patrol vessels. He is a warranted IFCO and an RYA Yachtmaster (Offshore).

Senior IFCO (Regulation)

Luke Godwin



Holding degrees in Marine Biology (BSc) and Environmental Sciences (MSc) Luke joined Eastern IFCA in 2012 as an Environment Officer, becoming Project Officer in 2014. His work streams have ranged from producing HRAs to drafting byelaws. He played a key role in the development of the annual Strategic Assessment and managing the Several Order shellfish lays in The Wash. He is a warranted IFCO.

Senior Skipper
Lee Torrice



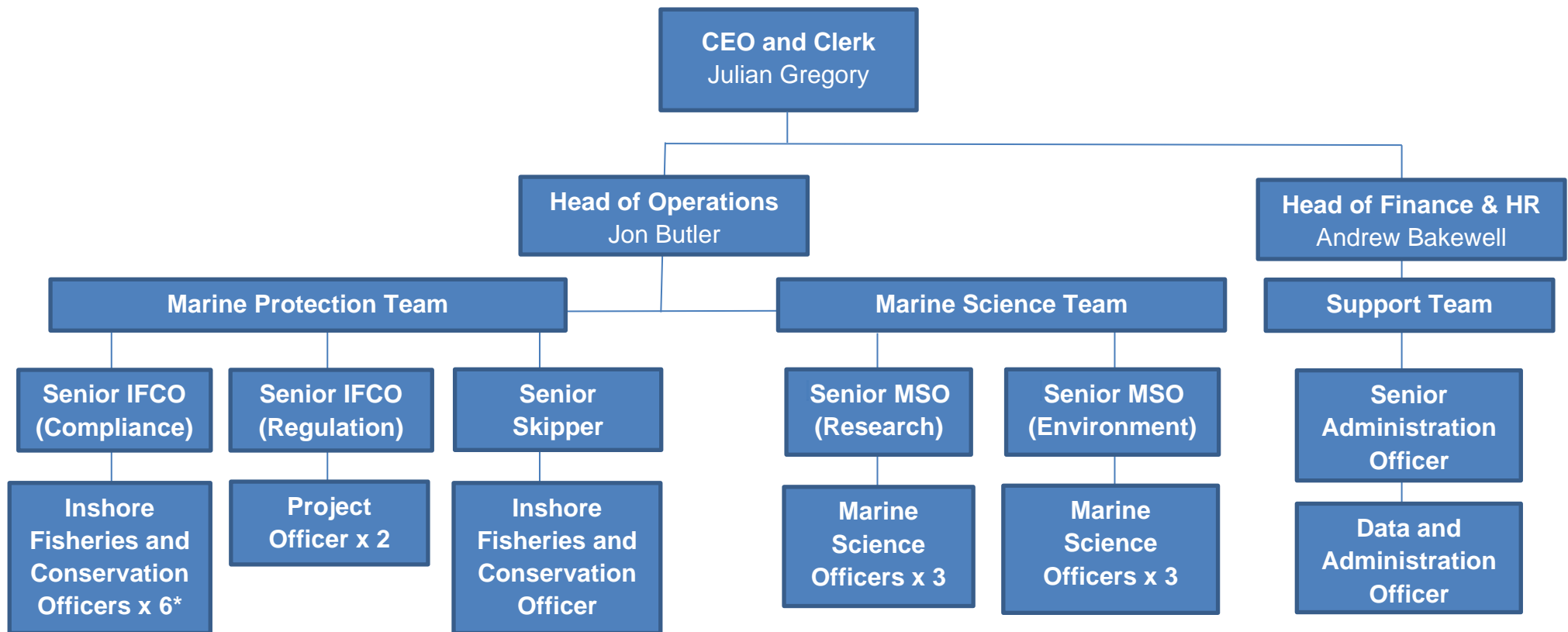
Lee joined ESFJC in 1998 and is an experienced skipper and engineer. Starting as a Fishery Officer, then progressing to engineer, Lee worked as a research assistant for a short period before becoming first mate on RV Three Counties and finally senior skipper. He is a long-standing member of the RNLI, serving at Hunstanton. Lee is responsible for all of the Eastern IFCA sea going assets. He is a warranted IFCO and an RYA Yachtmaster (Offshore).

Together, the leadership team brings a wide range of skills and experience gained in both the public and private sectors as well as in the more specialised environment of Eastern IFCA. This blend of experience facilitates free thinking and the capacity to question the way in which the organisation operates, balanced with strong levels of skill, experience and knowledge provided by long-standing members of the team.

Our management team are pivotal to the overall success of the organisation; they are required to deliver the Authority's strategic intent through operational plans, ensuring that their teams deliver to the required standard. As such, we have invested in our management capability through formal training and ongoing coaching. The key focus is to help first line managers to develop as leaders and to take ownership of delivery within their area of responsibility. This has been a key focus and will continue to be so moving forward, with all Senior Officers working towards formal qualifications with the Institute of Leadership and Management.

All the Eastern IFCA team are remunerated by an established salary structure with a set number of annual increments based upon length of service. The majority of the Marine Protection and some of the Marine Science Team members are additionally rewarded with a 7.5% supplement to account for their seagoing role, which involves unsociable hours, including weekend working. Annual leave is based upon length of service and all qualifying staff are auto enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Eastern IFCA Staff Structure



* currently operating with an additional IFCO, one beyond compliment.

Operations

The Authority is currently located at its primary base in King's Lynn with offices to accommodate staff and a local storage unit for its portable and transportable assets. A satellite office, co-located with MMO officers in the Cefas building in Lowestoft, was opened during 2016. Vessels are based at moorings at Sutton Bridge (*RV Three Counties* and *FPV John Allen*) and in Lowestoft (*FPV Sebastian Terelinck*). During 2020 all officers transitioned to home working as necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognising that there are some benefits to working from home, a hybrid-model is now in place and under review to seek to strike the right balance, noting that working from the office also lends itself to a cohesive team environment and sharing of ideas.

Costing and control of the authority is maintained by a rigidly sequenced ordering and approval system for all expenditure which is also analysed in detail to establish costs by department as an aid to decision making, budgeting and forecasting future funding requirements.

The Authority procures its supplies from approved suppliers including ESPO and the Local Government Purchasing Scheme according to established procedures and Financial Regulations. To support its operations the Authority currently employs owned capital assets (set out below and valued at original cost). During 2022/23 financial year, *FPV John Allen* (Patrol vessel) and 1 Skoda Yet (2014) were sold. Patrol vessel replacement is underway and seeking to address the current needs identified by the Authority. A new car is added to the fleet (Hyundai Kona) which is an electric vehicle intended to act as a trial to inform future vehicle replacement. In addition, the project to replace *RV Three Counties* has continued and delivery of the replacement vessel is projected for mid-2023.

Vessels

	£
<i>RV Three Counties</i> – Research catamaran	914,560
<i>FPV Sebastian Terelinck</i> – Patrol vessel	417,000
<i>FPV Sea Spray</i> – Open RHIB	59,138

Vehicles

Ford Tourneo (2016) – crew transport	
2 Skoda Yetis (2017) – general duties	13,267
1 Skoda Fabia (2017) – general duties	14,222
1 Skoda Karoq (2020) – general duties	30,537
Isuzu 4x4 (2015) – deploying towable assets	10,215
3 Hyundai Tucsons (2021) – general duties	56,259

Various items of Marine Science equipment	134,707
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2022-2023 Changes to date

Additions

- 1 Hyundai Tucson – general duties
- 1 Hyundai Kona (EV) - CEO

Disposals

John Allen FPV

Collaboration – Marine Management Organisation

During 2015 Defra initiated a workstream to achieve greater collaboration between the MMO and the IFCAs. This was subsequently formalised under the oversight of a joint IFCA and MMO Programme Board with six workstreams including accommodation, training, intelligence, and operational collaboration.

Since 2015 Eastern IFCA has been at the forefront of developing collaborative working both at the local and national levels. Locally officers developed effective working relationships with MMO colleagues through a number of initiatives including shared accommodation at Kings Lynn and Lowestoft, shared Tasking and Coordinating arrangements for operational activity and routine joint patrols and operations. At national level the CEO has been an active proponent of the collaborative working agenda and associated workstreams as (previous) Chair of NIMEG and through membership of the IFCA Chief Officers Group. He played a leading role in developing the joint IFCA and MMO response to the COVID-19 pandemic and sits as part of the IFCA and MMO Strategic Operations Group, which was established in February 2021 as the permanent successor to the Joint National Covid Response Group.

Eastern IFCA has, in common with all other IFCA's, developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which formalises joint work opportunities and use of IFCA assets such as vessels and officers with the MMO. Vessel deployments are co-ordinated nationally to ensure that opportunities are exploited for Eastern IFCA to contribute to national fisheries management and border security matters where appropriate. In addition, the Authority has a data sharing agreement with the MMO to facilitate efficient sharing of information and put into practice the 'collect once, use many times' ethos of data collection.

Eastern IFCA's Marine Science officers are actively involved in the national MMO/IFCA Marine Licensing liaison group, that was established to identify common themes and share best practice in matters relating to IFCA/MMO collaboration on marine licensing. This is particularly relevant to the Eastern IFCA district because of the high number of offshore developments requiring marine licence, including offshore wind, marine aggregates and seaweed farm developments, in the southern North Sea. MS officers undertake MMO training in the application of Marine Plans, and participate in MMO evaluation of marine plan implementation.

Marine Protection Operations

Compliance and enforcement activity are undertaken in accordance with principles set out in the Regulation and Compliance Strategy, with the emphasis being upon endorsing compliance. This means that the approach is to encourage compliance with regulation through education and advice, but sanctions are also available to deter, punish and remove any benefit from non-compliance in line with the Enforcement Policy. A risk-based approach is taken to ensure that compliance and enforcement activity is proportionate and to make best use of limited resources, this is informed by monthly risk profiles and emerging intelligence.

The Marine Protection Team comprises 11 warranted IFCOs based at Kings Lynn and Lowestoft, who are responsible for ensuring compliance with fisheries regulations. These officers have a range of powers provided under UK legislation, primarily MaCCA 2009 and the Sea Fishing (Enforcement) Regulations 2018 (SI 849/2018). Officers also have secondary functions such as vessel crew (skipper, mate/crew), completing data analysis and projects. All officers are trained to operate as crew to the Authority's vessels and are therefore able to operate at sea as well as ashore. The CEO and Head of Operations are also warranted IFCOs.

Enforcement operations are undertaken both at sea and on land. They include boarding and inspecting fishing vessels, their catch and their fishing gear at sea and inspecting vessels and their catch as they land in harbours, ports and on beaches. Inspections of premises such as fish processors are also undertaken.



As a consequence of the sale of *FPV John Allen* in 2022, the Authority currently operates one dedicated vessel for compliance activities; a Redbay Stormforce cabined RHIB, *FPV Sebastian Terelinck*, which was acquired in 2015. The project to replace *FPV John Allen* is underway and it is intended that such a replacement enhances our ability to undertake monitoring of pot-based fisheries in particular. An open RHIB, *FPV Seaspray*, was procured in 2018 to

enhance our ability to deploy from around the district via a trailer.

The primary function of *FPV Sebastian Terelinck* is enforcement, but she is also capable of undertaking some research activity. The vessel is primarily based at Lowestoft to cover the Norfolk and Suffolk coast but is also based in Sutton Bridge to cover The Wash as well as the north Lincolnshire and Norfolk coasts as required and in lieu of a second vessel. *FPV Seaspray* has been re-located to Wells Police Station, this has created joint working opportunities with Norfolk Constabulary and allowed

officers to carry out patrols in the smaller harbours along the North Norfolk Coast. She has also been deployed to patrol the Suffolk Rivers based on intelligence received.

Marine Science Operations

Eastern IFCA's Marine Science function has developed from a single Research Officer employed by ESFJC in the 1990s, to today's team of eight dedicated Marine Science Officers (MSOs), including two senior officers. Their work is central to Eastern IFCA obtaining scientific evidence to underpin its management decisions, thus supporting sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and delivering environmental protection¹⁴. The remit has expanded from its initial main focus on bivalve stock surveys in The Wash – still a core requirement that supports management of the cockle and mussel fisheries – to include, *inter alia*, habitat surveys in multiple parts of the Eastern IFCA district, stock sustainability assessments for crab, lobster and whelk, fisheries impact studies (particularly in relation to Marine Protected Area conservation objectives) and environmental monitoring. Further, the Marine Science team leads on Eastern IFCA's provision of advice to partner marine regulators on marine planning and licensing matters.

The Marine Science team is based in the King's Lynn office and can deploy throughout the District. .

Research

Evidence is gathered from a variety of sources including literature reviews of scientific papers, fishery landings data and surveys and research at sea. For this latter role, the team utilise all the Authority's vessels, including RV *Three Counties*, from which they can deploy a wide range of scientific equipment that the Authority either owns or shares with other IFCAs.

This equipment includes an Edgetech 4200 dual-pulse side scan sonar, used for broadscale mapping of seabed features; an ARIS 3000 sonar camera, which uses soundwaves rather than light for capturing video images in highly turbid water typical of the East coast; and two BlueROV2 underwater remotely-operated vehicles (ROVs) equipped with high-definition video cameras. These ROVs have been used since 2021 to assist in the research directives outlined by the Adaptive Risk Management approach to the management of potting in the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ; an ongoing priority workstream. In this role, they have not only been able to help map the seabed features, but their flexibility and manoeuvrability has enabled potting gear to be studied in situ, providing high-quality imagery of the interaction between the gear and the seabed features. Together, the combined strengths of this research equipment enables the collection of up-to-date and robust evidence to inform management decisions, as is required under the Eastern IFCA duties.

¹⁴ See IFCA Success Criterion 3, at Appendix 2

Eastern IFCA conducts an annual Strategic Assessment of fisheries across the district to identify research, regulation, and enforcement priorities. This informs the selection of projects for inclusion in the annual research programme. In addition to these projects, the Marine Science team manages the year-round collection of shellfish samples for Local Authority environmental health offices, for water quality monitoring in shellfish harvesting areas.

Eastern IFCA manages cockle and mussel fisheries in The Wash and conducts annual surveys to assess these stocks. These surveys are critical in supporting Eastern IFCA's adaptive management of these fisheries, accounting for stock sustainability and wider ecological requirements. These surveys are substantial projects and are routinely undertaken as part of Eastern IFCA's business-critical workstreams.

Research Equipment

The table below lists some of the research equipment that is available to the Marine Science Team.

Item	Purpose	Owner
Day grab	Collecting seabed samples during cockle surveys or for sediment analysis during habitat mapping ground-truth surveys	Eastern IFCA
Mini-Hamon grab	Larger than a Day grab, it is used for ground-truthing sites that contain pebbles and cobbles	Eastern IFCA
Van Veen grab	Weighing just 10kg, this small grab can be deployed by hand from a small boat or RHIB, expanding our operational capability	Eastern IFCA
Edgetech side scan sonar	Towed behind the vessel, the side scan sonar emits and receives high-frequency sound waves that it interprets into broadscale geo-referenced visual images of the seabed. These provide an indication of the nature of the seabed, the type of sediment that it is composed of and its texture.	Eastern IFCA jointly with Kent and Essex IFCA, Sussex IFCA
2 x BlueROV2 Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV's)	Acquired in 2021 to replace our dated VideoRay Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), these BlueROV 2 ROVs offer greater performance and manoeuvrability than their predecessor, enabling us to capture high quality video footage of the seabed. These images are used to identify what features are on the seabed, to ground truth broadscale acoustic data and to determine impacts that	Eastern IFCA

	fishing gear may be having on conservation features.	
3 x GoPro type cameras	Small, easy to deploy underwater video cameras. Used for multiple purposes where underwater imagery is required.	Eastern IFCA
ARIS 3000 Sonar Camera and frame	A short range (30m) camera, mounted on a bespoke frame, that captures images using sound waves enabling it to produce imagery in the highly turbid waters that are encountered regularly in The Wash in which usual cameras would not work.	Eastern IFCA
2 x sondes and sonde buoy	Collecting water quality data (temperature, salinity, Chlorophyl and turbidity) to inform primary food availability assessments. One sonde is deployed permanently on a buoy to collect continuous data, the other sonde is deployed manually from a vessel	Eastern IFCA
Various mussel and oyster dredges	Collecting shellfish samples from the seabed	Eastern IFCA
Seine and fyke nets	Two different types of net used during fish surveys	Eastern IFCA
Miscellaneous survey equipment	The team has a wide variety of smaller equipment that is used during the course of surveys for collecting and measuring samples. These include precision electronic weighing scales for accurately weighing samples; quadrats for collecting samples; a variety of sieves for separating sediment into a range of particle sizes; microscopes and hand-held GPS's	
Specialist software	A range of specialist software is used to plan and monitor survey progress, analyse data and map survey results. These include Microplot 7 and Hypack Max plotting software for survey operations, Triton Perspective for analysing side scan data and MapInfo and QGIS for charting the results.	Eastern IFCA
Shared Equipment	In addition to the equipment listed above, Eastern IFCA has access to a range of other equipment belonging to the other IFCA's	IFCA's

through an agreement with the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG). This equipment includes side scan sonars, underwater drop-down cameras and ROV's.

Marine Protected Area Work

In addition to stock surveys and environmental monitoring, a key function of the Marine Science team is the assessment of impacts of fishing on the marine environment. This involves desk-based research and analysis, and an element of field surveys. Almost all the Eastern IFCA district (96%) lies within MPAs (listed below), requiring fisheries regulators to manage activities in alignment with conservation objectives for these sites.

The designation of so many marine protected areas in the Eastern IFCA district reflects the importance of habitats and species in our local seas. 15 of these designated sites are immediately adjacent to the coast, and three are located offshore, partly within the Eastern IFCA district but also extending beyond 6nm. 18 are European Marine Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)), recognised for their internationally important habitats and species. One is a Marine Conservation Zone – the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds on the Norfolk coast, designated to protect nationally important marine habitats.

Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern IFCA District

Name	Designation type	Location	Size (km ²)
Humber Estuary¹⁵	SAC	Lincolnshire (& Yorkshire)	366.6
Humber Estuary¹⁶	SPA	Lincolnshire (& Yorkshire)	376.3
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank & North Ridge¹⁷	SAC	Offshore: Lincolnshire & Norfolk	845.1
Gibraltar Point	SPA	Lincolnshire	4.2
The Wash	SPA	Lincolnshire & Norfolk	620.4
The Wash & North Norfolk Coast	SAC	Lincolnshire & Norfolk	1077.2
North Norfolk Coast	SPA	Norfolk	78.6

¹⁵ Majority of this site is in North-Eastern IFCA district

¹⁶ As above.

¹⁷ Offshore (non-coastal) site, partially within Eastern IFCA district

North Norfolk Coast	SAC	Norfolk	31.5
Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds	MCZ	Norfolk	321
Haisborough, Hammond & Winterton¹⁸	SAC	Offshore: Norfolk	1467.6
Great Yarmouth & North Denes	SPA	Norfolk	1.60
Outer Thames Estuary	SPA	Coastal and offshore: Norfolk & Suffolk (also Kent and Essex)	3924
Breydon Water	SPA	Norfolk	12.0
Alde, Ore & Butley Estuaries	SAC	Suffolk	16.3
Alde-Ore Estuary	SPA	Suffolk	24.0
Orfordness to Shingle Street	SAC	Suffolk	8.9
Deben Estuary	SPA	Suffolk	9.8
Stour & Orwell Estuaries¹⁹	SPA	Suffolk (& Essex)	36.7
Greater Wash	SPA	Coastal and offshore: Lincolnshire, Norfolk (& Yorkshire)	3,536
Harbour Porpoise (Southern North Sea)	SAC	Coastal and offshore: Norfolk & Suffolk	36,958

NB. Many of these coastal MPAs are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Ramsar Sites (wetlands of international importance). Public bodies have additional duties in relation to these designations; Eastern IFCA addresses these duties in parallel with the SAC and SPA requirements, and through liaison with the statutory nature conservation advisor, Natural England.

Eastern IFCA and its predecessor have undertaken annual Habitats Regulations assessments (HRAs) of the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries for over 15 years, to ensure these fisheries are managed in accordance with marine protected area conservation objectives. Under Defra's revised approach to fisheries management in marine protected areas, announced in 2012, this fishery assessment work has been rolled out to cover all commercial fisheries in all MPAs in the Eastern IFCA district. A significant resource has been directed to this work, which remains ongoing, and has required input from the marine protection team as well as the science team.

MSOs gather evidence on fishing activity, protected feature distribution and sensitivities, and evaluate fishing/feature interactions across all marine protected areas. This enables Eastern IFCA to identify where management is needed to ensure fishing is conducted within ecological limits. This includes for example, assessment of

¹⁸ As above.

¹⁹ Majority of this site is in Eastern IFCA district, but part of it falls within Kent & Essex IFCA district.

fishery/habitat interactions and a thorough examination of the extent of sensitive habitats (in some cases this has required habitat survey work conducted from *RV Three Counties* and *FPV Sebastian Terelinck*). Where required, this has led to the development of restrictions to towed demersal fishing in five marine protected areas across the Eastern IFCA district for the protection of sensitive seabed habitats, under Eastern IFCA's Closed Areas Byelaw 2021. In addition to these spatial measures, further mitigation against fisheries impacts on MPA features has been developed in the form of effort management and technical measures – for example in the brown shrimp fishery in The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC.

Most fisheries assessed for impacts on MPAs were found to not cause adverse effect, or hindrance to conservation objectives, at current levels of activity. However, the majority of assessments were undertaken in 2015 / 2016, and now require updating in order to be used to underpin Monitoring and Control Plans. This will involve reviewing fishing activity data, and setting out how changes in spatial distribution, gear types and effort levels will be detected, and how Eastern IFCA will respond to changes in fishing activities in relation to potential impacts on designated MPAs.

Marine Planning

The marine science team provides advice on behalf of Eastern IFCA to partner marine regulators, MMO and the Planning Inspectorate, on the potential fisheries and environmental impacts of proposed marine developments. In addition to fishing, the southern North Sea and East coast are key locations for oil and gas, offshore renewable energy, aggregate extraction, ports and shipping, cables and pipelines, coastal flood defences, and marine recreation activities. Seaweed aquaculture is a new growth sector in the district. Eastern IFCA provides formal advice to the licensing authority (MMO) on marine licence applications and on environmental impact assessments, and to the Planning Inspectorate for major infrastructure developments. This entails consideration of potential impacts of a wide range of developments on fisheries and conservation receptors.

Since 2020, an increasing focus has been collaborative work with developers and regulators on the development of conservation compensation measures to mitigate against the impacts from wind farms on MPAs. In September 2020, the Authority agreed to actively engage in exploring opportunities for exploring environmental compensatory measures, not to support measures that would have an overall adverse impact upon fishing activities and opportunities. These marine science functions are undertaken in close liaison with partner regulators and advisors, private sector companies, non-government organisations as well as local fishery and conservation stakeholders.

Communications and Engagement

The importance of being 'recognised and heard' is recognised under Success Criterion 1 (Appendix 2) and is crucial to achieving our main duties.

Our approach is to achieve clarity and transparency with stakeholders, particularly in relation to consultation on the development of management measures. Box 1 (below) sets out how dialogue with stakeholders will influence the development of management measures.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 impacted engagement as a result of social distancing restrictions, several lockdowns and various new regulations. This necessitated a revised engagement approach which, in part, reflects a greater emphasis on remote engagement through video calls and social media, but also an overarching requirement for flexibility and adaptation in our communication. Our stakeholders generally embraced utilising online technologies but have welcomed the return of more in-person dialogue as a consequence of COVID related restrictions. Overall, our ability to engage with stakeholders have been enhanced as a result of online meeting facilities which are now more mainstream.

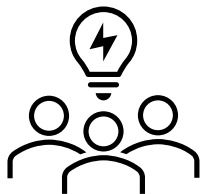
The COVID restrictions also coincided with the largest engagement exercise undertaken by Eastern IFCA to date, namely the replacement of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 upon its expiry in January 2023. This workstream generated a strong sense of feeling amongst many of those who held a licence under the WFO, namely that their preference was to maintain the status quo. However, the significant resource allocated to this dialogue led to the development of a replacement mechanism which is considered far more fit for purpose and has addressed the key concerns of industry which persisted throughout the lifetime of the WFO.

Both the changes enforced as a result of the COVID pandemic, and the lessons learnt from the engagement on the WFO replacement have influenced the Engagement Strategy for the coming year (Appendix 5).



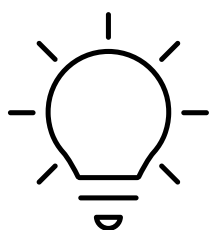
Box 1 – How consultation influences the development of management measures

Informal consultation and evidence gathering



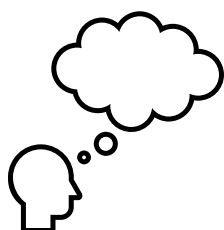
At the earliest stage, before management measures are drafted, stakeholders provide crucial information and insight into what is needed from management measures. This is sometimes in the form of fishing activity information (to inform a Habitats Regulations assessment, for example) or to feedback on the general principles which will guide the drafting of measures.

Development of management measures



The information obtained from stakeholders is reviewed and together with other relevant information is used to help inform a first draft of the management measures and a recommendation to the Authority members. The views of respondents are often summarised and presented to members to help inform their decisions at Authority meetings.

Formal consultation



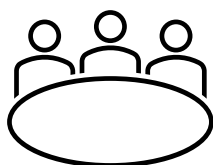
Once drafted, the Authority ‘makes’ the management measures in a Byelaw. Although this sounds final, this legislative term refers to the Authority’s intention to make the measures and is not the point at which they are finalised. After they are ‘made’, measures are put to formal consultation for stakeholders to review in detail. This will always include the full wording of the measures, charts showing where they apply and an assessment of the impacts on stakeholders.

Finalising the management measures



The feedback received from formal consultation is reviewed and informs the finalisation of the management measures. At this point, if there are any significant changes which need to be made to the draft measures, additional consultation may be required.

Confirmation



The Secretary of State ultimately decides whether or not to confirm a byelaw. Other management measures may be decided by the Authority (e.g. permit conditions). It is at this point that all the views of industry are considered against the proposed management measures to inform a decision as to whether the measures are reasonable.

Financial Plan

Past performance

In recent years, as a result of primarily vacancy management, interest, grant funding and increased sampling fees the authority has continued to add to reserves and fund various capital projects including replacing vehicles, vessels and research equipment.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Estimate
Income				
Levies*	1,037,200	1,057,944	1,079,103	1,079,103
“New burden”	394,145	394,145	394,145	394,145
Other	84,678	56,348	79,050	50,000
Grants	67,229	89,559		
Total	1,583,252	1,597,996	1,552,298	1,523,248
Expenditure				
Salaries	1,029,747	1,065,182	1,110,000	1,072,600
Administration	204,984	198,095	205,045	195,760
Operations	39,797	37,459	38,000	44,000
Vessels	112,046	132,663	115,640	119,660
Vehicles	24,927	32,167	27,800	32,500
Assets	22,967	181,831		
Projects	65,322	64,609		
Total	1,499,790	1,712,006	1,496,485	1,464,520
Surplus/(shortfall)	83,462	(114,010)	55,813	58,728
Asset Replace	150,000	154,500	159,135	159,135

5-year forecast 2023 – 2027	2022/23 Budget	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast
Income					
Levies	1,100,685	1,122,699	1,145,143	1,168,056	1,191,417
“New burden” *	394,145	394,145	394,145	394,145	394,145
Other	70,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Total	1,564,830	1,596,844	1,619,288	1,642,201	1,665,562
Expenditure					
Salaries	1,207,000	1,231,140	1,250,000	1,270,000	1,305,000
Administration	207,450	211,500	212,500	215,000	217,500
Operations	38,500	39,000	39,500	40,000	40,500
Vessels	126,850	105,000	107,000	110,000	112,500
Vehicles	31,250	32,500	34,500	35,500	36,500
Total	1,572,550	1,619,140	1,643,500	1,670,500	1,712,000
Surplus/(shortfall)	(7,720)	(22,296)	(24,212)	(28,299)	(46,438)
Asset replacement	163,910	168,827	173,892	179,109	184,482

* From 2023/24 a notional replacement of equivalent value has been assumed

Although the future of New Burdens funding is uncertain the Finance Directors of the three County Councils are aware of the possibility that Levies may need to increase as part of the strategy to make up any shortfall.

The pressure on public sector finances is recognised in the figures with the Authority maintaining a standstill levy up to 2018/19 with an annual 2% increase thereafter. Income projections are forecast as static however in reality they are likely to increase. As the table shows the Authority will need to find increasing levels of savings and/or income in the forecast years to avoid depleting reserves. The Authority is continually exploring the potential for grants and increased income to support its core duties.

Capital Account

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Opening	2,281,341	2,439,205	1,095,399	647,785	363,320	79,985
Revenue	58,728	(7,720)	(416,441)	(418,357)	(422,444)	(440,583)
Asset rep	159,136	163,910	168,827	173,892	179,109	184,482
Utilised	(60,000)	(1,500,000)	(200,000)	(40,000)	(40,000)	(740,000)
Balance	2,439,205	1,095,399	647,785	363,320	79,985	(916,116)
Defra??			394,145	788,290	1,182,435	1,576,580
Final	2,439,205	1,095,399	1,041,930	1,151,610	1,262,420	660,464

***includes replacement funding equivalent to “new burden” Capital levy increases annually by 3% from 2019/20 inception**

The Authority depends on its’ capital assets to perform a significant proportion of its duties. The table shows that without “new burden” or an alternative source of finance reserves are exhausted in 2025/26. All assets have finite useful lives and periodically need to be replaced. The cost of replacement assets has in the recent past been funded from reserves accumulated over several years. However, as operational costs increase the Authority would not be able to add to reserves at the rate required to match the cost of replacing its’ assets. The table above reflects the additional annual capital levy that the authority will require to meet capital commitments.

	Est. Cost	Est. life	/annum	Residual life
Research Vessel	c.1.7 mill	30 years	57,000	<0 years
Patrol Vessel 1	490,000	10 years	49,000	2 years
Patrol Vessel 2	490,000	10 years	49,000	4 years
Other assets	240,000	8 years	30,000	average 3 years

Factors:

- Residual value of asset being replaced
- Cost of replacement (at the time)
- Success and magnitude of income generation initiatives (Full cost recovery)
- The effect of changes to ways of working

- Inflation
- Invest to save (e.g. IVMS, Moorings project, Accommodation)
- Political/Legislative change
- Joint working initiative
- External funding
- Slippage in replacement programme

Priorities

Planning Cycle

A rolling five-year Business Plan brings together all elements of activity undertaken by the organisation. The plan is intended to project five years in advance with annual reviews to update the strategic and financial context and to prioritise and plan for each financial year. Overall priorities for the Authority are established based upon the annual cycle together with specific priorities and plans for enforcement and communications and engagement. These are set out in appendices to the Business Plan. Whilst using the annual cycle for planning, utilising a five-year rolling plan enables priorities to be identified that will span financial years.

The annual cycle is informed by a Strategic Assessment, which comprises two assessments – a data driven, initial assessment to determine the risk of sustainability issues associated with groups of fisheries, and an additional assessment which considers incomplete datasets and contextual and political issues as well as expert knowledge from officers.

Risk Management

In developing the Business Plan potential risks to the delivery of outputs have been identified. The risk register at Appendix 1 illustrates the main risks to the delivery of the priorities of the Authority identified by Officers. The risk matrix is reviewed quarterly at full Authority meetings. The assessment of risk is inevitably a subjective one based on the experience of the individuals assessing the risk. It should also be noted that this risk register only records the main threats to the organisation and is not intended to be definitive.

High Level Objectives

During 2015, Defra led on the development of new High-Level Objectives and Success Criteria, working in conjunction with the IFCA Chief Officers Group and the Association of IFCAs to develop something that is meaningful in the current context. This resulted in a clear link with the UK Marine Policy Statement, which provides:

The UK vision for the marine environment is for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas'. The UK high level marine objectives published in April 2009 set out the broad outcomes for the marine area in achieving this vision, and reflect the principles for sustainable development²⁰

The performance framework incorporates the five High Level Objectives from the UK Marine Policy Statement, from which flow five Success Criteria, each underpinned by intended outcomes and associated indicators.

The Secretary of State decided not to issue the new performance framework as formal guidance and instead it was agreed at the IFCA Chief Officers Group and the Association of IFCAs. It was adopted by Eastern IFCA at a full Authority meeting in October 2015. The performance framework will guide the work of Eastern IFCA, and it can be found at Appendix 2.

Defra are also developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the IFCAs. IFCAs will be consulted on their development, and they will be included in this plan by way of update.

Annual Priorities

The nature of the dynamic inshore marine environment and the work undertaken by Eastern IFCA inevitably means that work streams do not always sit easily with an annual planning cycle. However, when considered in the context of a rolling five-year Business Plan it is easier to incorporate plans and priorities that span financial year timeframes.

Eastern IFCA Priorities 2023-24

The overall priorities for 2023-24 can be found at Appendix 3. The plans below have been developed using the strategic assessment to meet the requirements of the Business Plan and to deliver the priorities for 2023-24.

Enforcement Plan 2023-24

The plan for 2023-24 can be found at Appendix 4.

Communication and Engagement Plan 2023-24

The plan for 2023-24 can be found at Appendix 5.

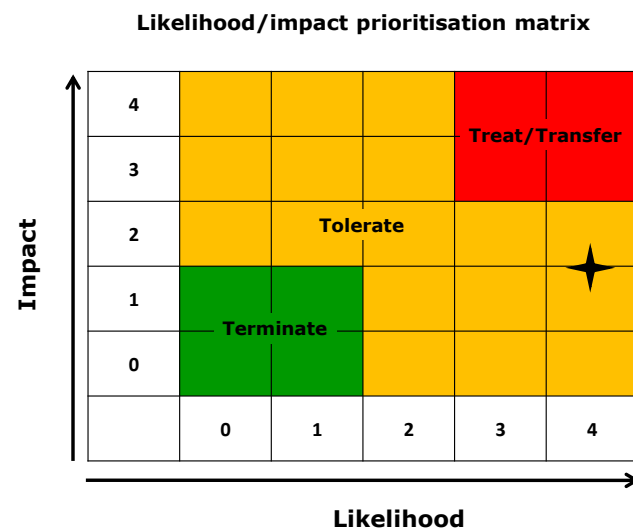
²⁰ UK Marine Policy Statement, 2011, The Stationary Office, London

Appendix 1: Risk Management

The risk matrix sets out the magnitude of the risk to Eastern IFCA from an organisational viewpoint incorporating amongst others reputational and financial risks. The matrix also sets out the likelihood of an identified risk occurring. Mitigation which is in place or to be introduced is identified. Risk is ranked on an arbitrary scale from 0 (low risk – coloured green) to 4 (high risk – coloured red). The average of the combined financial and reputational risk is taken and plotted on to the matrix below, the likelihood of that risk occurring is also plotted. Mitigation action is noted. It should be noted that in most cases there are already many actions being undertaken as part of routine working practices to reduce the risks to the Eastern IFCA.

The four actions that can be applied are:

Treat	Take positive action to mitigate risk
Tolerate	Acknowledge and actively monitor risk
Terminate	Risk no longer considered to be material to Eastern IFCA business
Transfer	Risk is out with Eastern IFCA's ability to treat and is transferred to higher level.



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Risk matrix with worked example

Risk A poses a financial threat (2) to the organisation and a reputation threat (1) generating a combined impact level of 1.5. The likelihood of the threat occurring is determined as 4. The resultant risk to Eastern IFCA is therefore plotted using the matrix and is identified as a risk that should be tolerated (i.e. acknowledged and actively monitored)

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Eastern IFCA fails to secure funding to replace assets	CEO	Substantial reduction in Eastern IFCA mobility particularly seaborne activities with consequential inability to fulfil full range of duties	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Current level of reserves provides sufficient funding to cover replacement of <i>RV Three Counties</i>The open RHIB, FPV Seaspray, was procured using EMFF fundingSeek efficiencies and promote cost effectiveness.Demonstrate value for money.Advertise/promote Eastern IFCA output and effectiveness to funding authorities through regular engagement with Council leaders and Financial Directors.Engage with partner agencies to identify alternative funding sourcesExplore asset sharing initiativesAgreement in place with funding authorities for capital funding contributions each year. Confirmed at the annual meeting with representatives of the Finance Directors on Friday 19th November 2021Scheduled asset replacement taking into account expected lifespan of assets which is reviewed regularly to account for unexpected depreciation and alignment of capital funding contributions;Assets managed and maintained to reduce the likelihood of early retirement or unexpected depreciation.Alternative sources of funding sought where appropriate e.g. capital funding is available from Defra with indicative amounts nominally allocated to Eastern IFCA for a daughter RIB for the new build vessel and a 'potting vessel' to replace FPV John Allen	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	4	Finance Directors agreed to annual capital contributions from 2019-20 onwards to cater for the cost of asset replacement as an alternative to requests for a lump sum amounts as assets are replaced. No guarantees were given or implied. Eastern IFCA will explore all avenues for funding.			
			Drive for savings may impact County Councils' decisions regarding Eastern IFCA funding. Visible presence reduced, enforcement and survey activities compromised.	Inability to generate sufficient reserves to meet asset replacement schedule would threaten Eastern IFCAs ability to function. Closure costs could result.				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners	CEO	If Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners Eastern IFCA's utility will come under scrutiny potentially resulting in re-allocation of duties	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a leadership function.• Be proactive and identify issues early.• Engage with all partners routinely.• Operate transparently and utilise effective communications approaches.• Use Business Plan to prioritise and communicate outputs, Measure progress/deliver outputs• Represent community issues to, and support their engagement with, higher authorities• Recent revisions undertaken to the ARM project for the MCZ to address wider stakeholders concerns about engagement• Effective business planning process in place.• Leading role where appropriate e.g. Op Blake.• Proactive approach to raising issues with Defra (e.g. Bass management, proposals for effort management trial). Participation in Parliamentary Review 2019.	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Possible – Whilst positive relationships have been established the existence of disparate partner aspirations introduces complexities which may drive perceptions of bias or inefficiency.			
			4	4				
			Loss of confidence in the organisation Failure of the organisation to perform in accordance with the standards and practices of a statutory public body	Withdrawal of LA and Defra funding for the organisation				
Negative media comment	CEO	Negative perceptions of Eastern IFCA utility and effectiveness created at MMO/Defra Loss of Partner confidence Media scrutiny of individual Authority members	3		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively and regularly engage with all partners including media outlets.• Review use of social media and web-based information noting its unavoidable use to misinterpret and spread misinformation.• Embed professional standards and practices.• Deliver change efficiently and effectively.• Promulgate successful outcomes• Assure recognition and understanding through clear and concise publications and effective promulgation of such as appropriate• Routine updating of news items on website.• Monitor media presence and engage where appropriate.• Targeted and meaningful dialogue with stakeholders which caters for intended audiences to reduce likelihood of misinterpretation or misrepresentation.	Treat
			Reputation	Financial	Possible – disenfranchised partners seek to introduce doubt as to Eastern IFCA professionalism, utility, and effectiveness			
			4	2				
			Eastern IFCA perceived to be underperforming	Negative perceptions introduce risk to continued funding				
			Eastern IFCA considered poor value for money					
			Eastern IFCA perceived as irrelevant					

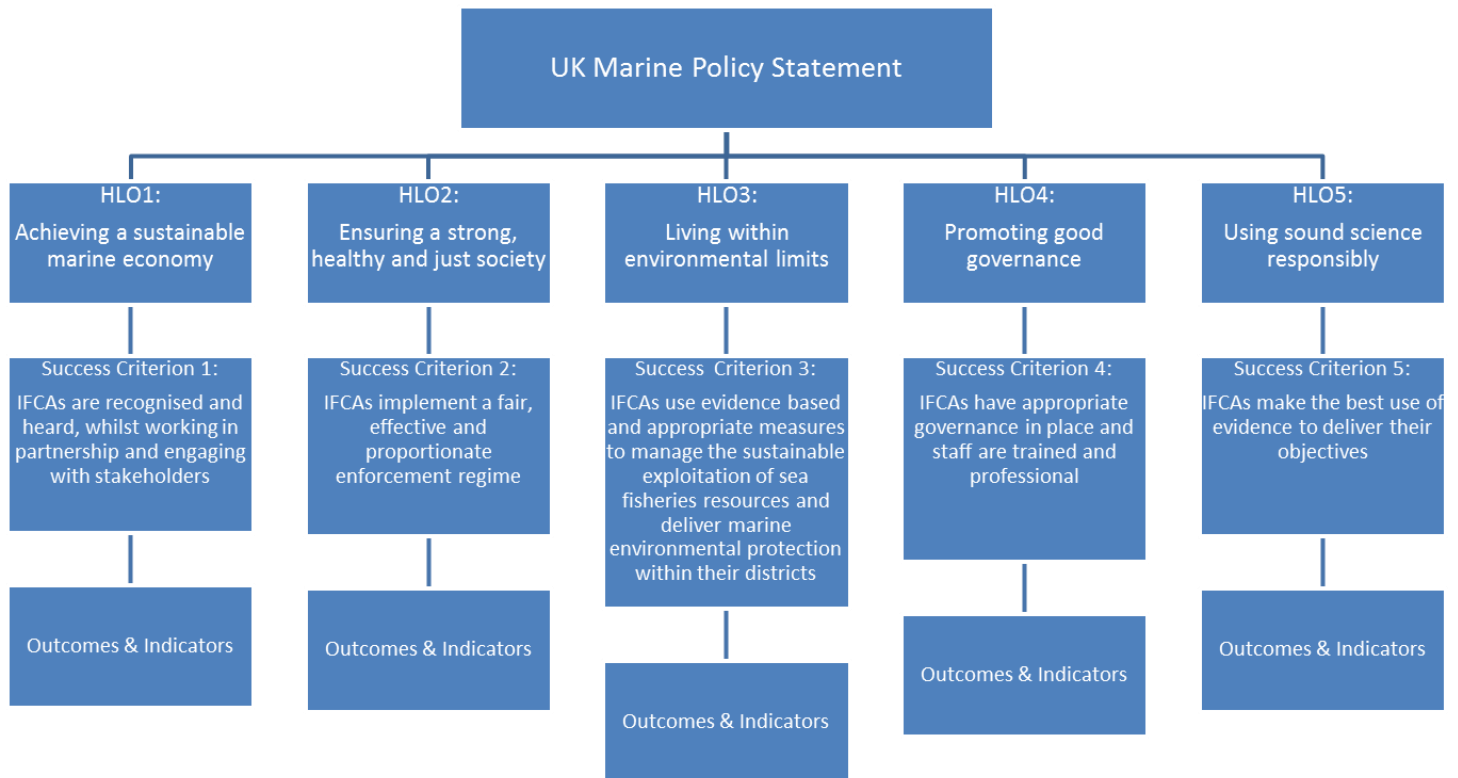
Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Degradation of MPAs due to fishing activity	CEO	Loss or damage of important habitats and species within environmentally designated areas.	3.5		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fishing activities authorised by Eastern IFCA are assessed per Habitats Regulations and MaCAA; management routinely includes mitigation to prevent adverse effects on MPA integrity.Eastern IFCA is fully engaged in national fisheries/MPA project, prioritising management of highest risk fisheries in MPAs and implementing new management measuresEffective monitoring of fishing activity and enforcement of measuresAdaptive approach to fisheries management – i.e. engagement with fishing and conservation interests in the development of management measures, and appropriate review of measures to respond to changing environmental and socio-economic factorsOngoing, close liaison with Natural England regarding conservation mattersReview of management in accordance with Defra guidanceUtilising I-VMS as a management tool by the Authority, >12m implementation expected underway.Continue to progress research into the impact of fishing activities on MPA features to ensure the Authority has an up-to-date evidence base to inform its management decisions.MPA management has been a high priority since 2012 with substantial progress made. Current workstreams (e.g. Cromer Shoal MCZ, remaining 'red risk' sites and Closed Areas Byelaw 2021) are a high priority and are being progressed.	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Possible – Eastern IFCA's approach to managing sea fisheries resources actively addresses our environmental obligations			
			4	3				
			Eastern IFCA is not meeting statutory duties under conservation legislation.	Legal challenge brought against Eastern IFCA for failing to meet obligations under environmental legislation (including MaCAA)				
		Eastern IFCA not achieving vision as champion of sustainable marine environment.						
		Degradation of marine habitats which lead to economic, social or cultural impacts.						

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Shellfish and fish stocks collapse	CEO	Risk of significant negative impact upon industry viability with associated social and economic problems	3		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual stock assessments of bivalve stocks in The Wash Annual review of the level of threat via the Strategic Assessment Ability to allocate sufficient resources to monitoring and effective enforcement Consultation with industry on possible management measures Review of management measures in accordance with Defra guidance. Develop stock conservation measures as required for crab, lobster and whelk fisheries through engagement with the FMP programme and fishing industry and continue support for industry led Fisheries Improvement Plan SWEEP research into primary productivity levels within the Wash Regular engagement with the industry to discuss specific matters Continued research into the cockle and mussel mortality events Whelk research is ongoing to identify level of risk posed and potential mitigation for sustainability concerns. Introduce shrimp management measures Annual surveys of Wash cockle and mussel stocks alongside innovative approach to management of the cockle fishery. Consideration given to an engagement plan to educate and inform about small cockles, including engagement with processors for officers to better understand the market context. General engagement with FMP programme 	Treat
			Reputation	Financial	Possible - Bivalve stocks have high natural variation; "atypical mortality" affecting stocks despite application of stringent fishery control measures Crustacean stocks not currently subject to effort control Bass stocks nationally and internationally under severe pressure Regional whelk and shrimp fisheries effort becoming unsustainable. Regional crab and lobster stocks being exploited beyond maximum sustainable yield. Active monitoring of 2021 cockle fishery identified small cockles being landed with potential impact on stock sustainability.			
			3	3				
			Loss in confidence of the Eastern IFCA ability to manage the sea fisheries resources within its district	Resources directed at protecting alternative stocks from displaced effort Additional resources applied to research into the cause of collapsed stocks and increased engagement and discussion with partners				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Failure to secure data	CEO	Non-compliance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">All computers are password protected. Individuals only have access to the server through their own computer.Secure wireless internetRemote back up of electronic filesAccess to electronic files is restrictedUp to date virus software installed on all computersImportant documents secured in safesICT equipment and policies provided by public sector provider – including encrypted laptops/secure governmental email systemAll Eastern IFCA personnel undergo DPA trainingElectronic backup of all Eastern IFCA documents held by ICT provider offsitePolicies and processes developed to ensure data security and compliance with data protection legislation.	Tolerate
		Prosecution casefiles compromised	4	4	Possible - Limited staff access to both electronic and paper files, Office secure with CCTV, keypad entry system and alarm			
		Loss of data in the event of fire or theft	Partners no longer believe that confidential information they have supplied is secure	Eastern IFCA open to both civil and criminal action regarding inability to secure personal information				
		Breakdown in dissemination of sensitive information between key delivery partners	Personnel issues arise over inability to secure information					
New Burdens Funding discontinued	CEO	Substantial reduction in Eastern IFCA capability with consequential inability to fulfil full range of duties or additional burden on funding authorities.	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">AIFCA engagement with Defra has led to an indicative three year settlement with ‘New Burdens’ funding continuing at the same level and additional funding of £150k for each IFCA to address three specific work-streams.County Council Finance Directors representatives have been kept appraised of the situation and the potential for increased levies in the event that funding from Defra is discontinued.	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Defra have continued to roll over new Burdens funding in recognition of the value that IFCAs provide in meeting national policy objectives.			
			4	4				
			Inability to meet all obligations would have a significant impact upon reputation.	Circa 25% of the annual budget is provided by Defra under the New Burdens doctrine so its loss would have a significant impact.				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
The Wash Fishery Order 1992 is not replaced in time when it expires in January 2023	CEO	Inability to manage the fishery with consequential impact upon industry viability and associated social and economic issues	4		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early decision taken to replace the WFO 1992 with a byelaw• Engagement with industry to address concerns about the use of a Byelaw• Engagement with industry to develop policies that will sit under the Byelaw• Byelaw has been 'made' by the Authority (Sept 2021) and submitted for QA to MMO and Defra legal teams.• Dialogue maintained with Defra teams about short-term solutions for the replacement Several Order.	Treat
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	4	The Authority agreed to replace the WFO 1992 with a byelaw in March 2020 and work is underway to introduce such a byelaw. There is judged to be sufficient time to get a byelaw approved but industry opposition may adversely affect this. If a replacement Regulating Order were applied for then the likelihood rating would increase to 4 and it is thought that it would be very unlikely that a new Order would be in place in time. The risk associated with the development of the Several Order is more prescient. Development of the several order and the FMP has been delayed.			
			The effective management of all fisheries within the Wash is important in terms of industry viability, sustainability of stocks and managing the impact of fishing activity in a heavily designated MPA. Loss of confidence in Eastern IFCA's ability to manage the cockle and mussel fisheries is likely to be significant if the WFO 1992 is not replaced in a timely way	Potential for legal challenge against Eastern IFCA				

Appendix 2: IFCA Performance Framework and Metrics



Success Criterion 1:

IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

Definition:

IFCAs will be visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users; and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

Outcomes

- **The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.**
- **The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published.**
- **The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level**
- **The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible.**

Indicators

- **SC1A:** The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year
- **SC1B:** The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.
- **SC1C:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.
- **SC1D:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.
- **SC1E:** The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.
- **SC1F:** By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.

Success Criterion 2:

IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

Definition:

The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.
- The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations
- The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.
- Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity

Indicators

- **SC2A:** The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year
- **SC2B:** The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures
- **SC2C:** The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.
- **SC2D:** The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.
- **SC2E:** The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.
- **SC2F:** Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development

Success Criterion 3:

IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts

Definition:

The IFCAs were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should make a contribution to sustainable development.

Outcomes

- **The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions**
- **The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.**

Indicators

- **SC3A:** The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority
- **SC3B:** The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website
- **SC3C:** Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of effectiveness of the intervention
- **SC3D:** The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website, and reviewed by 31 March each year
- **SC3E:** New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales
- **SC3F:** The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries

- **The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development.**
-

Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.

- **SC3G:** Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.

Success Criterion 4:

IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

Outcomes

- **The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year.**
- **Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed.**
- **The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings.**

Indicators

- **SC4A:** The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- **SC4B:** After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of certified financial information in a normal year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- **SC4C:** IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.
- **SC4D:** An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.
- **SC4E:** The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries &

Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders.

- **IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972**
-

Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.

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

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

Outcomes

- **A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources**
- **Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners**
- **A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review**
- **Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community**

Indicators

SC5A: The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year

SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making

SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has made towards national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report

Appendix 3: Eastern IFCA Priorities 2023-24

The table below sets out the work-streams which were identified as of high priority by the Strategic Assessment 2023. Each work-stream has been assigned a supplementary priority. Where resource limitations call for work-streams to be re-prioritised, these are used to inform which work should be the focus of available resources.

High Priorities for 2023-24
1. To ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas in the district are furthered a) Implementation of management measures for 'red-risk' gear/feature interactions. b) Continued implementation of the Adaptive Risk Management approach for the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. c) Completion of amber/green gear/feature interactions and development / Implementation of management measures where required.
2. Management of Wash cockle and mussel fisheries (wild capture and private) a) Confirmation of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw to enable management of wild capture fisheries b) Implementation of Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw access policies (transition). c) Develop appropriate management of private shellfish aquaculture within The Wash.
3. Obtaining better fisheries data a) Implementation of I-VMS for all fisheries specifically the Wash Shrimp fishery (dependent on partnership working with MMO led project).
4. Fisheries Management Plans a) Contributing to the development of Fisheries Management Plans.

Business Critical Workstreams 2023-24

The Strategic Assessment indicates where risks in relation to a fishery or species are mitigated because of established work streams. The cessation of such work streams has the potential to increase risk associated with a fishery. Such identified work streams are set out below and constitute ongoing, long running workstreams which have become established and represent 'business as usual'.

Effort monitoring within the Wash SAC and North Norfolk Coast including, and permit scheme administration

Moved from a 'priority' workstream to reflect that the workstream has delivered the required initial outputs and has now moved in to 'business as usual'. The Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 was confirmed by the SoS in 2022 and an effort monitoring programme has been established and is ongoing. Administration of the permit scheme will be required during the financial year, including the implementation of effort

management measures as may be required. This workstream is critical to the continuation of the shrimp fisheries in the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC.

SWEEP Study of the Wash Embayment, Environment and Productivity

Monitoring continues as it is required mitigation developed after Eastern IFCA's Habitats Regulations assessment for The Wash. Several fishery identified a potential impact relating to productivity. Monitoring is undertaken utilising one mobile and one fixed sonde (automatic data transmitters) to measure chlorophyll-A as a proxy for phytoplankton concentration that were purchased to facilitate this monitoring regime.

Wash cockle and mussel surveys and management

Annual surveys of cockle and mussel stocks within The Wash are a significant undertaking, providing a level of fisheries evidence which is not reflected in any other fishery within the district. There is currently a review ongoing regarding the type and extent of sampling regime required. Extensive HRAs are also completed annually to assess the potential impacts of the fisheries on designated habitats and species of The Wash – with a particular focus on shellfish-feeding birds and on harbour seals. These assessments inform what mitigation is required to enable these fisheries to operate whilst avoiding adverse effects on designated sites. A long-term HRA for The Wash cockle fishery is being developed, but annual updates will be required to account for latest evidence on cockle stocks, and bird and seal populations levels and distribution. The HRAs will need to take account of updated advice on Harbour seal disturbance, following a 2022 SMRU review of seal haul-out sites. Furthermore, a study into seal disturbance by intertidal fishing activity in The Wash has been proposed for 2023, to better inform this issue.

Reports have been received about an increased targeting of small cockles which threatens fishery sustainable and industry viability in the long term. It will likely become necessary to develop an engagement plan to educate and inform about small cockles, including engagement with processors to better understand the market for small cockles. A voluntary approach could be considered in the first instance, enhancing the existing code of conduct.

Shrimp Fishery Management (MSC accreditation)

Work includes gear inspections and effort calculations to assist industry with continuing to meet the requirements MSC accreditation. In addition, Eastern IFCA has agreed to facilitate certain aspects of the MSC accreditation for the Wash brown shrimp fishery, recognising its importance as a nationally significant fishery (accounts for 95% of the brown shrimp fished in UK waters). As such this is a business critical workstream relating to industry viability and protection of MPAs within the district.

Development of measures to address the sustainability of whelk stocks

Although a complete stock assessment is pending, there is strong evidence to suggest that the whelk stocks are experiencing significant decline and there is therefore a high

risk to the sustainability of the fishery. The stock assessment is necessary to inform the review of whelk permit conditions. The priority of this workstream is increased in the context of the low-mobility and reproductive trends of whelk which make stocks more vulnerable and therefore are slower to recover. Completing the size of maturity (SOM) study is also a priority in relation to industry viability to ensure that minimum sizes are appropriate. The stock assessment is dependent on obtaining reliable whelk landings data (gathered via Eastern IFCA's whelk permit scheme). The SOM study requires samples of fished whelks from different parts of the district; difficulties in obtaining samples has delayed progress in this work to date but efforts to obtain samples are ongoing.

Complete HRAs in relation to 'unplanned' fisheries

Mussel fisheries (sub-tidal seed fisheries in particular) have the potential to occur throughout the year. Where such a fishery is detected by fishers, officers have a limited amount of time to develop management measures and an HRA for the fishery. In the event that a fishery does occur the economic benefit is relatively high.

Advice in relation to risk of conflicts with other marine users

Eastern IFCA's strategic assessment focusses on sustainability issues which are within Eastern IFCA's envelope of influence. Other marine users also compete for space and resource within the marine environment and such activity is increasing over time. Eastern IFCA recognises that the issue of spatial squeeze and displacement is particularly relevant for small-scale fisheries operating in inshore waters, because of their limited working range and few opportunities to diversify.

Eastern IFCA is a consultee within the Marine Licensing system. Where new plans or projects are proposed within the district, Eastern IFCA provides advice to MMO (marine licence regulator) on the need to protect the environment and to prevent interference with legitimate uses of the sea, such as fishing. For nationally significant developments, such as offshore wind farms, Eastern IFCA provides similar advice to developers, their consultants, and to the Planning Inspectorate during planning examinations. One conflict which Eastern IFCA regularly reports is the issues of windfarm cables and the impacts of these on electrosensitive species.

Compliance monitoring and engagement in accordance with the Compliance Risk Register and TCG

Enforcement activity is primarily driven through the Compliance Risk Register and TCG meetings (which considers intelligence, emerging issues, fishing trends and the monthly risk profile). Enforcement activity is influenced by the outputs of the Strategic Assessment as this identifies the fisheries most at risk of sustainability issues (and by extension, those potentially most vulnerable to negative impacts through non-compliance).

Engagement and education with RSAs

Recreational sea angling is a popular and economically important activity in the Eastern IFCA district. Eastern IFCA needs to understand the trends of RSA activity, particularly when occurring in MPAs or sensitive areas. IFCOs routinely engage with RSAs on minimum sizes, applicable local and national regulation and wider sustainability issues as a business critical workstream.

Monitoring of district-wide biosecurity risk

A monitoring plan for biosecurity has now been implemented and officers are briefed regarding reporting biosecurity concerns. Furthermore, officers undertake engagement with stakeholders to increase awareness and understanding as appropriate. It is recognised that the spread and control of invasive non-native species is outside of Eastern IFCA's remit and we may be limited to reactionary actions only, but this is not a primary function. Work in relation to ensuring compliance with WFO lease conditions primarily putting on and removing shellfish and education and engagement work is going in relation to biosecurity and the transfer of invasive non-native species.

Partnership Working

Working in close collaboration with partners like other IFCAs, Natural England, Cefas, the MMO, local police forces and district councils enhances our capacity to undertake research, allows us to share expertise and experience, increases the reach of projects and helps to deliver impactful outcomes. The Strategic Assessment shows that the outputs of partnership working mitigates risk in relation to many fisheries. For instance, partnership working with the MMO in the context of the national intelligence project is critical to developing our evidence-base and understanding of risk to various species. Partnership working is also critical in the context of delivering the Adaptive Risk Management approach to the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ and the investigation into mussel die-off in the Wash, and these are only some examples.

Identification of future priorities 2023-24

Due to the finite resources of the IFCA, workloads are prioritised. The table below sets out work streams relating to risks identified within the assessment which are considered less of a priority. It is important to highlight these potential work streams because they may inform future Strategic Assessments or, opportunities may present during the year which would enable their undertaking or increase their priority.

Future Priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Obtaining better fisheries data<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Development of relationships with RSA to obtain more fisheries data, including consideration of the added value of developing an RSA strategy.b) Investigation into cockle & mussel die-offc) Continue dialogue with MMO and other partner organisations to develop 'joined-up' approach to gathering fisheries data from fishers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Gather information regarding recreational hand gathering. e) If required re-assess need to deliver 'unregulated netting' measures in the context of Bass Nursery Areas. f) Implementation of electronic/app-based returns system (to be incorporated with MMO under 10's catch returns if possible). g) Investigate requirement/applicability of netting permit. h) Develop mechanism to monitor levels of use of Lesser Spotted Dogfish as bait. i) Investigate shrimp fishing activity outside the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Delivering fisheries management in relation to fisheries in MPAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review the Humber estuary cockle byelaw (inherited from North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee) b) Development of monitoring and control plans c) Review mussel fisheries management plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) To ensure that sea fisheries resources are exploited sustainably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assessment and development of management measures in relation to crab and lobster fisheries sustainability b) Consider incorporating the internal Eastern IFCA position on seaweed farms in an aquaculture strategy c) Explore initiatives to invigorate the herring fishery through participation in promotional campaign/awareness raising

Appendix 4: Eastern IFCA Enforcement Plan 2023-24

Introduction

Compliance activity is undertaken in accordance with the Regulation and Compliance Strategy with the emphasis being upon the principle of endorsing compliance. This provides that clarity on regulation together with guidance and advice is essential to ensure compliance. The Eastern IFCA approach is to encourage compliance with regulation, but sanctions are also available to deter, punish and remove any benefit from non-compliance in line with the Enforcement Policy.

To ensure that compliance and enforcement activity is proportionate and to make best use of limited resources a risk-based approach is taken, and this is informed by the Compliance Risk Register.

Method

The inshore fisheries sector is dynamic and as such compliance and enforcement activity can change from week to week. To ensure a cohesive approach operational activity is planned and co-ordinated using a clear process. A Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (TCG) considers information from the Annual Compliance Risk Register via a monthly Risk Profile, which combined with analysis of previous activity, intelligence and emerging issues, is used to agree priorities for the month. A weekly Operations Meeting manages activity to address the priorities agreed at the TCG meeting.

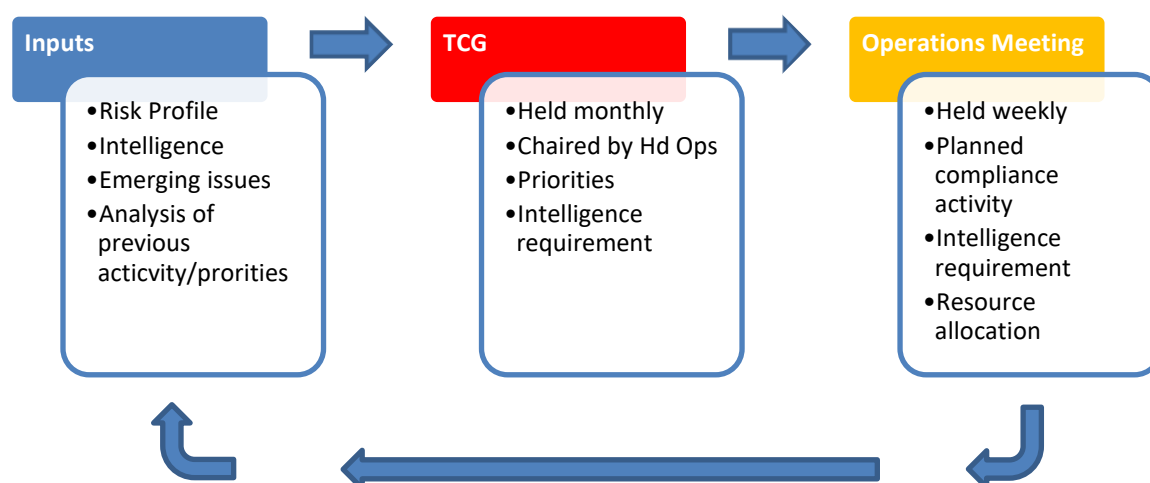


Figure 2. The TCG Process

Tactical Activities

Compliance and enforcement activities are conducted both at sea and ashore and can be categorised under six primary themes (see below). Activity may comprise one or all the following themes at any one time:

1. High Profile Visible Presence

Being present in the environment in which fishers operate is the foundation upon which all compliance activity is built. At a basic level, it provides credibility through operating both at sea and ashore, reassurance to the majority who comply with regulations and a deterrent effect for those that may be tempted to flout regulations. It also provides the opportunity for information and intelligence gathering as well as engagement and education.

2. Monitoring Activity

Monitoring activity enables Eastern IFCA to understand the level, nature and impact of fishing activity and the potential for regulations to be breached. It also helps Eastern IFCA to meet its legal obligation to prevent damage to MPAs from fishing activity e.g. in some cases, fisheries regulations exist for protecting these sites and in these cases, Eastern IFCA monitors compliance.

3. Engagement and Education

As provided by the Regulation and Compliance Strategy the primary approach is to encourage compliance with regulation. This is best achieved through engagement with the fishing industry to provide clarity on regulation and to assist compliance through education and the sharing of best practice. Engagement is also important in developing and maintaining strong and constructive relationships with both the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

4. Information, Intelligence and Evidence Gathering

Information, intelligence and evidence are key to Eastern IFCA's approach to fisheries management, regulation and compliance. Fisheries involve people, vessels, fish and markets, all of which are dynamic (e.g. people are compliant or non-compliant; vessels move; the emergence of fish is highly dependent on the environment; and markets go up or down). Understanding these factors is essential to Eastern IFCA's ability to operate effectively. Advances in technology provide for additional information sources, including for example use of drones and utilising Inshore VMS data, and the Authority will embrace and adopt these to further inform enforcement activity. The distinction between information, intelligence and evidence in this context is important:

Information takes many forms, but it includes local knowledge, anecdotal information and information gleaned from any source that may be of relevance to fisheries management. The dynamic nature of the marine environment means that fishing activity will vary from year to year and this form of evidence gathering is crucial to being reactive to changes in a dynamic inshore fisheries sector and it can help to inform compliance

activities in the short term. It may also indicate gaps in our current data or evidence base and be used to direct further investigation.

Intelligence relates primarily to enforcement and is information that has been evaluated to assess provenance and reliability to make informed use of it in compliance and enforcement activity.

Evidence in this context relates to quantifiable information that can be used to support fisheries management and regulation. This will include fisheries data, which is quantitative evidence gathered in such a way as to understand its confidence. For example, quantities landed and fishing effort. Generally, evidence is not used to support short-term responses to dynamic changes, but it informs the strategic management of fisheries and their regulations. This form of data is of crucial importance to designing and assessing the suitability of management measures.

5. Inspection

An important element in ensuring compliance with sea fisheries regulations is undertaking inspections (e.g. measuring catch and inspecting fishing gear) both at sea and ashore in ports, harbour, creeks, and beaches. Such inspections are risk based and the objective is to operate a proportionate regime that achieves the right balance between achieving compliance and managing the regulatory burden on commercial fishers and the level of intervention into the activities of recreational fishers. Not only do inspections provide confirmation of compliance or evidence of transgression but they also enable engagement and education and the opportunity to gather intelligence and information.

Eastern IFCA works in partnership with the MMO and the EA as well as other organisations. As such, evidence is collected and passed onto partner organisations for offences which are not necessarily enforceable by Eastern IFCA (e.g. quota restrictions).

6. Enforcement

Whilst the primary objective is to achieve compliance through engagement and education there will be occasions where it is appropriate to undertake operations to identify offending and to apply sanctions to deter, punish and remove any benefit from non-compliance in line with the Enforcement Policy. Operations and investigations can take many forms, but the key elements are to employ appropriate tactics to identify offending; to secure and gather evidence; and to prepare case files to support the appropriate sanction.

Partnership Working

Whilst Eastern IFCA are responsible for managing the fisheries out to six miles at sea there are some shared and complimentary areas of responsibility with both the MMO and the EA. Not only is co-ordination of effort between organisations important for stakeholders it also provides opportunities for sharing resources and reducing workloads.

Therefore, partnership working, particularly with the MMO, is a key element of Eastern IFCA's approach to achieving compliance. Key mechanisms to achieve this are set out below:

- **Attendance at TCG:** MMO officers attend the monthly Eastern IFCA TCG and *vice versa*. This enables shared priorities to be identified and information relevant to determining such to be shared.
- **Attendance at Operational meetings:** As with the above, attendance at operation meetings is undertaken to ensure that opportunities to share resources are identified and actioned.
- **Shared intelligence:** IFCA's and the MMO pool intelligence so as to ensure relevant information can be actioned by the relevant body. Officers from either organisation will gather intelligence relevant to the MMO, IFCA or other partner organisation.

This collaborative approach has resulted in more efficient deployment of officers to undertake inspections and an increased pool of information from which operational, tactical and strategic decisions can be made. Further collaboration is planned over the next financial year to include standardisation of approaches, training and sharing best practice. Moving forward Eastern IFCA will continue to develop partnerships to further enhance working relationships between the Border Force, local police and Broads Authority.

Objectives

Whilst the method employed to deploy resources via the TCG process (ante) means that it is necessary to retain the ability to be flexible, it is appropriate to set benchmark objectives for some activities to ensure that resources are not unintentionally directed toward one fishery or area. This includes the potential to surge and draw-back on levels of activity on a seasonal and risk-based approach. It is also appropriate to have an established intention in relation to vessel sea time to provide a high-profile presence as a minimum and to enable other compliance activities.

Table 1. Seaborne Compliance Activity

Objective	Quantity	Comments
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Sea patrol days (primary enforcement)	50+	50 dedicated enforcement sea patrols to establish high profile visual deterrent to non-compliance. The impact of sea-borne patrols is augmented through the use of social media to emphasise presence across the district. This objective in the context of a proportionate approach to compliance where the intention is not to over-burden fishers (set out in the Regulation and Compliance strategy).
Sea patrol days (secondary enforcement)	40+	In addition to the above dedicated enforcement patrols, IFCOs function as crew aboard research and survey activities at sea. The level of activity is not driven by enforcement priorities however IFCOs still perform enforcement functions (monitoring, engagement etc.) and activity will be reprioritised to focus on compliance where necessary.
Monitor MPA closed areas	100%	All areas closed under the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018 will be monitored throughout the year on a risk-based approach managed via the TCG.

Table 2. Shore Based Compliance Activity

Objective	Quantity	Comments
Port visits	1 x per month (min)	High profile visible presence augmented through the use of social media. A minimum level of effort ensures intelligence gathering and fishing trends monitoring is undertaken evenly across the district in the absence of risk-based drivers.
Monitoring MPA closed areas	1 x per month (min)	All areas closed under the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018 will be monitored throughout the year on a risk-based approach managed via the TCG.
Officers to engage with the owner/skipper of all vessels which have recently entered the district	100%	Engagement and education to ensure that persons unfamiliar with the district are aware of the relevant restrictions and regulations.

Table 3. Partnership Working

Objective	Quantity	Comments
Attendance at MMO Area TCG meeting	100%	Monthly meetings that provide the opportunity to harmonise activity and plan joint work.
Joint patrols/inspections/operations with the MMO	24 (min)	Joint patrols represent a resource saving enabling greater coverage of the district.

Indicators

To understand resource usage and outcomes it is necessary to capture data that will provide indicators on activity and performance. Reporting metrics are set through the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) which will also be reported

through the Annual Report. This information is used to assess the effectiveness of enforcement actions, the spread of our activities and to identify any gaps.

Table 4. NIMEG reporting metrics		
Category	Metric	Detail required
Inspections at sea	Vessel patrols	Count any patrol by a patrol vessel or survey vessel (mother/daughter boat combination counts as one patrol)
	Fishing vessel boarding	Count fishing vessels (including unregistered/unlicensed) inspected at sea, where boarding was in pursuit of any relevant duty
	Fishing gear inspections	Count store-pots, tiers/strings etc of fishing gear found deployed in the sea, where inspection was in pursuit of any relevant duty. Do not count gear inspected on board a vessel
Inspections ashore or in port	Shore patrols	Excursion/visit of any length to any part of the coast for an inspection or observation of fishing related activity
	Port visits	Individual port/cove/beach visits within a shore patrol
	Premises inspections	Markets, merchants, refrigerated units, retailers, food producers/outlets etc
	Fish/shellfish landing inspections	First-hand observations of fish/shellfish as it was landed ashore from a vessel. Do not count inspections of fish laid out on a market or in a storage facility unless the landing of that fish was observed
	Other inspections	Count vessel gear/fish checks in port/ashore, diver and shore angler catches, vehicle contents, shellfish on lay areas etc

Eastern IFCA collects additional information to help inform our progress with the targets set out above. These are set out below.

Partnership Working

- Attendance at MMO TCG meetings
- Joint patrols/inspections/operations with the MMO
- Joint Patrols and collaboration with Border Force, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire Police, Environment Agency and Broads Authority

Enforcement

- Verbal warnings
- Advisory letters
- Official written warnings
- Financial Administrative Penalties
- Prosecutions

Appendix 5: Eastern IFCA Communication and Engagement Plan 2023-24

The Importance of Communication and Engagement

Effective communication and engagement are essential to effectively fulfilling our duties under MaCAA. Three key objectives of communication and engagement are:

- Transparency and clarity to build trust with stakeholders;
- Educate stakeholders to aid compliance with management measures by improving an understanding of the importance of these measures;
- Draw on the expertise and local knowledge of stakeholders to inform management decisions.

Key engagement areas in 2023-24

Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) in the Cromer Shoal MCZ

ARM refers to the process of ‘managing through doing’, an iterative process of implementing management in lieu strong evidence and monitoring its effectiveness which is, in the case of potting within the Cromer Shoal MCZ, a means of avoiding more impactful, precautionary measures (such as closures).

Successful ARM is dependent on a collaborative approach, bringing stakeholders together to inform research and management. To that end, the Project Board responsible for delivering ARM in the site established two ‘Task and Finish Groups’ and a stakeholder group all of which include relevant stakeholders to inform the work.

This workstream is highly contentious, with a strong conflict in perspective between what can be described as our ‘conservation’ stakeholders and those from the fishing sector. Despite this, the work has so far led to the adoption of voluntary measures and the development of a flexible permit byelaw to manage fishing in the site.

The continued development of the byelaw and associated flexible measures will be the key focus area for engagement during 2023/24 to ensure that resultant management is effective at reducing risk (to the site).

Wash Fishery Order 1992 transition

The agreement to replace the WFO 92 with a byelaw in March 2020 led to a strong sense of feeling on the part of industry. Significant resource was allocated to engagement with the industry to inform this work, and to reassure industry who were generally concerned by the uncertainties inherent in changes to a system which has persisted for 30 years. The commitment to dialogue on the matter enabled the identification of the key issues which in turn were addressed through the development of measures to manage the associated fisheries.

The WFO 92 expired on 4 January 2023. The byelaw is at the final stages of coming into effect and the policy to manage access is agreed and the consequential transition from the WFO 92 is underway. Dialogue throughout this transition will be one of the key focus areas of 2023/24, and it is hoped that more focus can be placed on other issues surrounding these fisheries including the removal of small cockles and cockle and mussel die-off within the fisheries which are considered to be the key issues faced by these fisheries.

In addition, the Authority agreed to make a Several Order to manage private fisheries (lays) in The Wash to replace the same as was in place under the WFO 92. Current lay holders have indicated their objections to the proposals and significantly this will represent a focus area for engagement in that respect.

Important lessons have been learned from the dialogue in relation to this workstream which will influence the approach to engagement going forward.

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

Pursuant of the provisions of the Fisheries Act 2020, Defra is leading on the development of FMPs and the Authority will play a crucial role particularly with respect to facilitating stakeholder involvement in addition to providing our expertise and knowledge with respect to the needs of the local fisheries and environment. Ultimately, the FMPs may lead to requirements to introduce additional management within the district and as a result, future engagement needs.

Other fisheries

The Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 was confirmed by the SoS in August of 2022 but is yet to be implemented by the Authority – a conscious decision on the basis that the key stakeholders impacted by the byelaw were engaged in dialogue regards the replacement of the WFO 92. A key engagement priority of 2023/24 will be the implementation of the permit scheme (and associated effort limitation scheme) which is crucial to enabling the continuation of the fishery within the Wash MPAs.

The key potting fisheries within the district (whelk, crab and lobster) are highlighted within the Strategic Assessment as requiring local management in addition to being the subjects of Tier 1 FMPs.

Approach

Recent engagement has been challenging, particularly with regards to the replacement of the WFO 92 and delivery of ARM within the Cromer Shoal MCZ. Reflection on these challenges and lessons learned are set out below which will guide our approach to engagement:

Appropriate use of social media

Social media is potentially a powerful tool, capable of reaching the full range of stakeholders with limited resource requirements. However, it can also lead to greater impacts as a result of misunderstandings (lack of clarity in messages) or misrepresentation (purposefully taking information out of context to further a conflict or antagonistic cause). Whilst this is not limited to use of social media, the impacts can be wider reaching and more damaging.

The Authority's social media policy will therefore be reviewed this financial year with a view to strike the right balance to ensure we maximise benefits of its use, but limit the impacts of its misuse.

Representation of wider stakeholder groups

The extent to which appointed representatives truly reflect the views and opinions of wider industry has never been formally tested or considered. It is apparent that generally, fisheries stakeholders often have diverse and conflicting views and do not necessarily have a coordinated or formalised approach and as a result, representations of behalf of wider groups can, understandably, miss some of the intricacies important for informing our work. In addition, organisation or engagement events and distribution of related materials can, at times, be negatively impacted, with some within industry feeling that their views are not heard.

Because of the importance of understanding the views of our stakeholders, significant resource has been allocated to using multiple formats (see below) for engagement and distributing to the individual level. In addition, consideration will be given to enhancing our understanding of 'representatives' roles to take this into account when we receive their representations. This includes further consideration of the appropriateness of large meetings with stakeholders without 'facilitation' on the basis that several report the views of many are lost amongst those of the vocal minority.

The focus for the coming period seeks to deliver the required engagement during the period and mitigate as much as possible against the identified risks. This will be achieved in the following ways:

Utilising multiple formats

The Authority recognises that stakeholders have varying preferences for communication and seeks to engage using all available media (letters, emails, telephones, website, and social media).

In addition, it is apparent that preferences for in-person dialogue also varies, with debate around the effectiveness of larger meetings. Additional consideration will be given to ensuring that the format of a meeting will achieve the intended outcomes, with a preference for facilitated larger meetings where information from stakeholders is sought.

Planning

To mitigate over-burdening stakeholders, the consultations will be planned to take place at the most effective times, minimising overlap between consultation and considering fishery seasonality where possible.

In addition, stakeholders will be informed of these timings in advance, providing clarity to avoid confusion between consultations. Where overlap is inevitable, given competing priority workstreams addressed above, officers will seek to provide targeted engagement and support to ensure that key messages are received and understood.

Clear and transparent communication

The matters for consultation often have complex legislative and scientific detail. However, engagement material should not reflect this and will instead represent the facts and key considerations to help stakeholders provide feedback. Consultation summaries will be provided on up to two sides of A4 and further information will be available for stakeholders who would like it. More visual presentations of information will be considered where appropriate.

Expectations will be managed in terms of the opportunity for stakeholders to impact workstreams and to what extent, to enable stakeholders to clearly understand how their comments have been considered. Clear results of the consultation will be discussed and Eastern IFCA will provide feedback on stakeholders' responses within a reasonable timeframe.

Seeking input into each stage of development

The Authority invests a significant amount of time into dialogue with industry which goes above and beyond that which is 'required'. That is because it is of benefit to the workstreams, particularly when developing management measures, as the intricacies of the local situation can be better reflected. It also increases stakeholders' investment in the outcomes, improving understanding of our intentions and improving compliance with any resultant measures.

Informed by Community Voice Method

The Authority invested in the Common Ground project in 2016 to identify what our stakeholders' value about our coastal environment. The project used novel engagement techniques (Community Voice Method) to give an equal voice to a wider range of invested stakeholders. Through the application of this technique, the project was able to identify stakeholders' shared values, and set out key actions to improve engagement between Eastern IFCA and our stakeholders²¹.

The table below, shows how the key actions are addressed within communication and engagement work.

²¹ <https://wnnmp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2017/12/Common-Ground-final-report.pdf>

CVM - Engagement Plan Actions	
Action	Rationale
Maintain and improve a professional and up-to-date website. With regularly updated content (2 new news items per month)	CVM participants highlighted the need for regular effective communication of news and updates which they have a vested interest in, therefore the focus is to have regular updates and news items, and this will be reflected in project planning.
Social media sites to be regularly updated; use social media posts in conjunction with website updates, to deliver key updates to the community	<p>Social media will be used to 'add value' to content published on the website as appropriate. This will include posting links to the website, adding photos and engaging/having dialogue with partner organisations to improve visibility and reach.</p> <p>Officers will consider social media updates into their weekly plans to ensure platforms are updated at an appropriate frequency. In addition to posting updates, officers will use available analytical tools to assess and improve on successful posts and engagement.</p>
Engagement with key stakeholders around consultations	<p>This year, there are significant engagement requirements once again. Both with groups that are regularly consulted with and those that are not. Therefore, additional work (on top of resource that is usually invested on getting meaningful engagement) will be completed to learn the preferences of these new groups.</p> <p>Specific improvements planned are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate feedback/dialogue with disparate stakeholders so that views/opinions can be included in a meaningful way. • Follow up calls/visits to individuals who may have not involved themselves with initial consultation but may have a view/opinion they want to express. • Hold meetings, online and in-person where permitted, to enable further direct needs for engagement, acknowledging individuals' different needs in consultation work. • During consultation periods deploy properly briefed and equipped staff (through the TCG process) to gather information and views.
Establish working groups on key fisheries issues	To facilitate engagement with key stakeholders, Eastern IFCA intends to set up working groups as required, with representative stakeholders, to ensure that they have input during the regulatory process. Working groups will be

	<p>established for key regulation projects throughout the year, where a need is identified. This has been most successful in the development of the ARM approach from Cromer Shoal MCZ work; a series of working groups including project, research, and stakeholder groups have been established to support the development of management. These groups will continue to be a priority for engagement into 2023. Working groups for other fisheries will continue to be considered where relevant.</p>
Maintain the stakeholder database	<p>Maintaining an up-to-date stakeholder database is crucial to stakeholder engagement. Some of the most important messages are still passed on to fishers through personal engagement or through letter. Whilst Eastern IFCA aims to promote electronic engagement with stakeholders, fair and comprehensive engagement can only be achieved through utilising all available tools.</p>
Key engagement messages reflected in officer duties	<p>The Marine Protection Team utilise monthly risk profiles to set priorities both in enforcement and engagement at the TCG meeting each month. Given the level of exposure IFCOs get with stakeholders (particularly fishers), the utilisation of IFCOs to deliver key messages represents a key mechanism for engagement. Guidance for IFCO's documents to be produced for each consultation so officers are aware of key messages to communicate. All officers to utilise established message system to log stakeholder comments centrally.</p>
Review outputs of CVM to inform and develop how the organisation engages and communicates with stakeholders	<p>The CVM project provides some information and data explaining stakeholder preference regarding engagement and communication. This information will be retained and further reviewed to inform future activities.</p>
Joint work with partner organisations	<p>Officers are often approached to join in with partner organisation events (e.g. Eastern IFCA attendance at Suffolk Coastal Forum conference). These events have been some of the most successful we have attended as they use a lower amount of resource for the organisation and coordination, have a promotional effect and allow closer links and working relationships with key partners. It is also a key action highlighted by CVM. Where possible officers will identify and participate in such events, remotely where possible, to add value to the ongoing engagement and communication themes, and as such preference will be given to events that link with ongoing consultations and will work with social media streams.</p>