



Marine Natural Capital Navigators: Meeting Minutes

18th January 2024, 15:00-16:30

Chairing Organisation: SEPA, Chair: Marion Harald

Agenda:

Item	Lead
1. Updates from members	SEPA
2. Five Capitals Approach Report Presentation and Discussion	Sam Collin/Ness Smith
3. Reflections from the last year of MNCFS/MNC Navigators; discussing our focus for 2024	Sinead Sheridan/Chris Leakey
4. Next meeting 24 th March – topic/speaker suggestions welcome. <i>Next rotating Chair: JNCC</i>	SEPA

Actions from previous meeting:

Action	Lead	Status
1. Organising blue carbon webinar with Scottish Blue Carbon Forum (late autumn)	JJ/Bill Austin (SBCF)	Ongoing
2. Potential presentation on mNCEA (DEFRA) for next meeting	JM	Ongoing
3. Organise Marine Nature Enhancement Team (MD) re-scheduled presentation	JJ	Ongoing
4. Check on status/timings of Finance Earth/Crown Estate consultation on High integrity marine natural capital markets report – potential presentation	AS	Ongoing. Report now available here
5. Work with designer to focus on compass alternatives (with clear marine theme) followed by group vote to select logo	SS/JC/CL/JJ	Complete. Preview of new website available here
6. Send poll for next January meeting date – all to inform of potential clashes with events/conferences	JJ/all members	Complete

Attendees:

Marion Harald (Chair, SEPA)
 Vicky Morgan - VM (JNCC)
 Julia Clough -JC (SWT)
 Rebecca Crawford - RC (SWT)
 Sam Collin - SC (SWT)

Hannah Rudman - HR (SRUC, Highlands Rewilding)
 Cathy Tilbrook -CT (NatureScot)
 Chris Leakey - CL (NatureScot)
 Sinead Sheridan - SS (NatureScot)
 Calum Duncan – CD (MCS)

Apologies:

Ness Smith (HMC)

Janet Khan (SEPA)

Bill Austin (University of St. Andrews, Blue Carbon Forum)

Jessica Jones (SWT)

Item 1: Updates from Members**JNCC**

The team are currently busy producing proposals for next year's mNCEA work, while also completing this year's mNCEA work. Have now appointed a new economist (team leader).

SWT

RC attended for the first time as Marine Policy Officer. Started properly in January, and in conjunction has been finishing off the Oceans of Value project, which will be wrapped up completely in March. Currently planning/organising for a Parliamentary event in February. Will be attending MNC Navigator meetings going forward.

JC updated the group that SWT are piloting some cross pollination between topics, calling this 'exploration zones'. The first topic will be international nature finance. Exploration Zones will be a way to explore topics in detail which are relevant to one or all the hubs. The Basecamp will be used to provide a structure for discussion and collaboration. This format can be used to explore issues to bring knowledge, expertise, findings back into the wider network. SWT are also currently organising a celebration event on the 29th Feb to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital. All are welcome, the details are available on the website. SWT are nearly ready to launch the Digital Enablers hub. On this we are working closely with the CivTech challenge team, to set up a challenge definition workshop to explore the issues in this area to discuss in June innovation hackathons.

NatureScot

CT updated on a FIRNS project, currently being delivered for the development of SMEEF. This is being done alongside another FIRNS project creating a potential river catchment fund that Fisheries Management Scotland are proposing. The aim is to explore opportunities for restoration in river catchments and allow for link up with SMEEF projects to support a source to sea approach. The other proposed project is looking at nature finance mechanisms that might be opening up for SMEEF and others, to make use of. The contract for this has been let to Finance earth and HMW. We are also looking at lessons learned from SMEEF on monitoring and developing a rigorous monitoring programme.

SS updated on a recent marine natural capital workshop that was organised by the MASTS Marine Planning and Governance Forum at the MASTS ASM. The notes and accompanying brief for this will be available soon.

CL noted that he had attended the first meeting representing the MNC Navigators on the SFNC steering group. Representatives attend from each 'hub'. It was agreed at this to add an objective to the SFNC steering group on facilitating stronger links and collaboration across the hubs.

Hannah Rudman updated that she is transitioning role to a new post as Business Development Director at Highlands Rewilding.

HMC

The organisation have recently recruited four new staff, and more recruitment is on the horizon. Scotland focussed project include the SMEEF insights already mentioned and the FIRNS Source to Sea project alongside Finance Earth. HMC are also working on best practice approaches in applying cumulative effects assessments.

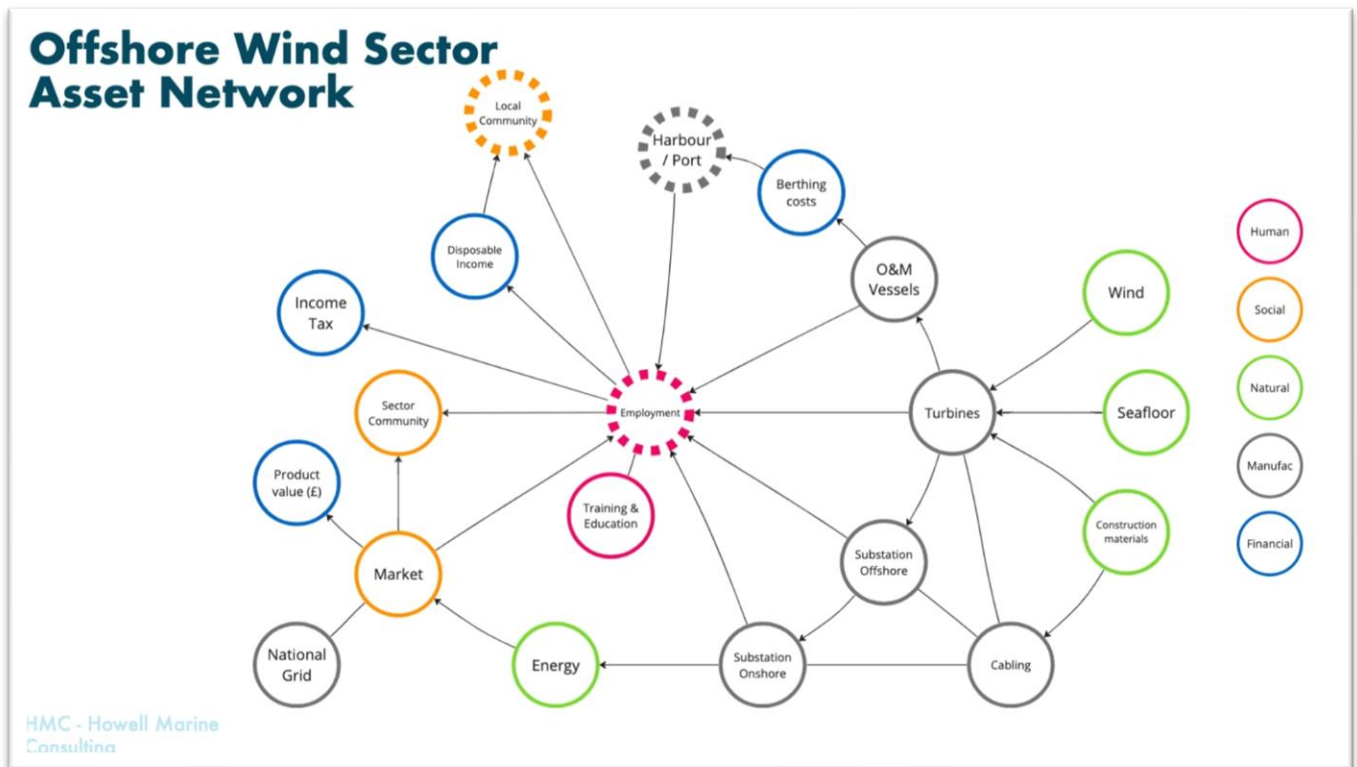
Item 2: Five Capitals Approach Report – Presentation and discussion

SC gave a presentation on a pilot project delivered for the MMO by HMC – Using the five capitals approach for marine plan development in the East of England. The report is available [here](#). A recording of the presentation can be viewed [here](#).

In summary:

- This is a thought-piece commissioned by MMO to examine if a five capitals approach can inform carrying capacity and support marine plan development.
- It was focussed on three sectors: offshore wind, fisheries and aggregates.
- The five capitals are: natural, social, manufactured, financial and human. These were first developed by Jonathon Porritt. The approach adopted by the Capitals Coalition considers four capitals (not financial) and there is also a six capitals approach that takes into account intellectual capital.
- The three key components of this study were: potential benefits and challenges and managing trade-offs for space; approach for marine planning decision making; and how it can be scaled up. For the purposes of the talk, SC focussed on outlining developing asset registers for marine planning decision making.
- An asset register was developed for the three sectors under consideration. There is recognition that this is a snapshot in time; it can be an additional consideration in the process to carry out regular updating. Publicly available data was used. Other data may have costs associated with it, or primary data collection may be needed.
- Once the register was compiled, the approach mapped out and developed an Asset Network diagram. This is a way to associate the capitals with the assets, and highlights which are important, and which have linkages across different sectors. An example from the presentation of the network diagram for offshore wind is shown on page 4.
- Dashed circles show where things are linked to other sectors.
- Showing the linkages in this way allows consideration of the whole system and the full scale of activities consideration of different stages of operation.
- Through this approach you can visually represent the different capitals and can adapt according to need. The network can be simple or complicated, depends on the question being asked.
- From this then a conceptual framework was then developed which looked to incorporate decision-making within the approach. The approach was to define the question, identify gaps, carry out stakeholder participation and align trade-offs with policy priorities, addressing initial question and use outcomes to inform decision-making. Within this process we can also assign relative values (so not just capturing monetary values). In considering impacts, can consider how impacts on assets will affect other capitals. Can also then do scenario modelling.
- HMC ran a workshop with MMO marine planners to test the approach.
- Builds stakeholders into the decision-making process, which then informs the scenario in return.
- Informs transparent decision making. Question driven approach, with a particular problem or policy objective in mind. Provides a way to look at changes through a whole system.
- Brings together a varied evidence base and a range of stakeholders.

- Can inform complex issues like carrying capacity but is not a silver bullet.



Questions:

- **How does the network map capture information on impacts on natural capital, to work out what the interactions are and what happens if impacts are scaled up?**

There are a lot of things that run alongside this. Diagram talked through is a simplified version, but it comes down to what question you are asking as to how you might bring in the impacts. If question is about how activities impact an asset, this can be built into the assessment. This approach cannot do everything and should run alongside other types of assessment, such as cumulative effects etc.

- **Natural capital assessments are a way to look at bits of the system that are not valued much. By putting the other capitals back in, do we risk watering down again the natural element, or is it a good way to compare?**

It has been important to develop the understanding of the role natural capital plays. Where we are getting to now, is understanding what this means to society, what do these ecosystem services deliver. This approach really highlights the value of natural capital as everything is reliant on it and the other values that stem from this. This approach puts natural capital in context of the wider system but do not think it waters down, if anything emphasises importance of it.

- **Very nice way to show the system. This seems to think of all of natural capital as assets – services benefits and the flow between these are all wrapped up in one symbol and one colour. Could this be expanded to note the difference?**

We played around with different models. It is very easy for them to become very complicated very quickly. We want to use this as a communication tool, so people can easily identify the links. It can be built out as wide as you want it to be and can show flows. In terms of the participation component and understanding felt this simplified version was best.

- **On social capital, it is quite difficult to nail a definition, and it is quite a nebulous concept. Other definitions are focused on trust in society, equitability and think this is not what this model is talking about?**

Found social capital the hardest one to comprehend and figure out how it fits into the system. The biggest challenge was around scale and defining what it meant at different scales – community, multiple communities, business. In the report we recommend developing understanding to incorporate it better. We tried to keep it as simple as possible, but the more you look into it the more complicated it becomes.

- **A great tool and great to have the visual. Can see how it would influence the decision-making process. How long does it take?**

We approached the workshops with it already made up and tested it. Have not gone through the process of using stakeholders to develop the networks but know the MMO are interested in this approach. Developing the asset register took a few weeks. The network can be quite quick to build and can be quite enjoyable. Human elements help understand what the key assets are and how are they valued. Talked about potential to build software.

- **To use this to build scenario modelling – ideally also need to understand strength and direction of relationship between assets. Is that all possible?**

Yes, it is possible, but need stakeholder mapping and discussion as the basis for the next step. Built on local expertise and knowledge.

- **Do you see a clear benefit to this over four capitals approach?**

Believe the reason the Capitals Coalition focussed on four rather than five capitals, was that financial capital is a product of the other four. Take care of others it will take care of itself. Felt it was important to include here to capture the whole system and including it also enables links across capitals to be highlighted.

Item 3: Reflections on the last year of MNCFS/MNC Navigators and discussing our focus for 2024.

CL gave a brief presentation noting the group was formed in late 2022 and reviewing the groups achievements in the last year. The slides are included below as a summary:

Navigators Hub Objectives

- To create a network of marine experts to advance marine natural capital and ecosystem service thinking, research and practical implementation in Scotland.
- To provide a platform for experts in technical advancement (particularly researchers in academic institutes) and policy development (e.g. Marine Scotland) to communicate and collaborate.
- To encourage representatives from projects/programmes with an interest in marine natural capital to:
 - Share knowledge
 - Share updates
 - Highlight most recent scientific findings and best practices (both domestic and international examples)
 - Provide expert advice to Group members
 - Identify opportunities for collaboration
 - Identify knowledge gaps
 - Collaborate on commissioning pieces of work to fill identified gaps
 - Avoid duplication of work
 - Provide a horizon scanning service, particularly with respect to new funding opportunities.
- To establish a network of marine natural capital experts that stakeholders could approach for advice.

- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- NatureScot
- SEPA
- SRUC
- Scottish Government's Marine Directorate
- Crown Estate Scotland
- JNCC
- University of Aberdeen
- University of St Andrews
- Howell Marine Consulting
- Scottish Environment LINK
- Plymouth Marine Laboratory



NàdarAlba
Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

SS also reviewed the priorities identified by the group in an October 2022 workshop. There was then a discussion.

- The reflections/ask should be widened to stakeholders also not at the meeting.
 - CL suggested canvassing for feedback through a survey.
- **ACTION – CL to coordinate a survey to gather feedback from group members.**

So far:

• In-hub Knowledge Exchange

- MCS Fisheries & Natural Capital study
- Sea The Value
- FIRNS
- [CivTech 8.4](#)

• Events

- Business in the Blue Economy



• Exploring priorities

- ...in the context of the Blue Economy Vision



In the pipeline / wishlist:

- Joint webinar(s) with Blue C Forum
- Nature Enhancement in Marine Directorate
- Defra's [mNCEA](#) programme

Opportunities / horizon scan:

- SFNC hub-of-hubs
- UKRI research and network calls
- More from FIRNS
- ...?



- One suggestion would be a piece of work to make the JNCC led universal asset matrix more applicable to Scottish habitats. VM noted that these considerations can be built into the existing model. The habitats are classified using UK and European habitat classifications, so it should be applicable to Scottish habitats. It is meant to be living thing and is designed so it can be added to.
- Thoughts were shared about the way the group has grown but there are decreasing numbers at meetings. It would be useful to explore why this might be. Perhaps as meetings are so far apart, there is a loss of momentum? It was also noted the Basecamp group is not very active. Is this seen as too much of a closed network? Do people feel they cannot join it?
- The Basecamp activity of the marine group in comparison with the activity happening on the nature finance group, might be reflective of the amount of work happening in that area. Things are a bit slower for marine natural capital. Perhaps the marine group does not get as much exposure.
- This group also runs slightly differently to finance group, which has a small leadership team of eight. Have not decided how we elevate what we talk about here.
- Regularity and frequency – maybe once we have decided on two or three focus areas, we can do a series of webinars over the whole season. This was something the finance group did. These were not always well attended but started the conversation and were recorded and shared.
- Scope to explore as part of the workplan whether this group could support NMP2. For example, there are links to data priority highlighted from BE workshop, and what is captured within NMPI.

- **ACTION – CL to ask Marine Directorate if there is value in the Navigators contributing to MNC related workstreams, for example to assist with delivery of BEV outcomes or in aspects of NMP2.**

Item 4: AOB - High Integrity Nat Cap Markets report and workshop

HR and CT attended the workshop to discuss this report and wider area of work. They gave a brief overview of this for the group. This report was published in November. The consultation is still open – the report can be viewed [here](#). The report team are holding workshops in each of the four UK nations. Presentations included an overview of the Scottish marine policy landscape. There was also an update on SMEEF and its achievements so far. The group also had discussions around lessons that we can learn from terrestrial natural capital and beginning to join terrestrial and marine natural capital, as well across seascapes. Workshop participants also discussed prioritising policy-based recommendations, and then finance and science ones too. The report authors will take away all the ideas discussed at the workshop and synthesise this into one document.

Date of next meeting

It was noted that the 24th of March is a Sunday. The meeting is probably set for Monday 25th. A calendar appointment will be circulated in due course. It was also suggested that if it is possible to move this meeting a couple of weeks forward, that would be helpful as things may be hectic as this is the end of the financial year.

CT suggested an update on the FIRNS work could be added as a presentation for the next meeting (**ACTION**). CD noted that these meetings are really relevant for his colleagues James Merchant. Participants suggested James should also attend going forward. SS also noted the website is now live and can be [viewed here](#).

- **ACTION – Add JM to mailing list for future meetings, and to the Basecamp group.**

Summary of actions from the meeting:

Action	Lead
1. Consider, if possible, to move date of next meeting from end of March to mid-April to avoid end of financial year	JJ
2. Coordinate a survey to gather feedback from group members	CL
3. Ask Marine Directorate about link with this group and contributing to marine natural capital related workstreams.	CL
4. Table FIRNS project update for a future meeting	CT
5. Add JM to mailing list for future meetings, and to the Basecamp group	SS/JJ
Ongoing from previous meetings:	
6. Organising blue carbon webinar with Scottish Blue Carbon Forum (late autumn)	JJ/Bill Austin (SBCF)
7. Potential presentation on mNCEA (DEFRA) for next meeting	JM
8. Organise Marine Nature Enhancement Team (MD) re-scheduled presentation	JJ
9. Check on status/timings of Finance Earth/Crown Estate consultation on High integrity marine natural capital markets report – potential presentation	AS (check if Adele is still appropriate person for this, as has returned from secondment to HES)