



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# MPA Network Management Action Guidance

2018-2023



Photograph: View of Porthllindaen Llŷn Peninsula

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## Key Messages

- The MPA Network Management Action Guidance Document is for applications from all Welsh Management Authorities, interested organisations and third sector organisations who meet the eligibility criteria set out in this document.
- This document offers guidance for applications for actions which do not require funding from the MPA Network Management Grant Scheme.
- Applications will be invited in a 'call for actions' window which will occur once a year. The timing will be dictated by the MPA Network Management Steering Group.
- Successful applications will be included as an 'action' within the annual MPA Network Management Action Plan and will be expected to provide an update for the subsequent Annual Report.
- The application form has been developed by the MPA Network Management Steering Group and is aligned with the criteria set out in the MPA Network Management Framework 2018-2023.
- An annual workshop will be held to offer guidance and support for interested applicants.
- Annex A at the end of this guidance provides the individual scoring guidance for each criterion.
- Annex B at the end of this guidance provides a link to the latest MPA Network Management Annual Report and case studies of previous projects, to offer support for interested applicants.



## Section A: Introduction

This guidance document explains the process for applying for an action to be included within the MPA Network Management Action Plan and which **does not** require any funding through the MPA Network Management Grant Scheme.

The annual MPA Network Management Action Plan is open to applications from all Welsh Management Authorities, interested organisations and third sector organisations.

Non-funded applications for inclusion into the action plan can include projects which span multiple years.

### Suggested examples of projects

An annex is included within this guidance note which outlines previous projects, whose completed summaries are provided in the annual MPA Network Management Annual Report. Case studies have also been developed for identified projects where best practice can be shared.

Applications need to demonstrate how they would improve overall management of the MPA network in Wales, however, consideration is given to pilot projects where there is potential to upscale to network level.

Consideration should also be given to how applications could improve the condition of MPAs through improved management which could support achievement of Good Environmental Status.

### Grant Funding

This guidance document is for applications (actions) which do not require any grant funding. All applicants are encouraged in the first instance to explore all other sources of funding. For proposals which do require grant funding, applicants should consult the MPA Network Management Grant Scheme Guidance Document.

## Section B: MPA Network Management Action Plan – Eligibility

### You are eligible if

You are a Welsh Management Authority (such as an advisory body or local authority), third sector organisation or another interested organisation. The process for applying for inclusion in the MPA Network Management Action Plan does not use an online platform to manage the process, therefore prior registration for any such application is not required.

Welsh Government encourages joint collaborative applications from multiple organisations and would be happy to facilitate this through our annual workshops.

### Marine Licences, planning consents, building regulations, Environmental Consents and Licences

If an applicant proposes to install or use capital items which in effect require licences and/or agreement they are advised to consult with the relevant licensing authority, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), their Local Authority (LA) or other agency as consent may be required to carry out some work.

Applicants must obtain any necessary planning consent and abide by any other relevant statutory requirements. Applicants also need to check their proposals do not break any byelaws, obstruct rights of way, affect oil or gas pipelines etc, and must avoid damaging the environment or causing pollution.

Applicants will be wholly responsible for any above consent which is required for the successful delivery of the action.

## Section C: Applying for inclusion in the MPA Network Management Action Plan – The Application Process

The application process will consist of an invitation to submit an application during a specified period known as a 'call for actions' which normally occurs in quarter 4 of a calendar year.

The call for actions window will normally last for 8 weeks and a virtual workshop will be held during this to offer applicants advice and guidance.

### The application

The call for actions will be announced through key Welsh Government and external stakeholder networks, with the application and guidance as part of the package.

If you have not received an application you can contact [MPANetworkManagement@gov.wales](mailto:MPANetworkManagement@gov.wales).

The application consists of 5 objectives with which applicants will need to satisfy to be considered for a potential grant. Applicants will also need to satisfy a minimum of one management principle.

Those applications which satisfy only one management principle will not be treated less favourably than applications which satisfy multiple outcomes as only the highest scoring management principle is considered.

### Criteria 1 – What is the ability of the action to deliver improvements in condition, or to improve our understanding of pressure/threats or their management

This criterion has been divided into two parts. Any potential action will only be assessed against one of these criteria (i.e. only 1a or 1b):

- A project which addresses one or more of the pressures or threats acting on one or more of the features of our MPA network, then you need to assess your project under criterion 1a.

- A project which demonstrates the need to gain a better understanding of a specific pressure or threat then the action will be assessed against 1b. The 1b criterion will also be used if the potential action involves needing to better understand or trial a specific management approach.

Applications which attempt to address both criteria will not be considered.

Both criteria can be used for pressures or threats, these are defined as follows:

- Pressure: something that currently has an adverse impact on one or more features.
- Threat: something that is currently not a pressure but is considered likely to become a pressure in the near future unless action is taken.

### Criterion 1a. What is the ability of the action to deliver improvements to, or maintenance of, feature condition?

This criterion relates to actions that will result in improvements to, or maintenance of, the condition of features of the MPA network, usually by managing pressures/threats to the feature. The action could also be linked to management of activities affecting feature condition, or the restoration of a feature.

**Elements to consider:** Be clear about which pressures the potential action is targeting, which features are impacted by the pressure, and how the features are impacted by the pressure. Explain precisely how the potential action will ameliorate the pressure targeted. If possible, clarify who will be involved, and what their roles will be.

Example actions that would be considered under 1a:

- An action to develop a network wide strategy to manage pressures on a feature e.g. UK Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise Conservation Strategy.
- An action to reduce nutrient inputs affecting a coastal feature as a pilot project.

- An action to reduce the impact of boat disturbance (e.g. code of conduct) on a whole feature.

### Criterion 1b. What is the ability of the action to improve our understanding of pressure/threats or their management?

This criterion is related to actions that will result in improving our understanding of the pressures or threats to the MPA network or improving our understanding of the different management measures that could be used to address these pressures or threats.

**Elements to consider:** It is important to be clear about what gap in understanding the potential action is trying to fill. Consider why it is a gap and how the potential action will fill it. If considering a new management approach (either to investigate or trial) be clear about exactly what the management measure is and the outcomes that will be achieved and if possible where the approach has been used successfully elsewhere.

Example actions that would need to be considered under 1b:

- An investigation into the impact of coastal squeeze on the MPA network features.
- An investigation into the impact of marine litter on our MPA features; or
- Trialling a new management approach to bait digging on a site (if it is also something that could be rolled out to other sites).

### Criterion 2. What is the spatial extent of the action?

This criterion is focused on what area of the network the potential action covers. The scores will be allocated based on the scale of the impact of the action on the MPA network. This is a network action plan, therefore, the larger the area of the network covered or the greater the number of features (or a large proportion of the feature across the network) involved the higher the score. A potential action can be given a threshold score of (2) if the action could be considered a demonstration project at a local scale which could be rolled out or implemented in other areas of the network.

**Elements to consider:** It is important to be clear what sites and/or features the action will benefit. If the action is a demonstration project, it is important to highlight other sites that would benefit in the longer term and, if possible, how the project could be rolled out across the network.

### Criterion 3: Is the action consistent with the MPA Management Principles?

This criterion is focused on how well the potential action meets one or more of the five MPA network management principles. The potential action can be scored against any or all of the MPA management principles in Box 1. A potential action may not be relevant for all management principles, and there is no need to try and make an action fit all criteria. Guidance for potential action owners is provided in italics under each management principle.

If an action scores negatively against any management principle, it should not be taken any further through the prioritisation process until these issues are addressed.

### Box 1: MPA Management Principles

**MP1 Strategic Planning:** Management should be guided by strategic planning processes at both a sectoral and all-Wales level. It supports sustainable use of the MPA network in ways which conserve and enhance, and contributes to resilient marine ecosystems, wellbeing and delivery of sustainable management of natural resources.

*Does the potential action have a significant Wales wide planning aspect contributing to resilient marine ecosystems, wellbeing and delivery of sustainable management of natural resources?*

**MP2 Regulation, development consenting and assessment processes:** Regulatory processes and consenting decisions are delivered consistently and proportionately across the network, and proactively consider and support the maintenance or enhancement (where possible/appropriate) of the condition of relevant sites and features across the network.

*Does the potential action relate to the regulation, development consenting or assessment processes for MPAs in Wales?*

**MP3 Management advice and guidance:** Decision making and management operations is supported by clear and consistent advice and guidance on MPAs including their conservation objectives.

*Does the potential action relate to the production of guidance to improve the management of our MPAs?*

**MP4 Understanding the condition of, and pressures and threats on, sites and their features to inform management:** Management is informed by formal assessment and reporting on the condition of features, sites and the network and the associated pressures. Assessment and reporting is informed by a prioritised evidence programme (including monitoring) which improves our understanding of the relationship between pressures and threats and condition.

*Does the potential action improve our understanding of the pressures on and/or threats to our MPAs?*

**MP5 Wider management:** Management activities across the network are prioritised towards those that have the potential for greatest improvement on condition and security of management. Common management challenges are addressed collectively across the network.

*Does the potential action improve the management and therefore the condition of the network of MPAs in Wales?*



#### Criterion 4. What is the feasibility of the action?

This criterion relates to the ability of the potential action owner to carry out the action. It is important under this criterion to consider how exactly the action will be carried out and if the methods proposed have been used successfully elsewhere.

**Elements to consider:** It is important to consider the technical feasibility of your project including the practical, logistical and technical abilities (including skills and expertise) needed to undertake the action. Consider appropriateness of the methodology for the site or context.

#### Criterion 5. How does implementing the action represent value for money?

This criterion is not relevant for this application process.





## Annex 1

Criterion 1a – What is the ability of the action to deliver improvements to, or maintenance of, feature condition: Scoring table

Explanation	Score
The action is not targeted at a pressure or threat with a link to feature condition.	0
<b>Threat*</b> : The action will manage one or more of the suspected threats that could affect the condition of the MPA network features.	1
<b>Pressure</b> : The action will manage one or more of the known pressures affecting the condition of the features of the MPA network. <b>Threat</b> : The action will manage one or more of the threats that could affect the condition of the features of the MPA network.	2
<b>Pressure</b> : The action will manage one or more of the known pressures significantly affecting the condition of the features of the MPA network, using a proven approach. <b>Threat</b> : The action will manage one or more of the threats that could significantly affect the condition of the features of the MPA network using a proven approach.	3

\* There is no score of 1 for pressures as to be prioritised for the action plan the pressure should be already known.

Criterion 1b – What is the ability of the action to improve our understanding of pressure/threats or their management: Scoring table

Explanation	Score
The action will not improve our understanding of a. pressures or threats; or b. the management measures needed to address them.	0
<b>Threat</b> : The action will partially improve our understanding of a. one of the threats which could affect the condition of the MPA network features; or b. the management measures needed to address this threat.	1
<b>Pressure</b> : The action will increase our understanding of a. one or more of the pressures and how they are affecting the condition of the features of the MPA network; or b. the management measures needed to manage those pressures. <b>Threat</b> : The action will improve our understanding of a. one or more of the threats that could affect the condition of the features of the MPA network; or b. the management measures needed to manage those threats.	2 (threshold score)
<b>Pressure</b> : The action will significantly increase our understanding of a. one or more of the pressures and how they are affecting the condition of the features of the MPA network; or b. the management measures needed to manage those pressures. <b>Threat</b> : The action will significantly improve our understanding of a. one or more of the threats that could significantly affect the condition of the features of the MPA network; or b. the management measures needed to manage those threats.	3

## Criterion 2 – What is the spatial extent of the action: Scoring table

Explanation	Score
The action is on a single site only and has no wider application across the network*.	0
The action is for a small number of sites or a small proportion of the network.	1
The action is for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multiple sites, or</li> <li>a large proportion of the MPA network, or</li> <li>a large proportion of a feature across the network.</li> </ul> A score of two can also be awarded if the action is a demonstration project# with strong potential to be delivered across the network after a local pilot stage.	<b>2</b> (threshold score)
The action is for the network (e.g. whole feature and/or pressure wide).	3

\*These actions should be prioritised though local action plans where they exist, or through the NRW Actions Database.

#To achieve the threshold score, a demonstration project must address an issue that is of concern across the network, but be suitable to be carried out at a single site level to prove the approach.

## Criterion 3 – Is the action consistent with the MPA Management Principles: Scoring table

Explanation	Score
The action has inconsistencies with the management principle.	-3
The action is not relevant to the management principle.	0
The action is partially consistent with the management principle.	1
The action is consistent with the management principle	2*
The action is consistent with the management principle and will also bring about a positive change in ways of working.	3

\* Threshold score – the potential action needs to score a 2 against at least one management principle

## Criterion 4 – What is the feasibility of the action: Scoring table

Explanation	Score
The action is not technically feasible, even if resources were available.	0
The technical feasibility of the action is currently unproven/there are issues with the appropriateness of the methodology	1
There are no significant issues with technical feasibility/appropriateness of the methodology	2
Technical feasibility is proven	3

## Annex 2

### Marine Protected Area Network Management Annual Report: 2020-2021