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COASTAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING EVIDENCE-SYNTHESIS REPORT

FOR WELSH GOVERNMENT MARINE & FISHERIES DIVISION

Dr Sophie Wynne-Jones & Ann Humble
Strategic Evidence Unit for Environment and Rural Affairs.

November 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government (WG) Marine and Fisheries Division are seeking to build capacity across coastal communities to achieve outcomes for sustainable growth and nature recovery (see table 1) in line with the Programme for Government 2021-2025 commitments.

Sustainable growth	Nature recovery
<i>Supporting actions to enhance and enable...</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sustainable aquaculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tackling climate and nature emergencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• local seafood supply-chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• managing the marine environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tourism & recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• blue carbon
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivery of Fisheries Objectives as outlined in the Joint Fisheries Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• public understanding of marine issues

The need to build capacity within coastal communities has been recognised by Welsh Government as a key component of a broader Blue Recovery programme of work. This has arisen in response to the various challenges facing coastal communities across Wales in recent years, including the UK's Exit from the EU, the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, and the ongoing impacts of the climate and nature emergencies; as well as responding to long-term marginalisation and decline in some coastal areas.

Several barriers impacting on coastal communities' capacity have been identified, including, but not limited to, a lack of long-term funding for projects; poor communication and a feeling of not being listened to; a lack of legacy or follow up activity following project completion; and people within coastal communities not feeling that they have a knowledge or capacity to have a role to play in marine and coastal issues.

To better understand these, and wider barriers, restricting coastal community capacity, and to identify the best means of supporting capacity building in this space, Welsh Government's Strategic Evidence Unit for Environment and Rural Affairs were commissioned to undertake two evidence gathering exercises to review best practice, identifying what works and what communities need to enable them to build capacity into the future. The resulting advice is designed to inform a portfolio of

activity that government could develop going forwards, for example in place of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund.

Firstly, a secondary evidence review was undertaken, to synthesize best practice for community engagement and capacity building in a marine and coastal context.

Secondly, two stakeholder workshops were convened in September 2022, to capture experiences of existing projects in Wales so we could document key lessons in a Welsh specific context.

Taken together, key findings from both sets of evidence have been synthesised to provide the following advice for the Marine and Fisheries Division. Full details are given in the main report below.

ADVICE FOR MARINE AND FISHERIES POLICY

- 1. Provide Continuity** in activities across coastal communities to grow and maintain capacity in these locales, retaining skilled staff and ensuring an ongoing sense of commitment to communities. This requires consideration of approaches to funding and delivery structures used as well as greater foresight and transparency to enable long-term planning.
- 2. Enable Financial Sustainability** to reduce the burden on the public purse, support continuity within communities and ensure prosperity. This can be attained by supporting provision of business skills, encouraging networking with the business sector, and funding to enable business clusters.
- 3. Be Community-led** to ensure that activities are meaningful to coastal communities and respond to their needs. To do this, funding should be tailored to communities and not just drive top-down priorities. Ongoing support for facilitators is essential to build these connections and insights. Enabling a culture of volunteering and participation can also ensure active involvement.
- 4. Be Inclusive** to address concerns from groups and sectors who feel they have not been adequately included or supported by previous initiatives. Ensuring appropriate representation of all groups, democratic decision-making and proper distribution of power, is essential to achieve this goal. Better understanding of the range of marine stakeholders and their diverse priorities is also necessary. Where conflicting priorities arise, use of recommended tools to enable the development of shared visions can resolve tensions.
- 5. Take a 'Joined-up' Approach** to addressing challenges, working across marine and terrestrial spaces, and across political boundaries. Objectives for nature recovery and sustainable growth should also be targeted in synergy, rather than separately or in opposition. This way of working should be

supported by appropriately targeted funding processes and priorities. Barriers that encourage siloed thinking should also be reduced and ultimately removed.

- 6. Use the Right Processes** to streamline and improve administration. Greater transparency and foresight should be made available on forthcoming funding offers. More open lines of communication to provide ongoing guidance to applicants are needed. Whilst a range of funding offers, varying in scope and focus would better support stakeholders.
- 7. Monitor Effectively** in a manner that is proportionate and appropriately tailored. Measures of success need to be meaningful to project participants and stakeholders. Qualitative measure can more effectively capture personal experiences and impacts. Longer term monitoring should be supported. Greater sharing of learning between projects across Wales is needed.

INTRODUCTION

Welsh Government (WG) Marine and Fisheries Division are seeking to build capacity across coastal communities to achieve outcomes for sustainable growth and nature recovery (see table 1) in line with the Programme for Government 2021-2025 commitments. This capacity building is design to enable greater public involvement in marine conservation and governance, enhanced levels of ‘ocean literacy’, and increased collaboration in marine planning. Capacity building would also augment sustainable business enterprise across coastal communities, from fisheries through to tourism, as well as enterprise that ensures climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. By capacity building, here we refer to the skills, connections and other underpinning factors that enable people to achieve the desired outcomes.

Sustainable growth	Nature recovery
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Table 1: Outcomes sought for sustainable growth and nature recovery.

The need to build capacity within coastal communities has been recognised by Welsh Government as a key component of a broader Blue Recovery programme of work. This has arisen in response to the various challenges facing coastal communities across Wales in recent years, including the UK’s Exit from the EU, the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, and the ongoing impacts of the climate and nature emergencies; as well as responding to long-term marginalisation and decline in some coastal areas.

Several barriers impacting on coastal communities’ capacity have been identified, including, but not limited to, a lack of long-term funding for projects; poor communication and a feeling of not being listened to; a lack of legacy or follow up activity following project completion; and people within coastal communities not feeling that they have a knowledge or capacity to have a role to play in marine and coastal issues.

To better understand these barriers restricting coastal community capacity, and to identify the best means of supporting capacity building in this space, Welsh Government’s Strategic Evidence Unit for Environment and Rural Affairs were commissioned to undertake two evidence gathering exercises to review best practice, identifying what works and what communities need to enable them to build capacity into the future. The resulting advice is designed to inform a portfolio of

activity that government could develop going forwards, for example in place of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund.

Firstly, a **secondary evidence review** was undertaken of existing published material, to synthesize best practice for community engagement and capacity building in a marine and coastal context. A rapid literature review methodology was employed, focused on both published academic literature and policy and practitioner evaluations. Three key areas of questioning were addressed:

- I. How can coastal community capacity development be best supported through community level facilitation and engagement activities? How can barriers and exclusions be tackled to ensure equal opportunities to develop these capacities?
- II. What evidence is there on existing infrastructure and capacity, within Wales, to support communities to achieve the desired outcomes and capacities? What needs/limitations and best practice can be observed?
- III. What methods most effectively support collaboration and consideration of varying priorities? How can these be used to reduce conflict and support cooperation between coastal stakeholders across Wales?

This work was undertaken by Dr Emma McKinley, from Cardiff University, as a leading expert in marine and coastal social sciences and reviewed by WG's Strategic Evidence Unit and Dr Natalie Hold, from Bangor University, another key expert in this field.

Secondly, two **stakeholder workshops** were convened in September 2022, to capture experiences of existing projects in Wales so we could document key lessons in a Welsh context. This was both in terms of successes i.e. 'what works well' but also to understand additional needs that may be required in future and any limitations of current/past approaches. A total of 29 marine and coastal stakeholders were involved from organisations across Wales.

Key findings from both pieces of work are detailed separately below and drawn together into a set of overarching recommendations for Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries Division. This 'Advice for Marine and Fisheries Policy' includes priorities drawn from both pieces of research. For the most part, the points made reflect a consensus across both pieces of research reflecting aligned findings in both the literature and stakeholder's lived experience. Some key points are not, however, reiterated in both sets of reporting. These distinctions are seen because the workshops were not able to capture a full spectrum of stakeholder experience, and hence the literature review has been able to include a wider set of voices and priorities. It is also the case, that some elements of stakeholder's lived experience are not adequately captured in the published literature. It is for these reasons that we undertook both exercises to gain a wider-ranging set of insights than we would have through one method alone. This style of research 'triangulation' is an important means of delivering robust and inclusive evidence to inform government policy making.

After the combined 'Advice for Marine and Fisheries Policy', key findings from both pieces of research are detailed separately to demonstrate the original source of different pieces of advice and provide transparency in how these recommendations have been derived. Notably, the findings from the stakeholder workshop have been synthesized to produce a set of guidelines specifically tailored to prospective projects. This is so that communities and partner organisations can gain insights into what has worked well previously.

The full detail of the evidence underpinning both research exercises is provided in separate report documents, which provide further detail on the methodologies employed and show-casing the evidence in full.

ADVICE FOR MARINE AND FISHERIES POLICY

Drawing together the key findings from both the synthesis of secondary evidence and the stakeholder workshops, the following points of advice are proposed to the Marine and Fisheries Division within Welsh Government to guide the development of future supports to coastal communities. This advice is broad ranging and covers more points than could be actioned in any one fund or initiative. The rationale is rather to inform a portfolio of activity that government could develop going forwards in place of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund. Points are numbered to aid the reader but are not in an order of priority.

1. Provide Continuity

Supporting continuity of activities in coastal communities is key to growing and maintaining capacity in these locales. Skilled, experienced, staff need to be retained to undertake community engagement and facilitation work, maintaining good relations, and building trust with people in those places. Stakeholders also need to feel a sense of long-term commitment, rather than ad hoc engagement, to want to get involved. There are a number of options for how government can support continuity:

- The most obvious is core funding to guarantee a minimum staff presence in key delivery organisations, which can then be augmented and targeted to different projects through shorter-term funds.
- Where budget is not available for core funding, ensuring structures are in place to maintain continuity between short-term projects is essential. Good examples here include coastal partnerships (e.g. Severn Estuary Partnership or Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum), management boards or 'Community Interest Companies (CIC's)'. Projects should be supported to establish these structures and advice given on how to ensure an ongoing presence beyond the life of specific activities.
- Prospective funding applicants would also benefit from greater foresight on funding opportunities, and associated deadlines, to enable them to plan-ahead and avoid hiatus in their activities. This would require government to commit to a long-term funding plan which is shared with the sector.
- In terms of funding criteria, supporting activities that explicitly provide continuity and legacy from prior activities is important. Here continuity can also be rewarded by supporting activities to scale-out good practice, and not just focusing on new innovations.
- Continuity can also be supported by encouraging financial sustainability as discussed below.

2. Enable Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability of coastal community initiatives is desirable for a number of reasons. It enables continuity of key activities and service provision, which could

otherwise be jeopardised by time-limited funds. It removes a reliance on the public purse for long-term delivery. It can also ensure the livelihood of those individuals involved in the specific enterprise, and create multipliers with other businesses, providing wider prosperity and social sustainability within communities. Whilst we need to acknowledge that some objectives for nature recovery are harder to achieve in financially viable ways, and hence will require ongoing public spending, there are various ways government can support financial sustainability:

- Firstly, by encouraging the use of business models as a vehicle for delivery. This can include using structures like CICs (noted above) and social enterprises, encouraging collaboration with/between existing local businesses, or supporting the establishment of new enterprises to deliver on key needs.
- Provision of advice and creating opportunities for networking and development of clusters with business representatives is important to initiate these approaches.
- Funding needs to be tailored accordingly, with business start-ups benefiting from smaller scale 'start-up' or 'seed' funds, which might include elements of capital spend. Simple application processes reflecting the scale of such funds is important.
- Supporting collaboration and networking between existing business is important, with funding to facilitate the development of business clusters being particularly beneficial; this might involve some capital funds for shared facilities, equipment, or infrastructure as well as revenue funding to support networking activities.
- Working across whole supply-chains and enhancing links between producers/fishers, processes, retailers/suppliers and consumers is a priority for such business clusters, as well as realising how supply chains are embedded in communities and the under-acknowledged role of some actors (e.g. women).
- Encouraging the realisation of synergies between businesses to simultaneously deliver on growth and nature recovery is a priority, for example bringing together enterprises focused on wildlife and seafood.
- Encourage skills development so that local communities can gain benefits into the future. Skills training to support diversification, value-adding and enhanced marketing is also needed for existing businesses. Projects that deliver on these goals should, therefore, be prioritised for funding.

3. Be Community-led

If we want people to get involved, activities need to be meaningful to coastal communities and respond to their needs. People need to have confidence that a project will deliver for them and is not being driven by other agendas that they don't feel connected to. Successful engagement is fundamental to building capacity, but ultimately what we want to strive for is not engagement as an activity done by external agents, but community mobilisation to drive forward initiatives that they want

to see happen. This also aligns with the five ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). To enable this, government should:

- Ensure that funding objectives can be flexible enough to be tailored to communities and not push a top-down approach to meeting Government priorities.
- Ensure that funding objectives are worked-up in response to dialogue with communities about what challenges they feel they are facing in place.
- Provide funding for facilitators to make the connections between national level strategic objectives and local interests and concerns. This will ensure the vital link between different scales and priorities can be made.
- Provide funding for facilitators to work with communities over the long-term to understand their needs, and gain trust so that people are willing to come forward and get involved in different initiatives.
- Offer supports to encourage a wider culture of volunteering and community participation, potentially working with business and employers to ensure that people have the capacity and opportunity to get more involved and hence build capacity in their locales.

4. Be Inclusive

Building community capacity requires an inclusive approach. Equality and cohesion are also central goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). A key issue in coastal communities is that particular groups and sectors feel they have not been adequately included or supported by previous initiatives. For example, we need to ensure that the full demographic spread of coastal communities is represented, including young people and black and ethnic minority groups. We also need to ensure that key industries, like fishing and aquaculture, and their associated communities are adequately supported and involved. It is not uncommon for communities to be made-up of diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Action to support collaboration and develop a shared set of priorities is, therefore, key. Government can support these requirements for inclusivity in the following ways:

- Support comprehensive mapping of coastal community stakeholders, through for example an updated Coastal Directory, so that initiatives start from the basis of fully understanding who the community are, and how they might get involved. This can include upstream and terrestrial actors as well as those geographically located in coastal spaces.
- Different groups and individuals hold distinct values in relation to marine and coastal environments. Ensure that funding objectives are open and inclusive to these differing values and the lived experience associated.
- Prioritise funding for projects where a transparent, democratic, and inclusive approach to decision making is demonstrated that enables a wide range of stakeholder participation and equally distributed decision-making powers.

- Prioritise funding for projects where the needs and involvement of a broad cross-section of demographics is clearly represented, and particularly where previously marginalised groups are involved in a meaningful way.
- Monitoring of inclusion and project participation is an important way to ensure these goals are met, but monitoring needs to take a sensitive approach, which is not intrusive or overly demanding on those involved. For instance, people should be able to characterise their backgrounds in a way that is appropriate to them.
- Share good practice on community engagement tools which enable conflict resolution and shared visions to be developed. For example, using 'Community Voice', 'Participatory Mapping', 'Serious Games' or creative and arts-based solutions, to understand different perspectives and priorities and encourage collaborative working to develop common solutions.
- Prioritise funding for projects which mobilise such techniques for developing shared, inclusive, visions.
- Act to alleviate the pressures on different marine and coastal stakeholders that act as a barrier to their participation in projects. For example, fishers face notable livelihood pressures which inhibit their ability to contribute as much as they might otherwise like in activities to support nature recovery. Support to enable fishers to work with conservation goals could help realise a combination of objectives.

5. Take a 'Joined-up' Approach

Tackling challenges in coastal and marine spaces requires a joined-up approach. We need to work across both terrestrial and marine environments, taking a whole catchment approach in many cases, to fully enable nature recovery in the coastal and marine environment and ensure a resilience resource base for sustainable growth. Administrative political boundaries, including county and national borders, are also important to work across so that problems are tackled at an appropriate scale to achieve solutions. Overall, given objectives for nature recovery *and* sustainable growth, it is critical that initiatives are not siloed or work against achieving both goals together, as has often happened in the past. To support this integrated approach government should:

- Ensure that there are no exclusions imposed by funding requirements which force initiatives to work at a more limited scale, which does not address challenges in a joined-up fashion e.g. restricted to working within a county or national boundary.
- Prioritise funding for projects that work across both terrestrial and marine actors and spaces, and/or take a whole catchment approach to tackling challenges.
- Provide support to share learning from projects that take an integrated approach, incorporating both terrestrial and marine elements, enabling good practice to be scaled-out to different locations and contexts.

- Prioritise funding for initiatives that bring together objectives for nature recovery and sustainable growth, rather than seeing them as separate goals.
- Ensure projects which deliver on goals for nature recovery or sustainable growth do not do so in a manner that leads to disbenefits for the other key goals i.e. by definition, sustainable growth should not lead to disbenefits for the environment, whilst nature recovery should not disadvantage communities economically.
- Support education and communication to marine users (including the wider public) and businesses to enhance ocean literacy and ensure that people are operating in a way that enables nature recovery; for example by not posing a risk to wildlife.
- Consider specific supports for marine industries to enable them to engage in nature recovery where there are significant livelihood disbenefits that inhibit them from doing so otherwise.
- Encourage developers to allocate funds for nature recovery and work with coastal communities to achieve these goals e.g. through enhanced sustainability criteria for EIA mitigation measures associated with marine renewables and infrastructure.

6. Use the Right Processes

Stakeholders involved in coastal community projects often complain that the supports and funds they seek to access could be better designed and that the processes associated need to be refined. Any offer of government support will require some degree of governance, particularly when it involves a financial contribution. Nonetheless, there is a request that administration could be more stream-lined and some key areas improved. The following suggestions could help government achieve these goals:

- Greater transparency on future funding windows and associated specifications.
- Information of future funding availability could be part of a long-term spatial planning exercise that stakeholders are involved with, to identify priorities across Wales and enable transparency on work being undertaken.
- Appropriate time frames to complete funding applications are needed, relative to the amount of money available, to ensure funding opportunities are accessible to more organisations and groups across Wales.
- The complexity of the application process should reflect the level of funding available, with some very simple smaller funding pots being available, to attract project applications across a range of scales.
- Stakeholders would appreciate more direct communication with funders/government through both application and delivery processes. There is a concern that communication is all one way, and stakeholders need to be able to ask questions and gain ongoing guidance.
- Public events, for instance a 'Royal Welsh Marine Show' would create forums for greater dialogue between stakeholders and government to ensure that the

needs of both parties can be communicated and that everyone understands the opportunities available.

7. Monitor Effectively

Monitoring is a key process to get right. Government wants to know what measures of success are needed going forwards. Whilst stakeholders want to ensure the ask on them is proportionate and appropriately tailored to deliver meaningful information, not only to for funders evaluation requirements, but also for participants to be able to learn and improve the impact of the work they are undertaking. The following priorities can steer what requirements government has for monitoring going forwards:

- Key Performance Indicators often provide very limited insights into the real impact initiatives are having. So, ask for qualitative and not just quantitative measures of success. This means asking projects to evidence how people experienced and felt about the activities they are involved in, and the difference their participation has made to them.
- Monitoring should not be intrusive or unpleasant for participants, or it could detract from the wider activities and opportunities on offer. Monitoring should be people centred, meaningful to those who are reporting, and where-ever possible fun! Personal stories and creative, and often visual, methods are an important approach here, for example using images and photography.
- The impact of different activities often continues into the longer term once project funding has finished. Provide budget for longer term monitoring to capture these effects.
- Ensure that monitoring is useful to communities undertaking the activities. Consider how it can help them learn and improve on what they are doing. Encourage reporting of instances in which monitoring has led to change.
- Ensure that projects are able to take risks and try new things. Do not penalise projects that don't meet all of their key objectives if clear experimentation and learning can be evidenced.
- Ensure robust evaluations of past on ongoing activities under the Coastal Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships and Fisheries Local Action Groups to inform future activities.
- Enable shared learning between different projects and initiatives. Providing resource and administrative support to share evaluations on a shared platform and supporting networking activities to discuss learnings verbally are key ways in which Wales-wide benefits can be attained from monitoring endeavours.
- Prioritise funding for projects that evidence clear learning from other projects and engagement with the wider learning, once supports have been put in place to enable this.
- Use the guidelines on what makes a successful project, outlined in this report, to determine what measures of success are important. These include measures of the level of continuity ensured; the degree of financial

sustainability attained; the extent to which initiatives are truly community-led; and the degree of inclusivity achieved.

SECONDARY EVIDENCE REVIEW

KEY FINDINGS

Through a rapid literature review process, topics relating to coastal community capacity building were explored, bringing together evidence on: the importance of co-development and community engagement; the role of ocean literacy; the current and future role of existing partnership structures; the potential for collaborative working to facilitate the formation of maritime clusters across Wales to support both sustainable economic growth and nature recovery; and the challenges of funding. Case study examples of existing work on these topics are presented in the full report (published separately) highlighting examples of where things have worked well and where lessons could be learned and applied in Wales.

Findings show that given the complexity of coastal issues and the broad range of coastal users and stakeholders who need to be considered, it is to be expected that there may be some level of conflict and a need to discuss trade-offs regarding marine and coastal space and resources. Table 2, below, presents a summary of some of the methods employed in the literature to address conflict and foster collaboration between multiple stakeholders. Coastal communities across Wales are not homogenous. While there may be similarities and typologies which can be identified, each community will have its own specific characteristics and needs, meaning that there will be no one approach that will work for every community – therefore, approaches used will need to be community led and respond to community needs and priorities. Further details on these methodologies are provided within the full report (published separately).

Potential methodologies for conflict resolution and community engagement
Appreciative inquiry
Asset based community development
Participatory mapping
Community Voice Method
Deliberative workshops
Facilitated focus groups and meetings
Scenario development
Stakeholder mapping and Stakeholder Network Analysis
Community consultations
Open community events and activities

Table 2: A summary of key methods to address conflict and foster collaboration within communities.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, this review reveals a number of key points, from the existing literature, which should be considered for future work on building coastal community capacity in Wales, which are presented below. These are not necessarily discussed in any order of priority; however, they should all be taken into consideration in planning of future initiatives.

Coastal Community Development and Enhancing Ocean Literacy

- For coastal community capacity building initiatives to be successful, **there is a need to understand and map Wales's coastal communities** so that previously under-represented voices, and values, can be considered in the issues facing Wales's coasts and seas.
- Building capacity and fostering community engagement is resource and time intensive – **future funding should be allocated to building relationships and trust** between stakeholders.
- There are opportunities to **align coastal community capacity building initiatives with the ongoing work to develop and enhance ocean literacy across Wales**. Evidence from the Defra, NRW and Marine Scotland ocean literacy survey indicates that concern for the marine environment is high across Wales. However, more analysis of the data is needed to explore how views and perceptions vary with region and other demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, education level) and to consider how this can be used to provide insight into where capacity building is most needed.

Working in Partnership

- To deliver the twin goals of Nature Recovery and Sustainable Growth, **working in collaboration, identifying opportunities for partnership and developing place-based visions and solutions** for the issues facing coastal communities across Wales will be crucial. No one organisation can achieve these goals alone, and mobilising action that is adapted to the needs of communities in place requires careful collaboration with the people affected.
- Wales has an active network of organisations and groups involved in topics relating to its marine and coastal environment. While the funding and project portfolio, and longevity, of some of these groups, including the two Coastal Partnerships in Wales, is an indicator of success, there is little published evidence as to the impact and effectiveness of these groups. **There is a need for robust evaluation of existing processes and structures**, such as the Coastal Partnerships or the Local Nature Partnerships, to better understand the impact of these groups for both Sustainable Growth and Nature Recovery, and

to identify where things have worked well and where improvements could be made for future coastal community capacity building. There are also lessons to be learned from existing or previous funding frameworks, such as the FLAGS i.e. adopting a place-based multi-stakeholder approach, to ensure that place specific issues can be addressed by a consortia with local knowledge and expertise, while the multi-stakeholder partnership ensures multiple voices and perspectives are included.

- While the 2016 Coastal Directory produced by Severn Estuary Partnership, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and Cardiff University is a useful resource – it is out of date. **Mapping of Wales’s coastal communities and stakeholders should be carried out to understand whose voices, perspectives and ideas are currently being included and whose are missing from the discussion.** This would help to ensure inclusive representation of all relevant stakeholders and communities, and also help to identify where capacity building initiatives are required to build and facilitate that representation and engagement. There is a clear need for an improved understanding of who Wales’s coastal communities and stakeholders are, taking in the breadth and diversity of Wales’s coastal regions, and recognising that this may and should include stakeholders and communities who are not directly positioned in a coastal area but nevertheless impact the coastal area and its environment. By adopting a catchment-to-coast approach to mapping stakeholders, a more comprehensive understanding of what is already happening, where success has been achieved and where lessons can be learned can be developed. With this in mind, it is suggested that the **Coastal Directory be updated as a first step of in building coastal capacity.** This will ensure that there is a better understanding of who is or isn’t represented currently, whose voices are missing or have historically been marginalised and what specific capacity building initiatives are needed in these communities to address these gaps.

Diversification for Sustainable Coastal Communities

- The resilience of coastal communities and economies is under increasing pressure from a changing legislative landscape, increased costs, changes to market access and a lack of new entrants into maritime industries (e.g. fishing and marine renewable energy). With a view to fostering Sustainable Growth, **maritime clusters may provide a platform for collaboration between and across sectors,** allowing members to take advantage of cooperative approaches to training, skills development, and new market opportunities. Successful examples already exist in Wales, including Marine Energy Wales and the Wales Seafood Cluster. Future community capacity building should explore other opportunities to develop maritime clusters and networks as a way of fostering collaboration and sustainable economic growth across supply chains and delivering value within coastal communities.

- In order to maximise the benefit of forming maritime clusters, **future funding should provide options for projects relating to a range of areas of Research and Development**, including capital investment for infrastructure and equipment, funding to support training, as well as funding to finance people's time to invest and develop a cluster so that it can achieve success.

Future funding

- **Future funding for coastal community capacity building should support continuity and legacy of projects to ensure the anticipated outcomes of funded projects are achieved and not limited by the challenges of short-term funding programmes.** The practicalities of delivering long-term funding are challenging and mean that this may not always be possible. However, long-term funding structures are the ideal scenario and should be aimed for. Even within existing short-term funding programmes, continuity, legacy, longer term planning and capacity building can be supported through future funds being open to a wider range of eligible activities. This could include funding of relationship and stakeholder mapping or network analysis to support projects to get off the ground (through seed funding initiatives, for example). Funding to support continuation of activities and legacy work is also important, to provide improved continuity and maximise the impact of projects and collaborations, rather than see these come to an end when project funding has run out, which can mean a lack of resource to support staff funding or ongoing activities within coastal communities. Overall, the funding portfolio available must support projects of varying scales, and, where possible, there should be a long-term funding mechanism or in the very least long-term planning to ensure capacity building programmes can respond and adapt to changing needs within communities.

Capacity Building Methods and Approaches to Collaboration

- **Being inclusive and creating a sense of collective engagement with marine and coastal issues facing communities is key.** Adopting methods of capacity building which actively engage all stakeholders in coastal communities, including those who have perhaps become disengaged or been marginalised in these discussions, and which encourage identification of potential areas of conflict and support collaborative working is required. Participatory methods, such as participatory mapping, community voice methods, asset-based inquiry and other methods which seek to identify community strengths, support conflict resolution and foster collaboration are key.
- There is **no one size fits all and there is a need to ensure that capacity building projects respond to community needs and can be developed in ways that build trust and social capital and foster new collaborations**

between traditionally siloed sectors and topics, therefore better enabling integration and alignment of the twin goals of Nature Recovery and Sustainable Growth.

- **Capacity building methods and approaches should be monitored and evaluated** to demonstrate their impact and effectiveness on conflict resolution and collaboration within communities to provide a wider evidence base for shared learning across Wales.

STAKEHOLDER EVIDENCE WORKSHOPS

KEY FINDINGS

A shortlist of key approaches and attributes for projects, which successfully achieve capacity building in coastal communities, was drawn together from the learning shared in both workshops. Whilst workshop participants brought forward a range of experiences, there was clear consensus across all those involved in both workshops that the following five points are important determinants of success. We, therefore, suggest that these approaches and attributes are actively sought and supported through government and wider interventions. They are not listed in an order of priority.

KEY APPROACHES

1. **Achieve outcomes by working across boundaries and taking a joined-up approach to problem solving.** This includes working across marine/terrestrial and administrative boundaries and identifying all the connections and actors that are relevant to consider for the issue(s) at hand.
2. **Ensure a collective sense of involvement, by being inclusive and responding to needs identified in communities.** This requires trust and democratic processes, as well as good communications. Ensuring diverse representation is also key. Working with community leaders is helpful here, but it is equally important to support a wider culture of volunteering and engagement to ensure communities can fully participate.
3. **Ensure financial sustainability** by enabling skills development and innovation to capitalise on opportunities in emerging markets. Also, by using appropriate project structures e.g. CIC's and fostering buy-in to projects through business investment and/or activities that have evident participant benefits.
4. **Work at the appropriate scale**, which is small enough for communities to be involved, ensuring trust and relevance to them, but achieves essential outcomes in line with Programme for Government commitments. To do this, good facilitation and network structures are needed.
5. **Maintain continuity between projects** so that trust can be built with stakeholders and learning is shared, scaling-out good practice so that we build on past experiences. This places value on previous successes and not only on innovation.

An extended list of guidelines and advice for prospective projects was also developed through the final exercise of the workshops, which sought to synthesise discussions on what works and why, and what else is needed to ensure success looking to the future. As with the shortlist, there was a strong degree of consensus on the points put forward. These extended guidelines provide insights on how to

work most effectively with communities, what characteristics to prioritise in your projects and staff, who needs to be involved, what supports might be required, and how to usefully monitor and evaluate activities. The advice here is not only directed to future project leaders but can also be read as advice for funders and government on what they should be encouraging and supporting.

ADVICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS

1. What approaches make projects successful?

Continuity, to enable communities to develop trust in organisations, feeling a sense of longer-term commitment, and build relationships with individual people (e.g. project staff). 'What works' should be continued, shared and scaled-out rather than projects constantly seeking to 'innovate'.

Structures and systems in place so projects aren't 'stop-start' or piecemeal. For example, management boards that sit above different project steering groups (as with the Marine Protection Area's, and Severn Estuary Partnership) and/or a Community Interest Company, which run more like businesses and continue beyond individual projects (e.g. Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum).

'Strength in numbers' – the size of a project can keep it going. For instance, when you have many different activities/partners in place to enable continuation, particularly when these are supported through different income streams. Diverse networks can also support each other, with different organisation types taking on different roles and activities as best suits their capacities. Connecting an 'ecosystem' of related projects can equally be helpful. Similarly, if lots of people are involved, projects develop momentum, as people want to be involved due to the social buzz.

Use self-sustaining project structures, like Community Interest Companies. With CIC's, projects are run by paid employees protecting their commitment and capacity and enabling recruitment of replacement(s) if needs. This reduces the reliance of success on one or two individuals, especially if they are volunteers. This supports continuity listed above.

Self-sustaining activities are those which have buy-in from participants, either in terms of interest in activities or financial. People keep doing things that they like doing (i.e. are fun, sociable), when they see results, or it benefits them (e.g. citizen science, finding out about their stretch of coast; meeting a core need, like disabled access; leading walks/conservation activities).

Activities which tap into emerging markets/opportunities for innovation, however small, can also be the key to being self-sustaining. Joining-up small business interests and/or social enterprises can be useful here. Getting actors with business/development skills involved can help support these types of activities. Simple seed/ capital funding for key infrastructure can similarly enable start-ups/business enhancement.

Projects having a face in community. One to one contact can be very valuable for some people and may be more equitable and effective than public meetings which can

become more 'political'. This needs resourcing. Accessible spokespersons embedded within the community can also provide clear (and direct) communications, combating misinformation i.e. assumptions and fears about what a project might involve.

Facilitators and intermediaries between communities and other groups/funders/government are important, enabling connections between grassroots interests/opportunities and strategic objectives.

Celebrate successes publicly across a range of media/channels. People are interested in what other projects are doing so sharing this information is good.

2. Who needs to be involved in projects going forwards?

It works well to use established structures and processes to involve people, developing connections and engagement with a project, for example through community associations, youth clubs and volunteering groups.

Good projects talk to a wide range of people, inclusive of a range of demographics. It is important to consider the diversity of the community and ensure this is reflected in projects. A democratic process is only ensured by considering all views in project development.

Bottom-up, community-led approaches are the preferable style of project development. Top-down approaches can work but project staff need to work with people in a meaningful fashion, not just consulting, but coproducing the project where possible.

Working at appropriate scales that are meaningful to the desired outcome, is important, instead of working to administrative boundaries. Working at the scale of community interest is equally important, channelling existing enthusiasm rather than coming in with strategic objectives. Good facilitators can connect to these as needed. This means having flexibility to be reactive to what is needed, not being dictated by a 'fund'. Projects have to mean something to the community & place.

Community leaders are the key to wider community engagement and can enable 'self-sustaining' activities. It is important to identify, facilitate and work with these individuals. They are not just those in formal positions of power and don't always have an established track record. New 'leaders' can emerge depending on circumstance. So, projects and funding calls need to be widely networked.

Volunteering is a commitment and needs to be supported/acknowledged in order to ensure that community activity can be sustained. Could businesses/employers support this to enhance community volunteering?

Project officers need to be trusted and well-known to be successful, which takes time. Ideally, they should be seen as separate from vested interests. Stakeholders feel that competing for funding against people who should be collaborators is not helpful and want to aim instead for partnership building.

Good projects will ensure holistic approaches, joining-up where it makes sense to the issue at hand for example linking terrestrial and marine, or working across administrative/political borders. To be effective, we need to connect everyone who has impact. For example, the tourist sector needs to be more involved as it is not clear they understand their impact on marine ecosystems.

Consider what skills and attributes a project needs and how to access these. Get relevant players involved to facilitate this, for example development trusts/business leaders, renewables companies, or universities for technical input. This can enable projects to become self-sustaining.

3. What supports do projects/stakeholders require?

Long term commitment to funding is important to success. Projects can otherwise lose momentum, trust and connections within the community. Funding continuity also allows staff career development and incentive to stay, otherwise you can lose experienced people.

Stakeholders would like to have a cross-Wales future funding plan outlining a long-term strategy that they can plan their activities to. They would also like to know where investment is needed for projects, for example through an augmented marine spatial development plan that illustrates what we need to make space for in our oceans and what areas need to be protected / restored.

Funding windows are quite tight. Stakeholders would benefit from more forward planning /visibility of forthcoming windows (linking to the point above about a long-term strategy). Proportional windows to fund size is equally important i.e. larger funds take more time to prepare a bid for.

Stakeholders want simple processes enabling them to action ideas and not get 'bogged-down' in paperwork. For example, appropriate application processes that are simple for smaller / seed-funds.

More funder involvement during projects and better availability/access to these representatives i.e. direct lines of communication, would be welcomed by stakeholders.

Access to skills, to take advantage of new infrastructure/opportunities, is important for coastal communities. For example, funding local skills training for the energy sector has been beneficial. Need to enable communities to identify the skills/supports they need (e.g. disabled access).

There is appetite for a 'Royal Welsh Marine Show' – to enable awareness raising, sharing insights, connecting people & enhancing ocean literacy.

4. How should projects be monitored?

Softer outputs i.e. qualitative measures – are now used in many rural development projects, which provide a good example to follow. For instance, recording quality of

engagement with projects rather than quantity and focusing on personal stories. Innovative approaches are also useful for example photos of before and after an activity, to show impact.

Some quantitative measures can be helpful to provide structure to reporting, but they are blunt tools. Not all quantitative measures are comparable, context is critical e.g. jobs created in remote rural versus urban settings - a small number of jobs in a rural location might be very important and have wide impact.

Any survey should be optional/voluntary (especially covering demographics e.g. ethnicity). Make it personal – ‘how would you describe your background?’. Shouldn’t collect diversity info if not using it i.e. committing to make changes on the basis of insights.

Post implementation monitoring is needed to capture ongoing impacts. Currently funding for monitoring finishes when a project finishes.

Need to enable people to learn from failure. Key Performance Indicators can lead to risk aversion, with a perception that you can’t fail because of the risk of not getting the next project.

Enable sharing and learning from good practice. A spatial log/database of projects/reports would be helpful as a resource for applicants and reviewers/auditors to help people to learn from other projects, share successes and understand what is happening where to connect-up similar projects. Dedicated resource for networking and sharing would be useful as people don't have time/capacity to share learning/info from projects.

Continue what works - there is a frustration that funding prescriptions have favoured 'new and innovative approaches'. Stakeholders know what works. “We just need to do an awful lot more of it.” Could monitoring and bid process be adjusted to reflect this?

