

# **Marine Biodiversity in Wellington Region: Knowledge, participation integration**

## **Collaborative Proposal**

### **1. Purpose**

The Ministry for the Environment seeks agreement from the NZBS Coordination Group to work collaboratively with the Wellington Regional Council on a pilot project on marine biodiversity in the Wellington Region. This paper outlines the scope, objectives, and structure of the joint proposal. It is not intended to create a contract between parties.

### **2. Background**

The Ministry for the Environment and the Wellington Regional Council have been working on marine biodiversity issues under two separate work programmes. As both work programmes have similar objectives and outcomes, a collaborative approach is being proposed. The backgrounds of each project are briefly described below.

#### **2.1 New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Project: Managing the Impacts on Marine Biodiversity at a Regional Level.**

The Ministry for the Environment received funding for this project under the NZ Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Package. The project involves developing and trialling collaborative structures, and a range of processes, and tools to achieve: (i) better coordination amongst regionally based agencies, (ii) better management of impacts on marine ecosystems, and (iii) increased iwi and community participation in managing impacts on marine biodiversity. This is being achieved through selected case studies. To date, three areas have been selected: Firth of Thames/Hauraki, Wellington, and Banks Peninsula.

Essentially, the project covers three separate, but related work areas - agency coordination, information management, and community and iwi participation. The project will also involve testing and trialling the Ministry for the Environment's marine classification system in the case study areas. The case studies will also incorporate, where possible, other relevant work initiatives (i.e. the Ministry of Fisheries National Aquatic Biodiversity Information System (NABIS), and the Threats project.

Each case study will be regularly evaluated in accordance with set performance criteria. This information will in turn be transformed in national guidance, and will also contribute to national policy development, such as the Oceans Policy.

### Key NZBS Objectives

- *Substantially increase our knowledge of coastal and marine ecosystems and the effects of human activities on them (3.1).*
- *Develop processes for marine management that enables decision-makers to consider whole ecosystems (3.2).*

## 2.2 Wellington Regional Council (WRC) Initiative

Over the past two to three years the WRC has been striving to ensure that ecological principles are incorporated into its management of the environment. The work has its origins in the Ecosystems Chapter of the Regional Policy Statement. The Council's biodiversity goal is:

- *Maintain and restore **all** remaining natural habitats and ecosystems to a healthy functioning state and sustain those features and ecological processes that support indigenous biodiversity in all ecosystems.*

The RPS ecosystem objectives are:

- *The overall quality of ecosystems in the Region is increased.*
- *Healthy, functioning ecosystems are distributed throughout the Region, including the rural and urban environments.*
- *The area and quality of indigenous ecosystems in the Region is increased.*
- *The Region has a diversity of healthy ecosystems which represent the full range of regional flora, fauna and habitats.*
- *Special ecosystems in the Region are actively protected and appropriately managed.*

Marine ecosystems have been identified as a core element of the Council's Ecosystem and Biodiversity Implementation Plan.

Two workshops have been held for councillors. In November 1999, councillors considered the role that the Council might take in providing additional protection for the Wellington Region's marine environment. In June 2000, councillors were presented information about their marine environment and community attitudes towards it. Glen Lauder, Commonground Associates facilitated the workshop, and he has continued to participate and advise the Council on its marine work.

### 3. Collaborative Proposal

In September 2001, the WRC established the Wellington Regional Marine Biodiversity Steering Group (see Appendix II). This group will oversee the running of the Wellington case study. Members comprise WRC staff members and Glen Lauder; representatives from the Ministry for the Environment, Maritime Safety Authority, NIWA, Department of Conservation, and Ministry of Fisheries.

Three key issues emerged from the meetings in September and October that form the basis of this collaborative proposal:

#### 1. *Information base*

We need to find out what is already known, what needs to be known, make it available to those who need or desire to know, and fill the gaps in our knowledge.

#### 2. *Community engagement*

The community has indicated a high level of interest in the marine environment. We need to explore this further to identify community objectives and to identify ways to actively involve the community in marine management. In this context “community” is given its broadest possible meaning, and includes iwi, individuals, groups and institutions.

#### 3. *Interagency collaboration*

To a large degree, management of the marine environment has been partitioned into separate silos. Cooperation, collaboration and integration will be essential if we are to maximise our progress towards achieving biodiversity goals.

### 3.1 Project Scope

The Steering group has recommended a case study approach to address the strands of work outlined above – information base, community engagement, and interagency collaboration. The case study will cover the coastal marine areas bounded by lines running south from Turakirae Head and Sinclair Head to the seaward limit of the Wellington Region in Cook Strait. The area includes the whole of Wellington Harbour. This is an area of high community interest with many current issues including proposals for a marine reserve, a marine education centre, a surf reef, beach nourishment and the sinking of a frigate. Discrete areas of work will in turn be identified.

### 3.2 Objectives

#### Knowledge

- Improve our understanding and management of marine biodiversity.
- Identify and implement opportunities for rehabilitation, restoration and protection of marine biodiversity.
- Develop and trial tools for management that enable decision-makers to consider whole ecosystems.

### Participation

- Identify and implement opportunities to involve the community and iwi in marine biodiversity management.
- Raise the public profile of marine biodiversity and enthuse, encourage and support public involvement.

### Integration

- Maximise the value of investment in marine biodiversity.
- Identify key inter-agency management responsibilities and how these can be integrated between agencies and with the community.
- Learn how to work together across silos.

## 3.3 **Structure**

The Wellington Regional Marine Biodiversity Steering Group will provide overall guidance for the project. They will meet on an “as required” basis throughout the project. WRC will be responsible for servicing this group.

The Ministry for the Environment and the Wellington Regional Council will jointly manage the project. While each agency will be responsible for managing agreed aspects of the work programme, all significant decisions will be made by consensus. All information and work products will be shared.

Glen Lauder, Commonground Associates, will provide advice and guidance to WRC throughout the project. The Ministry for the Environment will have dedicated staff and consultants working on the project.

A management structure is attached in Appendix I.

## 3.4 **Reporting**

The WRC will report to its Environment Committee. The Ministry for the Environment will report to the NZBS Chief Executives Group, and the Marine Biodiversity Coordinating Group. Both the WRC and MfE will report to the Wellington Regional Marine Biodiversity Steering Group.

## 3.5 **Communication**

Communication will be an integral part of all three strands of work. Consideration will be given to the preparation of newsletters, information sheets, the Internet (NZBS Website), public meetings, public seminars, attendance at meetings external to the project (e.g. at a community group’s regular meeting), as well as regular meetings between participants. The project’s contribution towards achieving NZBS objectives will be communicated through the NZBS logo.

## 3.6 **Budget**

The budget outlined below shows indicative funding only. The Ministry’s allocation of funds will be reviewed at the start of each financial year. The Ministry and WRC will be responsible for funding discrete work areas that best align with their respective project

objectives and outcomes. The budget does not include staff contribution from each agency.

	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
<b>WRC</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>MFE</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

### 3.7 Risks

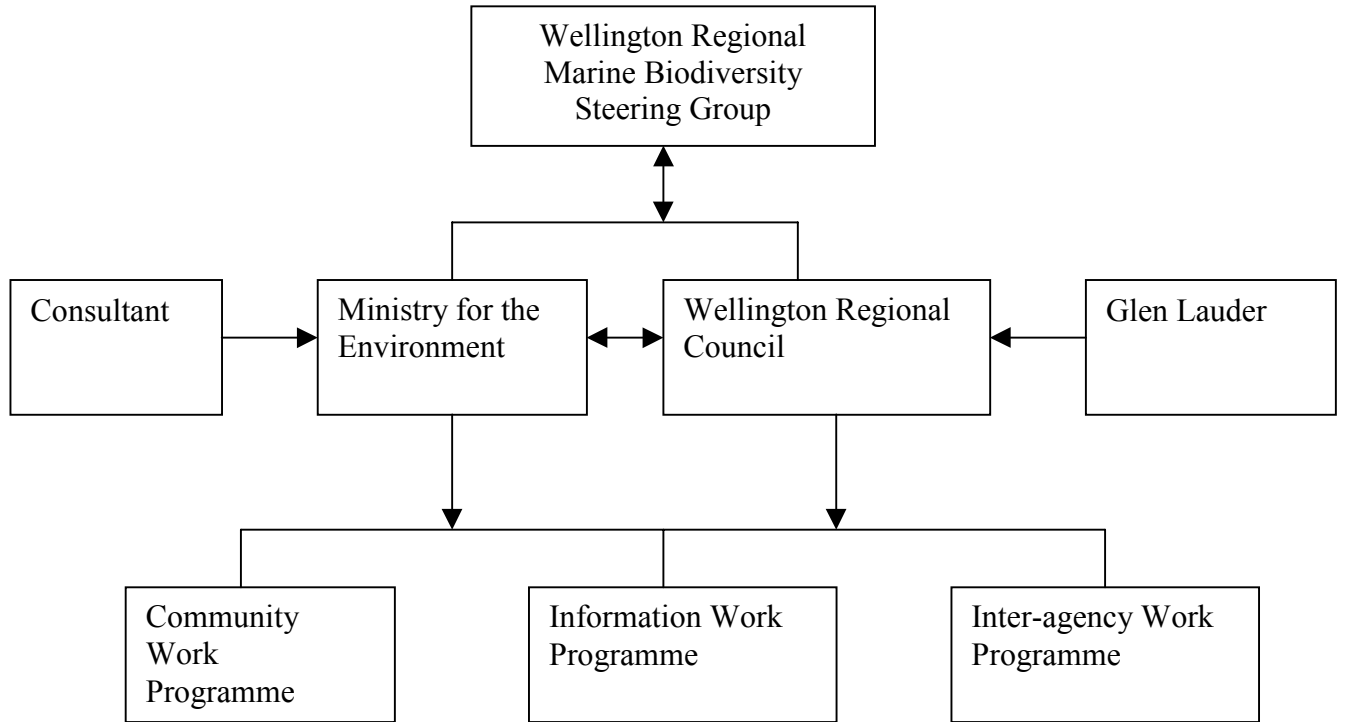
- Inability to engage operational agencies and iwi in the process
- Barriers to information sharing.
- Duplication and inconsistencies with related projects (NZBS information projects).
- Changing political priorities and impacts on funding.

### 4. Recommendations

- Core biodiversity agencies agree to the collaborative proposal outlined above.
- Develop an overall work programme that incorporates separate work plans for knowledge, participation, and integration strands.

- Appendix I

## Management Structure



## Appendix II: Marine Biodiversity in the Wellington Region: Knowledge, participation, and integration Work Programme Structure

