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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of a public dialogue project on the social impacts of offshore renewable energy projects in Scotland. The dialogue was commissioned in September 2014 by Marine Scotland, with support from Sciencewise[1]. The dialogue was delivered by a consortium led by Collingwood Environmental Planning, and independently evaluated by 3KQ Ltd.

Aim. The dialogue aimed to improve the way in which Marine Scotland identifies and assesses the social impacts of offshore renewable energy developments. The methodology for assessing social impacts is less developed than for understanding other impacts such as economics or the environment: the science and lack of robust evidence is considered challenging. As such, this project was considered to be breaking new ground. In the first instance, the dialogue project aimed to gather data on what the public's social values were, and how these might be impacted by a renewable energy project. Beyond this, the project aimed to move towards a new methodology for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) both at a plan and project level.

Dialogue. The dialogue broadly consisted of two rounds of facilitated public events. Round 1 held six events around the coast of Scotland, including one in Glasgow as a control location. Between 13-18 participants were recruited to each event (95 in total) to give a cross-section of the population and incentivized to attend each of these six events. Facilitators used various materials and discussion sessions to uncover what the participants felt were important social values in their community. Scenarios were used to consider how these values might be impacted – both positively and negatively – by different renewable energy projects offshore. A single event in round 2 brought a selection of participants together from the locations in round 1, to discuss overarching issues such as the timing of SIA and how data should be gathered. The contractors analysed the results and compiled a narrative report, which contains a proposed framework of social values and cluster headings that might be applied in SIA in future. A small Oversight Group of external stakeholders provided a diversity of perspectives throughout to guide the dialogue.

Evaluation. The independent evaluation ran in parallel with the design and delivery of the dialogue. The evaluation used various strands of evidence to inform its findings, including: direct observation of seven events and meetings, 24 interviews with Marine Scotland staff, Sciencewise and other stakeholders, 95 participant questionnaires, and the review of numerous documents and the general email traffic on the project. The evaluation used as its benchmark the 'Quality in Public Dialogue' assessment framework[2], which covers the full project from inception through to delivery (not just the public events). The evaluation findings below follow this framework, covering: context, scope and design, delivery and impact.

Context. The drivers for this dialogue were clear and it was well timed to influence relevant decisions. However, the project suffered significantly by failing to agree clear objectives and unambiguous outputs near the start: tensions arose and delays occurred whilst differences of view were sorted out. Funding for the dialogue was adequate. Staff resourcing of the events on Marine Scotland's part was commendable, although they struggled to provide a stable project management function due to workload pressures, illness and contractual changes: this disrupted the running of the project. Lessons include:

- Objectives and outputs must be clearly spelled out in the initial documentation including the Invitation to Tender (ITT). If not clear in the ITT they should be drafted soon after an Inception Meeting and discussed and agreed by all parties *before* the project gains further momentum.
- When major or repeated ambiguities arise about the objectives of the dialogue, progress should be halted until they are resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The benefits of doing so cannot be overestimated.

[1] Sciencewise is the UK's national centre for public dialogue for policy making involving science and technology issues, and is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk
[2] Quality in Public Dialogue: A framework for assessing the quality of public dialogue. Working Paper – March 2015.

- A stable project management function in the commissioning body is essential to the smooth running of a dialogue: any threat to that stability is a threat to the success of the project and needs to be actively resolved.

Scope and Design. The scope of the dialogue was open to diverse input. However, the establishment of an overall roadmap of the dialogue, rather than tackling each round of events separately, might have provided more clarity about the overall structure of the process. The number of events and locations chosen were seen as a positive aspect of the project. The sample of public attending was large enough and diverse enough: the use of a recruited incentivized sample to reach 'fresh' members of the public was seen as a particularly positive aspect of the project. A successful 'trial event' with internal staff enabled a workshop design and materials to be tested and improvements made. Lessons include:

- Design of the overall dialogue trajectory at the start could have provided clarity to the objectives for both rounds of events, as well as a single unified picture of where the project was trying to reach.
- An internal 'trial event' can provide tangible improvements to the design and materials, as well as reassurance to everyone on the reliability of delivery. It also and reduces the need for treating the first public event as a 'pilot'.

Delivery. The team at Marine Scotland involved in the project was commendably large, and could have benefited from streamlining by the setting up of an additional smaller Project Management Team. The Oversight Group added value, although some members found it difficult to participate with meetings organised at short notice. Clearer allocation of the facilitation role in OG meetings would have at times helped conversations be more productive.

Once the first event had been run, everyone felt committed to see the project through. The six round 1 events all went well, with all involved pleased with how they were received. The design of round 2 was less successful, fitting too much into a short time and therefore sacrificing depth of coverage for the sake of breadth.

Analysis of data from the workshops was conducted in detail using a software package. However, the analytical framework was not discussed adequately in advance, so the significant choices about how existing academic frameworks could be tested (or left behind) could not be debated until it was too late.

The relationship between Marine Scotland and the delivery contractor was difficult much of the time. Problems arose around the writing of the Inception Report, and this tension continued throughout the project. This tension reached such a level before the first event that some Marine Scotland staff reflected *"we should have let the project fail at this point"*. Lessons include:

- A Project Management Team could usefully be explicitly formed to stabilize the project management function within the commissioning body.
- Oversight Group meeting dates should be booked in as part of the overall project plan, to ensure clarity and visibility of planning milestones.
- Oversight Group meetings need clear facilitation when conversations get difficult or complicated: either the commissioning body or contractor can do this, but the role needs actively allocating otherwise it doesn't happen.
- There should be a clear contractually-based formal warning system and termination process to guide the resolution of tensions between a commissioning body and contractor (in case other routes fail).
- Advance discussion and agreement of the analytical framework is essential before the events start, especially on a project that aims to test and develop an analytical framework.
- A presentation of headline findings and conclusions to the Steering Group or Oversight Group is useful and can help streamline the reporting process, before the contractor writes up a full narrative Dialogue Report.

The dialogue was specified in the Invitation to Tender as needing to meet six challenges. Some of these were met, and some were not. The most important challenge that was only partly met was the need to 'ask the right questions' regarding social impact. Overall the project clearly *did* explore how the participants perceived the social impacts of offshore renewables, but there was a wide range of interpretations within Marine Scotland, the contractor and the OG about which questions should have been emphasised, leading to an inherent dissatisfaction on the part of most staff involved about how far the project got.

Impacts. It is too early to identify any policy-related impacts. Possible future uses of the results include that the data gathered and the initial framework of social values can act as inputs to future steps along the path towards developing an SIA methodology. The SpORRAn[3] research project could use the dialogue's data and findings in future, and from this could arise a project that develops a full SIA methodology. However, the project didn't get far enough along the path to a new SIA methodology to be useful in impacting Marine Scotland's current processes.

There has been some useful learning from the project. Some Marine Scotland staff interviewed identified specific things that had been interesting or useful for them as learning: tools and materials used, the generic framing of the workshops, use of independent facilitation, use of a recruited incentivized sample, contract management learning, and a reminder that *"the public can be trusted with tricky topics"*. However, most Marine Scotland staff interviewed felt that they were already able to deliver this kind of work as an organisation, so the dialogue had not contributed tangibly to their learning although it might have boosted their confidence.

Valuable aspects of the dialogue for policy makers within Marine Scotland included: the use of a recruited incentivized sample as a way of reaching people who wouldn't normally attend consultation events, use of independent facilitators, collection of data on social impacts in communities, confirmation of Marine Scotland's understanding of social impacts, a range of anecdotes from the public that illustrate the diversity of social impacts, and *demonstrating* that Marine Scotland has explored this area from the public's perspective.

Participants enjoyed the dialogue, with a 99% satisfaction rate and 91% *"learning something new by taking part".* The facilitation was considered by participants to be independent and effective, and most participants felt they had enough balanced information to participate properly in discussions.

It is not possible to definitively judge the balance between cost and benefit in the project from available data, but it is true to say that views are at best mixed amongst interviewees:

> *"Probably was worth it, but it did take a huge amount of money and effort" Marine Scotland*

Overall, some useful data was gathered and the initial set of workshops with the public worked well. The project has allowed MS to identify a list of social values and guidance on using these values that will be helpful in the next step along the path of developing its SIA methodology. However, the lack of clarity about objectives and outputs, and continuous problems with project management and delivery, significantly reduced the achievements and impacts of the project.

The evaluator at 3KQ thanks everyone who contributed their views and time to the evaluation: it would not be possible without their generous and honest participation.

[3] SpORRAn stands for Scottish Offshore Renewable Research Framework network, a new initiative led by Marine Scotland to coordinate research about the marine environment.

1 - Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of a public dialogue project exploring the social impacts of offshore renewables in Scotland. The dialogue was commissioned in September 2014 by Marine Scotland, with support from Sciencewise[4].

The evaluation report presents evidence on the quality of the public dialogue process, and its impacts. It also identifies lessons to help develop good practice in public dialogue more widely.

2 - Methodology of the Public Dialogue

Policy context

Marine Scotland is a directorate of the Scottish Government. It is responsible for the integrated management of Scotland's seas, and its primary purpose is to manage Scotland's seas for prosperity and environmental sustainability. It does this by promoting economic growth, promoting sustainable fishing and aquaculture, conducting research to inform policy and planning, and ensuring compliance through regulation, licensing and enforcement where necessary. More information is available on their website[5].

Scotland is recognised as having considerable potential for offshore renewable energy development[6]. The Scottish Government is committed to developing a balanced portfolio of onshore and offshore renewable technologies to contribute to National and European renewable energy targets[7].

There are two key pieces of legislation that are relevant to marine planning: the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Marine Coastal Access Act 2009. Both Acts allow for a system of National and Regional marine planning to be developed for Scottish waters.

Within this legislation, Marine Scotland is developing Sector Marine Plans for wind, wave and tidal energy. These plans will provide relevant information and assessment on strategic locations considered by Scottish Ministers as suitable to progress the development of commercial scale offshore renewable energy. The draft plans have been subject to a sustainability appraisal, and are underpinned by detailed technical assessments such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Appraisal, and Socio-economic Assessment. The draft plans were subject to extensive public consultation in 2014 including over 30 joint public and stakeholder events across Scotland, as well as the written formal public consultation.

The draft plans have now been revised, and are awaiting formal approval and publication alongside a Post Adoption Statement as required by the SEA Directive.

However, through the consultation responses and its own deliberations, Marine Scotland identified limitations in how social information is solicited and incorporated into these plans mainly via socio-economic assessments. It concluded that there were improvements that could be made: mainly the more effective inclusion of the social impacts (both positive and negative)

[4] Sciencewise is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate. www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk

[5] www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/Directorates/marinescotland

[6] Scotland's Renewable Resource (2001) http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47176/0014633.pdf

[7] Three targets are relevant at a Scotland, UK and European level. Scottish Government's target for 100% of Scottish demand for electricity to be met from renewable sources by 2020. UK target of 15% of all energy requirements to be met from renewable sources by 2020, as defined by the 2009 EU Renewables Energy Directive. EU 2020 target of 20% of all energy requirements to be met from renewable sources.

of offshore renewables developments via better 'social impact assessment', or SIA. Given the inherently social nature of these impacts, it was decided with Sciencewise's support that a public dialogue be run to explore these impacts and potential ways of including them more effectively in Marine Scotland's assessment methodology.

The title of the project was "A two-way conversation with the people of Scotland on the social impact of offshore renewables" and for brevity is in this report simply referred to as "the dialogue".

Aims

The aim of the dialogue[8] was "to engage with the people of Scotland in areas of renewable energy potential, through a series of public dialogue sessions to explore the social impact of renewables development, using a process that is mutually beneficial in line with Sciencewise guiding principles".

There were six challenges that were to be met under this aim:

1. Open Policy Making - Giving the public the opportunity to participate and influence policy.
2. Getting the right representation.
3. Asking the right questions - Assessing Social Impact.
4. Meeting multiple policy objectives.
5. Up skilling Marine Scotland staff.
6. Interacting with other research.

As the project progressed, more specific objectives and outputs were identified by the delivery contractor to bring more clarity to what the challenges above might mean in practice. These are not repeated here as they achieved little traction with the Marine Scotland team or Oversight Group, although they are listed in the Dialogue Report (www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk). This issue is covered in more detail later.

In terms of impact, there were various routes identified at the start by which the project could change Marine Scotland's thinking or actions, including:

- Informing a new process by which Marine Scotland considers the social impact of plans and projects.
- Informing a new best practice standard for Social Impact Assessment.
- Informing the next iteration of the Sector Marine Plans.
- Informing the pilot Marine Spatial Plan, and future Marine Protected Area management plans.
- Increasing the willingness, comfort and ability of Marine Scotland staff to engage the public on similar issues. This would build on their experience to date of extensive public consultation events.

Funding and support

Total project costs were planned to be £158,880. This includes the costs of Marine Scotland, the delivery contractor and the independent evaluation. This was funded by Sciencewise (£157,600) and a contribution in kind from Marine Scotland of £8,680 mainly through staff time. Sciencewise also supported the project by advising throughout (see below). A separate consultation was also undertaken by Marine Scotland at an estimated total cost (cash and

[8] As cited in the Invitation To Tender document, September 2014.

in-kind) of £277,020.

Roles

A specialist delivery contractor was procured by competitive tender to design, facilitate and report on the public dialogue. This was a consortium led by Collingwood Environmental Planning, who delivered the majority of the work.

Marine Scotland formed an internal Steering Group to enable a wider range of staff to input to the project. This consisted of ten Marine Scotland staff covering the policy, planning, SEA, science and analytical teams. The Steering Group (SG) was invited to comment on various key aspects of the dialogue such as locations for events, the event design, materials, and draft reports. The SG also attended the events as active supporters: presenting material and answering public questions where useful. In the eyes of the public, they essentially acted as specialists regarding renewable energy, social impacts and government policy. No further external specialists participated in the events.

An external stakeholder Oversight Group was set up to provide guidance to the project. This Oversight Group (OG) consisted of five external organisations:

- Scottish Coastal Forum
- Scottish Renewables
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- The Crown Estate
- University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh acted as an advisor to Marine Scotland as they had been influential[9] in the initiation of the project. Additionally a Marine Scotland staff member who deals with community energy issues was invited to join the OG, so there were six members in total at the start of the project.

The OG met in Edinburgh three times:

- 19th May: after the first event but before the rest of Round 1
- 24th August: after Round 1 complete, but before Round 2
- 9th December: after all events complete, during reporting

A Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist (DES) provided on-going guidance and oversight of the project on behalf of Sciencewise. The DES effectively sat on both the Steering Group and the Oversight Group, attending most of their meetings and participating in most of their conference calls.

Independent evaluation of the whole project - not just the events - was procured by competitive tender. 3KQ was appointed on 8th February 2015. The Sciencewise Evaluation Manager provided advice and support to 3KQ on the evaluation as the project progressed.

The management and governance of the project is covered in more depth later in the report (see section 9).

[9] At Marine Scotland's request, Edinburgh University wrote a briefing paper to inform Marine Scotland's work on social impacts, and this was seen as a driver for the project and duly released to potential contractors with the ITT pack. The document reference is "Howell and Haggett, An overview of social impact assessment: Working paper to inform Marine Scotland work on social impacts. University of Edinburgh".

Dates and locations
The table below sets out the overall project timeline with key milestones, ranging from the appointment of the contractors to the publication of the Dialogue Report.

Date		Key Milestone	SG/OG
2014	Nov	Contractors appointed	
	Dec	Inception Meeting	
2015	Jan		SG
	Feb	Evaluator appointed	
	Mar	SG mtg and trial event Event 1 of Round 1, in Kirkwall/Orkney	SG
	Apr		
	May	Events 2-6 of Round 1	OG 19 May
	Jun		SG 29 Jun
	Jul		
	Aug		OG 24 Aug
	Sep		
	Oct	Round 2 event, 2-3 October	
	Nov		
	Dec	Draft report submitted	OG 9 Dec
2016	Jan		
	Feb	Wash-up debrief meeting	23 Feb
	Mar	Anticipated publication of final Dialogue Report	

The dialogue was split into two rounds. Round 1 consisted of six one-day events, each in a different coastal location. The focus, facilitation plans and materials were kept largely consistent across these six. Dates and locations were as follows:

Date	Location	Public attended
28th March	Kirkwall/Orkney	15
6th June	Islay	13
13th June	Helmsdale	15
20th June	Stranraer	18
27th June	St Andrews	17
4th July	Glasgow	17 = 95 total

The single Round 2 event was held in Glasgow on the evening of 2nd October and morning of 3rd October (a Friday evening and Saturday morning), and consisted of 10 participants selected from across the Round 1 events.

The Dialogue Report is anticipated to be published in March 2016 or shortly thereafter.

Recruitment and incentives
The delivery contractor managed the recruitment of public participants via a recruitment agency. A recruitment screener was developed and agreed with Marine Scotland (Appendix 1). Participants were recruited off the street using the following criteria:

- Residence in the location: visitors were excluded.
- Involvement in consultations on offshore renewables: excluded if they had participated.
- Gender: roughly equal representation of male and female.
- Age: all participants over 16 and a good spread of ages.
- Ethnic background: reflective of the local area.
- Employment status: spread of types of employment.
- Level of education: spread of levels of education.

95 people participated in the six round 1 events, ranging from 13-18 at each event. The profile of the participants that attended is included as Appendix 2.

Members of the public were incentivised with a cash payment of £75 for participating in the round 1 events, as a thank you for their time. This also covered their travel expenses for reaching the venue, which in most cases would have been minimal.

Participants for the round 2 event were recruited from participants in round 1 who said they would be willing to attend a follow-up workshop. Ten people attended this event, comprising at least one from each round 1 location.

Round 1 Events – agenda and data capture
The format, agenda and materials for the round 1 events was developed through iterations between the contractor team and Marine Scotland staff. The package was exposed to a dry-run at a 'trial event', attended by Marine Scotland staff and an external stakeholder from the OG. The event design was tweaked slightly after the first public event in Orkney.

The design below is the one that was rolled out to the remaining five locations, and can be considered the base design for round 1. A full facilitation plan is included in the Dialogue Report. All events started at 10am and finished at 4pm. The third column outlines how data was captured during each session.

Session	Detail	Recording
Arrivals exercise	Participants answer three thought-provoking questions[10] over coffee.	Participants place one red dot on a scale for each question.
Introduction	Welcome, introductions, aim, agenda, ground rules, brief context for work.	-
Context presentation	Marine Scotland presentation on work aims, why doing it, funding. Questions of clarification.	-
What is important to you	Participants consider what is important to them, and develop a map of relative importance.	Participants, writing/drawing on to an individual blank map of concentric circles.
Building a hypothetical community	Participants transfer their 'important things' to icons and place on a map of a hypothetical coastal	Laptop recording, plus audio recording as backup.

[10] The three questions were: 1) Generating renewable energy in the seas off Scotland will… (place dot between 'have no effect on me' and 'change my life'). 2) Members of the public should have a say in decisions about developing renewable energy technologies in Scotland's seas (place dot between 'no not at all' and 'yes definitely'). 3) How positive or negative do you think the development of renewable energy will be for you? (place dot between 'very negative' and 'Extremely positive').

	community. Discussion throughout the transfer process. Plenary discussion about what each group has developed.	
Offshore renewables presentation	Marine Scotland presentation on the range of offshore renewable technologies, and the process by which projects are developed. Questions of clarification.	Laptop recording of plenary discussion.
Scenarios exploration – wind/tidal	Participants read worksheet of tidal scenario, in two groups. Facilitator puts scenario icons on map. Participants discuss the positive and negative impacts of the scenario on the things they value. Then do same with other scenarios[11].	Laptop recording, , plus audio recording as backup.
Summary	In same two groups, summarise discussion so far: - Comparative impacts - Things you want to protect - Opportunities you hope for	Participant records their group's view on an A3 sheet
Revisit the arrivals questions	Participants reconsider the three questions asked during the arrivals exercise, and place a dot on each scale. Discuss changes in plenary.	Participants place one yellow dot on a scale for each question.
Engaging with Scottish Government	Consideration of how participants wish to engage with Scottish Government, and how their values should be represented. Plenary.	Laptop recording.
Next steps and close	Explanation of Round 2 Evaluation forms Close	

[11] The four scenarios discussed included: generic changes, two different offshore wind scenarios, and a tidal scenario.

The round 2 event was held in Glasgow for ease of travel from the dispersed round 1 locations, and was held on a Friday evening and Saturday morning to enable participants with long journeys to attend with only one night away from home. The agenda and recording arrangements are below:

Session	Detail	Recording
Friday evening		
Arrivals	Participants browse materials from Round 1, on walls	-
Introduction presentation	Marine Scotland welcome and reminder of project Facilitator: introductions, aim, agenda, ground rules and ice-breaker exercise.	-
Reviewing Round 1 views	Group work to review Round 1 output, using summarised 'values' and 'impacts' on maps: ● To what extent do the clusters represent the social values that came up in Round 1? ● Which values are the most important? ● Whose views do they represent? (any missing?)	Note-taker on laptop, plus backup audio recording
Dinner, 30 mins		
Plenary debrief	Collective consideration of how reflective the summary output was of Round 1, and how useful the cluster headings were.	Flipchart recording at front

Saturday morning		
Orientation	Facilitator: reminder of aim/agenda	-
SIA presentation	Marine Scotland presentation: why and how it's done.	
Improving SIA	Group-work: - When and how should public values be considered? - What would purpose of involving the public be? - How many and what kinds of people should be involved?	Note-takers on laptops, plus audio recording as backup
Methods for gathering data	Group-work carousel on method/techniques: - indicators - surveys - dialogue Plenary discussion across these three topics.	Note-takers on laptops, plus audio recording as backup. Flipchart recording in plenary, plus laptop notes.
Plenary debrief and closure	Overall discussion of the events, including key messages to Marine Scotland Completion of evaluation forms.	Flipchart recording

Materials

The development of materials was a core part of the contractor team's approach in the events. Below are the key materials used in round 1, as described by the contractor team:

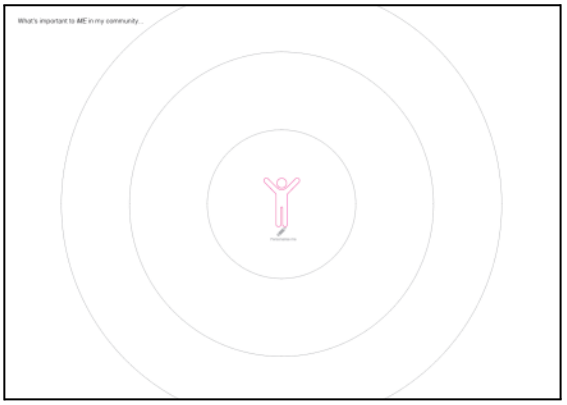
Baseline and final views posters

Three posters were used to record participants' views and attitudes on offshore renewables at the start and end of the dialogue event, to see how views change over the day.

How they worked:

Participants were given three sticky coloured dots when they arrived and asked to put one on a scale on each posters. The same exercise was repeated at the end of the day, using different coloured dots.

Concentric circles pictures



A3 sheets of paper with a figure (male/female as appropriate) in the centre of three concentric circles

How they worked:

Each participant was given a blank picture. Participants were invited to imagine that they were the figure in the middle and to draw or write the things that they valued, using the circles to show relative importance of the things.

'What is important' markers

Small paper markers that can be put on the map to show the things that people value. Icons were used for common things (e.g. family, health care) and colours differentiated types of things (e.g. economic capacities, community capital, etc.)

How they worked:

Participants chose the markers they wanted and wrote on them the things they valued from their pictures. The markers were put on the map.

Maps of a hypothetical coastal location

Large map showing a hypothetical coastal location with features such as a small town, port, golf course island. About half of the map was sea.

How they worked:

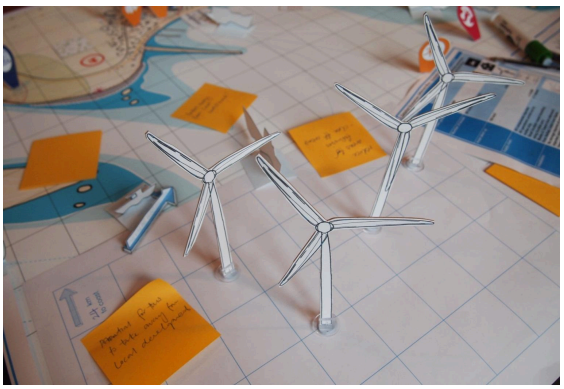
Each small group had its own map on which it put the icons showing the things that participants valued as well as models of the offshore renewable energy technologies and support structures that they were discussing in each scenario.

Scenario model pieces

Cardboard models of elements of the scenarios discussed during the dialogue, e.g. offshore renewable energy technologies, support installations, ships, etc.

How they worked:

Before the discussion of each scenario, the facilitator puts the relevant pieces on the map, so that participants could better visualise the scenario.

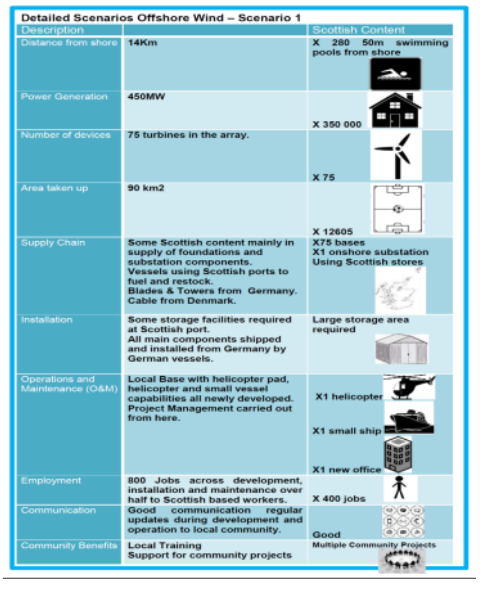


Scenario Factsheets

One-page sheet for each scenario with standard information on one side (e.g. distance from shore, power generation, number of devices, etc.) and photos on the other side.

How they worked:

At the start of each scenario session, participants received a factsheet which they could refer back to during the discussion.



Detailed Scenarios Offshore Wind – Scenario 1

Description		Scottish Content
Distance from shore	14Km	X 280 50m swimming pools from shore
Power Generation	450MW	X 350 000
Number of devices	75 turbines in the array.	X 75
Area taken up	90 km2	X 12605
Supply Chain	Some Scottish content mainly in supply of foundations and substation components. Vessels using Scottish ports to fuel and restock. Blades & Towers from Germany. Cable from Denmark.	X75 bases X1 onshore substation Using Scottish stores
Installation	Some storage facilities required at Scottish port. All main components shipped and installed from Germany by German vessels.	Large storage area required
Operations and Maintenance (O&M)	Local Base with helicopter pad, helicopter and small vessel capabilities all newly developed. Project Management carried out from here.	X1 helicopter X1 small ship X1 new office
Employment	800 Jobs across development, installation and maintenance over half to Scottish based workers.	X 400 jobs
Communication	Good communication regular updates during development and operation to local community.	Good
Community Benefits	Local Training Support for community projects	Multiple Community Projects

Data analysis and reporting
Data from the discussions with public participants was captured in a variety of ways, as set out in the table above alongside the agenda. It comprised mainly of participant-initiated data (dots, icons and notes) and laptop note-taking by the facilitation team, with audio recording as backup.

The contractor team describe their data analysis approach in the Dialogue Report. Where data existed in Word document format, such as the discussion notes, this was uploaded to a data analysis software called dedoose[12]. This enabled the coding of individual comments to particular themes that emerged, as well as the filtering of comments according to location. Other data was analysed manually where it was not available in Word, such as the concentric circles value pictures. The data from round 2 was analysed manually due to the smaller volume of information.

During the analysis, the team used a coding tree which used as its base the existing social impact assessment categories (from Vanclay *et al* 2015, IAIA Social Impact Assessment Guidance: 2), as well as adding further codes where comments did not fit comfortably into these categories. The coding tree was developed by the consultants and discussed with the SG and OG after the Interim Report was almost complete and round 2 was being designed.

Reports were produced by the contractor team and circulated to the SG primarily for discussion and revisions, as well as to a lesser extent to the OG. All reports received significant amounts of discussion and suggested revisions by the Marine Scotland team, and this contributed to the duration of the project being extended. This is discussed later.

Outputs
The following outputs have been produced by the project:

- Inception Report, containing a literature review.
- Round 1 Report (Interim Report), including materials for public discussions.
- Dialogue Report, the main output that combines the above outputs with results from round 2, plus overall conclusions and recommendations.

[12] See www.dedoose.com for more information.

3 - Evaluation Aims and Methodology

The **aim** of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the impact and quality of the dialogue, and in doing so contribute to the wider effectiveness of public dialogue both in Marine Scotland and beyond.

The seven key questions asked in the evaluation arise from Sciencewise guidance[13] and were reiterated in the Invitation To Tender:

- Objectives: has the dialogue met its objectives? Were they the right ones?
- Good practice: has the dialogue met the Sciencewise principles of good practice?
- Value, Benefits and Satisfaction: have those involved been satisfied with the dialogue and its value?
- Governance: how successful has the governance of the project been?
- Impact: what difference or impact has the dialogue made?
- Costs/Benefits: what was the balance overall of the costs and benefits of the dialogue?
- Lessons: what are the lessons for the future?

The evaluation has also been mindful of the Quality Framework[14] that Sciencewise has published as a working paper. This evaluation report uses the framework as a basic structure, building in improvements that we understand are being made to the next version of the framework.

This evaluation report is based on the following data collection and analysis methods, conducted between March 2015 and January 2016:

- **Observation.** The evaluators directly observed a variety of events including:
  - Planning meeting between contractor team and Marine Scotland, on the morning of 19th March
  - Trial event, afternoon of 19th March with Steering Group
  - Round 1 event number 2, on Islay
  - Round 2 event on 2-3rd October
  - OG meetings on 19th May, 24th August and 9th December
  - SG meetings on 19th March (trial event), and 29th June
  - Presentation at Scottish Natural Heritage conference, 12th February 2016
  - Wash-up meeting to debrief the whole project, 23rd February 2016.
- **Interviews.** Formal stakeholder interviews were conducted at three key points throughout the dialogue. A round of five baseline interviews were completed with stakeholders[15] before round 1 events started, to establish the context for the dialogue. An interim round of eight interviews was conducted[16] after delivery of the round 1 events. A final round of eleven interviews was completed[17] after the draft Dialogue Report was released, to assess learning

[13] Sciencewise, 2008. *SWP-07 Requirements evaluating Sciencewise Projects* http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/SWP07-Requirements-for-Evaluation.pdf
[14] Quality in Public Dialogue: A framework for assessing the quality of public dialogue. Working paper, March 2015.
[15] Baseline interviews were conducted with five people: two staff at Marine Scotland, Sciencewise, and two staff at Collingwood Environmental Planning.
[16] Interim interviews were conducted with eight people: four staff at Marine Scotland, an OG member, Sciencewise, and two staff at Collingwood Environmental Planning.
[17] Final interviews were conducted with 11 people: six staff at Marine Scotland, two OG members, Sciencewise, and two staff at Collingwood Environmental Planning.

and impact. These formal interviews were complemented by informal discussions with the Marine Scotland project manager and Sciencewise DES from time to time throughout the project.

- **Questionnaires.** Written self-assessment questionnaire data was gathered from all 6 of the round 1 events and the round 2 event. A 100% response rate was achieved, with all 95 participants completing a questionnaire. A summary of the data gathered from the events is given in Appendix 3 (round 1), and Appendix 4 (round 2).
- **Document review.** The evaluator reviewed the majority of written correspondence[18] and documents that were circulated throughout the project such as minutes, dialogue stimulus materials, draft process plans, and the various evolving stages of the Dialogue Report.
- **Formative evaluation input.** Throughout the project the evaluator fed in observations, to support the development of the dialogue where appropriate.

The author is grateful to the Sciencewise Evaluation Manager for providing invaluable on-going advice and acting as a sounding board throughout the evaluation of the project.

Reporting. There have been three key outputs from the evaluation:

- Baseline evaluation report. Issued April 2015.
- Interim evaluation report. Issued September 2015.
- Final evaluation report. This report, issued March 2016.

The evaluation reports listed above were circulated amongst the team at Marine Scotland and Sciencewise, as well as the contractors delivering the project. Readers will note that many of the key conclusions raised in this report that follow were raised in one or both of the previous evaluation reports. The conclusions that follow are therefore largely not new, but are set out in more detail with further evidence and commentary.

"The evaluator could see that things were going wrong, and even intervened to point out the risk of delivering the lowest common denominator in the absence of clearly agreed outputs. We didn't listen at the time and I regret that: we should have." Marine Scotland staff

[18] Over 400 emails were read and monitored as part of the evaluation.

4 - CONTEXT

The key attribute evaluated here is *the extent to which the conditions leading to the dialogue were conducive to the best outcomes*. This is discussed from different aspects, where evaluation commentary is useful.

Timing and Framing
There was a clear motivation for this project. Marine Scotland had identified a limitation in the way they included social impacts in their previous socio-economic assessments of plans, and they wanted to improve it. This motivation was well articulated in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for procuring the delivery contractor. Every staff member at Marine Scotland contacted by the evaluator supported this motivation in an unprompted and compelling way. The Marine Scotland team ultimately wanted to develop a new methodology for SIA, and they saw this dialogue project as instrumental in achieving this.

The dialogue was originally planned to occur 9-12 months earlier, allowing it to run in parallel with the 30 consultation events held around Scotland on the draft Sector Marine Plans. However, the staff capacity was not available to manage the project at that time (in large part due to being busy running the consultation itself), so it was postponed until more staff resource was available.

Although postponed, the timing still allowed for the results of the public dialogue to potentially be incorporated into the revised Sector Marine Plans. Indeed, the finalization of the plans has also been postponed and they are as yet un-adopted by Ministers, so there is still theoretically time to incorporate the dialogue results if desired.

So, the overall motivation for the dialogue was clear, and the timing was appropriate: both essential conditions for effective dialogue.

It is however noticeable in the ITT that there are no objectives listed. Instead there are six challenges outlined:

1. Open Policy Making - Giving the public the opportunity to participate and influence policy.
2. Getting the right representation.
3. Asking the right questions - Assessing Social Impact.
4. Meeting multiple policy objectives.
5. Up skilling Marine Scotland staff.
6. Interacting with other research.

Although each challenge was elaborated with narrative text in the ITT, the document did not specify what the project was required to produce, or how far along the path of developing a new Social Impact Assessment methodology it was expected to get. The evidence gathered through the evaluation is that the absence of specific objectives and outputs in the ITT – and their effective continued absence throughout the project - caused significant barriers to the success and credibility of the work.

Had Marine Scotland staff all wanted the same outputs, and had there been a common understanding of how far along the path towards a new SIA methodology the project would get, the problems would have been less significant. In practice though, there was a significant range of expectations internally about what depth the

project should go to at each stage, and how far it should get to by the end. This diversity of expected output extended into the Oversight Group as well. The spread of expectation is illustrated by the range of outputs hoped for, as expressed in evaluation interviews, collated below:

- A list of issues raised by the public as social impact
- A list of social values and impacts
- A model to categorize impacts
- A list of what people see as positive, negative, and their relative importance
- Narrative elaboration of how people feel they will be impacted and why
- Guidance on how to elicit social values and impacts from the public
- Guidance on how each impact should be measured
- Guidance on how each impact should be assessed
- Materials and tasks for use in future processes of SIA
- A list of ways in which the public expect impacts to be mitigated
- Guidance on when and how people should be involved in SIA
- Guidance on how the products of SIA are most effectively presented
- A new SIA methodology that is people-friendly and evidence-based. This, it could be argued, it essentially a consolidated package of all the above outputs within a single coherent framework.

This list starts with relatively low-hanging fruit and extends to more ambitious outputs. The discussion was not explicitly held about choosing which of the above were being driven at, and which were being postponed to another project. This sense persisted right through the project from inception, design, delivery and reporting, and exists even at the end:

"There was occasionally a general sense that we knew what we were doing, but it never precipitated into a clear sense of how things were going to work"
Marine Scotland staff

"The project is complete but I'm left still slightly confused about exactly what the project is about" OG member

"My key learning is to iron out differences in objectives right at the start: this would have gone a long way towards avoiding the problems" OG member

The Dialogue Report does contain a table of specific objectives and outputs, developed by the delivery contractor and presented at an OG meeting. The contractor spent considerable time developing and updating these. However, these objectives and outputs were developed well into the delivery of the project (after some events had already been run) and were not substantively discussed or 'bought into' by either Marine Scotland or the OG. They did little to improve the situation of ambiguity so are not discussed further here.

Commitment and Credibility
The number and spread of Marine Scotland staff supporting the project was impressive. There were nine staff regularly involved with the project on the Steering Group and supporting the public events, and one other who was part of the Oversight

Group. These staff spanned policy, planning, SEA, science and analytical teams, as well as appropriate senior level representation that meant results could be acted upon in a credible and useful way. The evaluator observed a willingness and 'pull' from a wide range staff for the project that is not always present in similar analogous projects in other organisations. The support from staff at the events was also extensive, with the six round 1 events on Saturdays being attended by at least two staff members, and four at round 2. Given the other pressures of workload Marine Scotland is under, and the travel time and logistics required to reach the events in often-remote coastal locations, this clearly demonstrates the practical commitment given.

The exemplary involvement of such a range and number of Marine Scotland staff did however bring challenges. Firstly, the need to clearly identify and acknowledge the differences in perspective that each staff member brought to a project with an ambiguous set of objectives. Second, the need for tight project management in terms of clarity and advance notice provided for meetings and commenting on papers. Both these challenges arose and impacted on the success of the project. This is not however to suggest that less staff should have been involved and options for addressing the challenges are covered later, under governance.

Public participation

There was widespread satisfaction with the numbers and type of public participants targeted and recruited for the events. Participant numbers seemed to strike an appropriate balance between being large enough to be credible, whilst also being low enough to be manageable and affordable. The recruitment criteria (see Appendices 1 and 2) were discussed and agreed openly with Marine Scotland, and there was satisfaction with this throughout the dialogue. From one OG member there was a nervousness that 'the public are ill-informed about renewable projects' but this was accepted as a key focus of the dialogue: purposely targeting people who have had very little contact with renewables to date.

Levels of participation

Levels of participation are considered here from the perspective of the public participants, the SG and the OG.

The evidence is that the public participants were able to participate well throughout: 97% said they could contribute and have their say, and 96% said they could ask questions and get appropriate answers. Members of the public were not expected to share ownership of the events or choices around the design of round 2, and as such had no expectations around influencing the events.

Steering Group members clearly did want to input to key choices such as the number and location of events, design of rounds 1 and 2, materials and reporting. The SG had various opportunities to input throughout the project, both via formal meetings of the SG and by email and other informal contact from the project manager. All SG members interviewed by the evaluator were satisfied with the level and overall scale of their involvement. The only exceptions to this were widespread observations that more advance notice of meetings and paper circulation would have made life easier for individual SG members to engage with the project.

The Oversight Group was expected by some Marine Scotland staff to take a little more ownership and get more proactively involved. This was manifest in their terms of reference, and also in how Marine Scotland staff saw the group. Four out of six

OG members attended an OG meeting. Only three of these (i.e. half the group) attended more than one meeting, and were actively engaged throughout the project: reading papers and commenting on documents. There is no evidence to suggest however that OG members wanted more involvement or influence. The OG's operation is covered further under the governance section of this report.

Resources

The project was adequately resourced with funding. Costs are set out in section 2 above. Whilst there were choices to be made between priorities in the design and delivery of the work - for example of how many locations could be afforded - the question of cost did not dominate discussions or appear to negatively constrain the design. Interviewees confirmed this.

Resourcing a continuous project management function within Marine Scotland was more of a challenge. Workload pressures were evident across the team. The impact of this was compounded by various issues including the recurring illness of the project manager, as well as contractual changes to the role of another manager who acted as backup. The combined impacts were significant, causing disruption and a lack of continuity throughout the project management. These impacts were felt in particular by the contractors who needed stability of guidance and clear timely decisions. A key observation, albeit difficult to evidence confidently, is that a more stable project management function would have lessened the impact of the ambiguous objectives, via a continuous link between the project manager and the contractors. As it was, this link was often broken or intermittent.

Lessons

- Objectives and outputs must be clearly spelled out as early as possible in project documentation, including in the ITT. If not clear in the ITT they should be drafted soon after an Inception Meeting and discussed and agreed by all parties *before* the project gains further momentum.
- When major or repeated ambiguities arise about the objectives of the dialogue, progress should be halted until they are resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The benefits of doing so cannot be overestimated.
- A stable project management function in the commissioning body is essential to the smooth running of a dialogue: any threat to that stability is a threat to the success of the project and needs to be actively resolved.

5 - SCOPE AND DESIGN

The key attribute evaluated here is *the extent to which the range of issues and policy opinions covered in the dialogue reflects the interests of those involved.* The section also covers issues around the choices made during the design of the dialogue.

Diversity of perspective
There was a wide range of Marine Scotland staff perspective involved, and this was able to input well to the inception of the project. The other way in which the diverse perspectives of stakeholders were introduced was via the OG, by inviting five external stakeholder organisations to participate in guiding the project. Of these five, only three participated in a regular way: attending meetings and commenting on documents. The operation of the OG could therefore be questioned slightly in terms of the breadth of representation: although it looked adequate on paper, it only partially materialized. There was no explicitly 'anti' group participating to offset the industry presence. However in the end, this potential lack of balance did not appear to affect the project much: there were other challenges to address.

Support from decision-makers
The evidence gathered from interviews and direct observations is that the support from appropriate senior decision-makers was in place. Specifically, there was a single identified senior decision-maker responsible for the project, and they regularly participated in meetings including the inception meeting, trial event, a round 1 event and the round 2 event, as well as being available for interviews. It would be unrealistic to expect more support than this, and it is to be commended.

Inception Report
Problems arose early in the project. The Inception Report produced by the contractors was not well received by Marine Scotland, and prompted a detailed and lengthy series of comments over the following months. Queries were raised over the report's depth and detail, its scope, as well as its academic underpinning. The report was not signed off prior to round 1 events starting, and indeed has not yet been signed off now even at the completion of the project.

This part of the project caused considerable tension between Marine Scotland and the contractors. From the contractor's point of view, they had written the Inception Report on their best understanding of the work, had produced a report without any specification, and Marine Scotland had taken months to provide comments. From Marine Scotland's point of view, the contractors had missed the deadline agreed for provision of the report, written it in a way that did not meet their needs, and had misjudged what they substantively wanted from the project. This mismatch of view persisted throughout most of the project. It waned slightly during the delivery of round 1 while everyone was focused on making the events successful, but appeared again during discussions about what round 2 might look like. This tension was not discussed openly during the project.

Design of dialogue overall
If one conceives of the dialogue as a single entity rather than two separate rounds of events, then it is observable that there was no plan or design covering the whole dialogue. Rather, a design for round 1 was first compiled, discussed and agreed. Once round 1 was complete, the focus of round 2 was then discussed and a design compiled accordingly. This approach of separating out the parts misses the

opportunity to view the dialogue as *one* conversation and, particularly in this case, misses the chance to spot at an early stage the divergence of end points expected by different Marine Scotland staff.

As a result of the tension described above with the Inception Report, Marine Scotland asked the contractors to run a 'trial event' with the Steering Group, one OG member, and a couple of wider internal staff. The aim of this was to test the design and materials for round 1, and give Marine Scotland the reassurance that the contractor team was able to deliver as expected. The trial event was felt to have been an essential part of the project:

"The trial event was really useful for us to see how things might actually work with the public. We could feed back where improvements could be made, and we got a bit more confident that the contractors could deliver". Marine Scotland staff

However, there was some dissatisfaction from a financial point of view:

"We had to pay for the trial event even though this was only because we didn't trust the contractor by this point: we didn't have much choice but we shouldn't have needed to" Marine Scotland staff

The trial event allowed Marine Scotland to proceed towards the first round 1 event, in Orkney. This had previously been cancelled due to a satisfactory design not being agreed.

In terms of the dialogue design, a key factor was the academic literature and frameworks for SIA that existed, such as Vanclay's previous work[19]. At times the project was being designed 'to test whether the SIA categories are meaningful to the public' and at other times 'to see what categories emerge if we put the existing categories aside'. This appears to be a tension that was not openly addressed in the design of the project. The framework proposed for the analysis of the data from the workshops was not available until round 1 was complete, so the SG and OG were not able to discuss it: this was seen as problematic by at least one Marine Scotland staff member.

"Round 1 was designed in absence of the analysis framework: this wasn't good" Marine Scotland staff

Overall, the dialogue would have benefitted from rounds 1 and 2 being mapped out in one plan near the start, so everyone could have confidence that the project would deliver what was wanted: in particular the balance between elicitation of data on social values, versus the development of an SIA methodology. This would also have included the analysis framework that was going to be applied.

Role of academic input and framing to project

The nature of the academic underpinning of the project warrants some exploration here, as it emerged as a factor that either increased or decreased the credibility or usefulness of the outputs in the minds of some Marine Scotland staff.

The University of Edinburgh wrote a briefing on the current status of social impact assessment, including its weaknesses. Various papers in the literature were referenced including Vanclay's work which appears to 'hold the centre' of academic

[19] Vanclay *et al* 2015, IAIA Social Impact Assessment Guidance: 2

writing on the topic. The Marine Scotland staff appointing the contractors found their tender appealing at least in part due to their academic credentials.

However, the role of the project in relation to the literature was unclear. At times the predominant academic framework that already existed to characterise the SIA categories seemed central to the work, and at others it appeared that the project should leave behind existing frameworks and start from a blank sheet to see what emerged from the *participants'* perspective. This choice – and the apparent dilemma it entails as one cannot have both – was not openly discussed or debated. Ultimately the design was done in the absence of a clear choice about the role of the academic underpinning. The analysis framework was a compromise between testing the existing categories and adding new ones where comments appeared not to fit. The confusion and lack of debate about such a central element of the project significantly impacted on its credibility and usefulness. This impact was felt in different ways depending on the staff members' point of view:

"We wanted more academic input and guidance from contractor: we thought we were buying a much more academically underpinned design"
Marine Scotland staff

"Pre-existing academic work like Vanclay was leant on too hard by the consultants, rather than listening to what Marine Scotland wanted"
Marine Scotland staff

"The academic nature of the project detracted from its usefulness for me: it wasn't focused on delivery or developers" Marine Scotland staff

There was clearly a range of expectation amongst Marine Scotland staff about the role of academic underpinning in a project like this, with the potential to increase or decrease credibility as a result. Opportunities to discuss and agree the role of existing frameworks were missed, and this undoubtedly impacted on the success of the project.

Locations of workshops with public participants
Most interviewees were satisfied with the spread of locations of workshops. The choice of six round 1 locations was seen as a pragmatic and sufficient spread given that the project couldn't go everywhere and the budget was bounded.

The inclusion of a 'central' location that was not explicitly coastal was encouraged by the Sciencewise DES to enable some degree of 'control group' to the work. Whilst this had caused some concern early about using up some budget, it was ultimately well-received and emerged unprompted in evaluation interviews as a useful aspect of the project:

"Really pleased they did somewhere central as well as coastal"
OG member

"Good to do the control session in Glasgow: made it a little more scientific"
Marine Scotland staff

"The Glasgow session enabled some of the ethical debate to emerge, regarding where impacts and benefits are felt" Marine Scotland staff

It may be questioned whether Glasgow should strictly be considered a non-coastal conurbation due to its proximity to the sea, but it is true that the majority of the residents do not rely on the marine environment for their livelihood or main recreation. In this way it worked well as a control group.

Sample design

In terms of the scope and design of the sample of public participants involved, there was widespread satisfaction amongst Marine Scotland staff. It was recognised that this was a qualitative piece of work and as such not statistically representative, and that just under 100 people was still a credible sample of the public. This view was largely shared by the OG, although there was some discomfort from one member about the degree to which a sample of less than 100 can be relied on to indicate wider public views.

A particular aspect of the sample that boosted the credibility and usefulness of the project was the fact that the public participants were recruited and incentivized specifically to access fresh views. The screening criterion that excluded those who had participated in previous consultations was seen as particularly useful, as it enabled Marine Scotland to hear from 'beyond the usual suspects' who might attend an open consultation event.

"It was great that the participants hadn't been involved before" OG member

Ethics, confidentiality and data protection

Overall the dialogue handled issues of ethics, confidentiality and data protection well, in areas that might otherwise have caused problems.

Data within the dialogue results was anonymised within the transcripts produced after each event, and also in verbatim quotes in the final reporting. The contractors highlighted this near the start of the events to enable participants to feel comfortable that they wouldn't be singled out, and this promise was delivered on.

During the participant recruitment process, there is an ethical consideration to let potential participants know what kind of event they are heading for. This was well covered because the recruitment screener clearly stated exactly what the events would cover (Appendix 1). It is worth considering the need to balance this ethical driver with the need to avoid non-response bias, where the potential participant comes along specifically because they have a view (or don't) on the topic mentioned. The ideal is striking a balance between the two: enough information to provide an ethical comfort that participants know what event they are being offered, but not enough that their pre-existing views might encourage them to attend or not. For example, a recruitment screener that invited participations to "events to discuss energy generation in Scotland" might have struck this balance, rather than the wording used which was to discuss "the possible impacts of generating renewable energy in the seas around Scotland". Either way, it was not an issue raised by any SG or OG members, and does not cause concern.

No issues arose regarding data protection. The evaluation forms used at the events requested the participants' permission for re-contact, and in many cases (but not all) this was provided.

Conclusions and Lessons

- Design of the overall dialogue trajectory at the start could have provided clarity to the objectives for both rounds of events, as well as a single unified picture of where the project was trying to reach.
- An internal ‘trial event’ can provide tangible improvements to the design and materials, as well as reassurance to everyone on the reliability of delivery. It also reduces the need for treating the first public event as a ‘pilot’.

6 - DELIVERY

The key attribute evaluated here is *the extent to which the dialogue itself represents best practice in execution, including its governance.*

Governance: Marine Scotland
The Marine Scotland staff team involved in this project was relatively large and very supportive, and this is to be commended. Given the number of people inputting, and the frequent disruptions to the project manager's presence, it would have been useful to form a small Project Management Team to enable project decisions to be focused and for some of the delays to be avoided. Such a PMT could have comprised two Marine Scotland staff, the Sciencewise DES, and the contractors. This type of PMT might have streamlined some of the decisions, clarified contingencies in the absence of the project manager, and dealt with some of the differences in objectives that were being expressed. This 'PMT plus Oversight Group' arrangement is seen to work well in other dialogues. Some Marine Scotland staff recognised this in saying:

"Maybe a smaller group at the centre to take decisions would have been good"
Marine Scotland staff

A PMT might have also helped with controlling the project management aspects that hampered other areas of the project.

"In practice we struggled to control the project management: meetings got booked late, and papers weren't always circulated in time to input well"
Marine Scotland staff

Other options for improving the stability of the project management function were to: reduce the wider workload of the project manager so as to enable more time to manage the dialogue, or secondly to enroll the support of a project assistant to handle much of the administration required such as organizing meetings, sending papers out, compiling comments etc.

Governance: Oversight Group
The OG met three times. When they attended, members participated actively and appreciated the opportunity to follow the work and input where they felt they could add value. It was noticeable that some members found it difficult to prioritise the dialogue over other competing work pressures, with two members not attending at all, and one member attending only one meeting. This was exacerbated by OG meetings being organised on an ad-hoc basis, often at short notice. It would have made it easier for OG members to attend if a suite of meetings had been booked at the start of the programme as an integrated element of the dialogue, even if one or two of the dates ultimately needed to be cancelled or rearranged due to changing circumstances.

It was noticeable that the Oversight Group did not have on its membership a skeptical or 'anti' viewpoint regarding offshore renewables energy developments. Whilst this was not raised by interviewees as problematic, it is something to actively consider in future dialogues to demonstrably safeguard against bias in the design or materials.

Like any technical field, social impact assessment has its own set of jargon, and this occasionally affected OG meetings when conversations became difficult. Members

sometimes talked at cross-purposes, and conversations sometimes went in circles. This could have been helped by the clear allocation of a facilitator/chair role in the meetings, enabling this person to facilitate in a more assertive way to maintain clarity and structure to the meetings.

"OG meetings sometimes went in circles and weren't very focused: bit frustrating" Marine Scotland staff

Despite these challenges, the OG undoubtedly added value and increased the prominence of the dialogue in the stakeholder community, as well as provided valuable feedback on the draft Dialogue Report.

Relationship between contractor team and MS

The teams of staff working on the project from the contractor and at Marine Scotland were observably dedicated, keen and competent. However, problems arose between the two teams as identified above, first appearing at the Inception Report stage and persisting throughout the project. There is limited value in delving in depth into these tensions in this evaluation report except where learning is possible for future projects.

In summary, Marine Scotland's perception was that the contractor repeatedly missed deadlines, took too long over writing reports and other documents, became over-reliant on Marine Scotland for input, and did not provide the academic underpinning that had been expected on the basis of their tender during procurement.

In summary, the delivery contractor's perception was that the Marine Scotland project management function was often absent without consistent backup, communications about Marine Scotland's expectations of aspects such as report specifications were unclear or absent, and the emphasis of the project kept changing over time.

The tension between these two views escalated around the cancellation of the first event in round 1, where Marine Scotland considered cancelling the contract, such was their level of dissatisfaction.

"We should have let project fail at this point, but we didn't have a contract termination process". Marine Scotland staff

This is key learning for Marine Scotland:

"I've learned from this project: I now have a formal warning and termination process in all my contracts" Marine Scotland staff

Once the first round 1 event was held (in Orkney), the Marine Scotland team then felt committed to continue to the end.

Governance: Sciencewise

The Sciencewise DES attended most of the SG and OG meetings and participated in their conference calls, as well as attending one round 1 and the round 2 event. He also maintained direct contact with the Marine Scotland team throughout the project where possible.

The DES's input was generally well received by the Marine Scotland team, with staff commenting that he was instrumental in pushing for the control event that was held in Glasgow, and that he was effective in drawing conversations together and providing helpful advice as a sounding board. The DES felt that he was able to input and that Marine Scotland listened to his advice.

It was observable that occasionally the DES and Marine Scotland had slightly different priorities, and this was particularly felt in discussions around the design of round 2. Some Marine Scotland staff (although not all) wanted to use round 2 to delve deeper into the social values, and how these were felt by participants. The DES on the other hand felt that round 1 had covered a lot of this ground already, and round 2 could more usefully explore how the impacts might be measured, and the ways in which data could be gathered from the public.

"Occasionally Sciencewise and Marine Scotland pulled in different directions, regarding the focus of round 2 in particular" Marine Scotland staff

One could argue that had the objectives of the dialogue been clearer and an overall map of the dialogue existed (as recommended above), this tension would not have arisen.

Marine Scotland specialist support to events

As described above, at least two staff from Marine Scotland attended each round 1 event, and four attended round 2. They gave presentational input as well as answered questions where needed, but otherwise remained 'in listening mode'.

On the basis of observations at two events, and the evaluation questionnaires completed by participants, their style of presentation and participation was ideal. 99% of participants "felt comfortable with the specialists" and 96% "got appropriate answers to their questions". The staff chosen to attend were from appropriate specialisms. They had been adequately briefed, and had prepared well for the presentations and questions. They remained polite and non-defensive, and refreshingly open about the challenges that Marine Scotland faced around offshore renewables. Their participation was seen as a wholly positive element to the project.

"Specialists were very useful" Public participant, round 1

"Very helpful and friendly" Public participant, round 1

"I felt really listened to" Public participant, round 2

Sample achieved: numbers and spread, in detail

Overall, Marine Scotland staff were satisfied with the sample of public participants achieved. Whilst there was an occasional question asked about specific recruitment issues, these did not appear to translate into a dissatisfaction or mistrust of the sample. Staff were also pleased with how the public contributed and shared their views during the events.

The actual sample achieved is detailed in Appendix 2. The specification requested "a

spread of participants" across various criteria, and this was clearly met. Although the sample does not match the targeted sample exactly, there is a spread of participation across the criteria specified, with no significant gaps.

Process used in round 1 events

The facilitation plan and materials used in the round 1 events is explained in section 2 above. Key elements of the process are highlighted in turn below.

The logistical preparations that the contractor made are to be commended. Access to the venue was gained early, and the full set-up of events was complete well before participants arrived (sometimes the evening before). This enabled the facilitators to brief the Marine Scotland team upon arrival, greet the participants when they arrived, and generally mingle and develop a rapport with everyone in the room before the event started. As a result, all materials were available when required, all the technology worked, and participants saw the team as credible, professional and 'in control' right from the start.

The facilitators treated the public participants with respect throughout the events. They greeted them upon arrival, ensured they were comfortable, made sure they could contribute, briefed them clearly on the programme and what was about to happen, and generally maintained a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

The discussions were structured to allow deliberation and an evolution of participants' thinking: from the generic "what do I value?" through to the specific "what might be impacted by this scenario, and how?" The facilitators enabled a degree of prompting and deliberation by asking supplementary questions, but this was hampered by a lack of time in some sessions to delve more deeply into what people were saying. More time would have enabled more depth.

The facilitation was largely independent, professional and effective. In all observed instances the lead facilitators maintained their independence and professionalism, and this led to a comfort and clarity to the conversations that followed. Only in a few instances did the evaluator see what might be called judgmental facilitation by a support facilitator, where their own views were allowed to slip into small group discussions. This did not appear to impact immediately on the discussions, but is worth bearing in mind when a delivery contractor fields a large team comprised of a variety of consortium partners: it is essential to ensure the same boundaries of independence are maintained if the data collected is to be reliable. To reiterate though, the facilitation overall was of a high standard, and this was felt by the participants too, with 90% agreeing that the facilitation was "independent, professional and effective":

"The team was great and kept things moving" Public participant round 1

"The public saw the consultants as independent of Marine Scotland, and trusted them more as a result" Marine Scotland staff

Materials used in round 1

Adequate information was provided to the participants to enable them to have the conversations asked of them. 94% of the participants felt that "enough information was provided to help me contribute" and 92% felt that "the information seemed fair and balanced". The combination of presentations, scenario handouts and verbal questions and answers seemed a comfortable mix of information provision methods.

Marine Scotland staff were also satisfied with the mix and level of information provided.

The maps and icons were a distinctive tool used in this dialogue. One Marine Scotland staff member said it was *"useful to see different tools being used with the public"*.

The maps worked well to establish a hypothetical community in the minds of participants, and therefore breaking out of a potential assumption that the dialogue was about their own community. This was a key risk of holding the events in specific coastal communities, and the hypothetical maps were very effective at managing the risk. They were professionally produced.

The success of the pre-prepared icons to represent particular social values was less clear-cut. On the one hand, the icons were visually interesting, prompted ideas that participants perhaps hadn't thought of, and built up a colourful, professional-looking and rich hypothetical community to base later discussions on. Some members of Marine Scotland supported their use as helpful, accelerating discussion. On the other hand, the icons were a distinct distraction in some groups, with participants anxious about "what does this icon mean?" or "where does this fit?" rather than feeling able to just talk about what was important to them. The icons were also fiddly, requiring the participants and facilitators to engage with some effort in the handing out, sorting, fixing and arranging of icons instead of managing the substantive conversation. More significantly, the icons risked pre-determining the public input, implying that the public should say particular things and conceive of them in particular similar way: one participant was concerned that *"we've missed all of those icons still in the box"*. This risk was identified unprompted by at least two interviewees:

"The icons were a serious distraction, and pre-determined what the public should say" OG member

There was some evidence from observations that the public did change or reframe what they wanted to say to better fit with a pre-printed icon. It is however impossible to accurately gauge the degree to which this impacted the results. Overall, the icons simply appeared unnecessary: blank cards[20] could have been used to a similar effect, without the risk of leading. The choice here is analogous to the choice about the academic framework: to start with a framework, or to start with the participants' experience? Both are valid, but a clear choice must be made with a clear rationale if the results are to be interpreted clearly.

Process used in round 2 event

The facilitation plan used is covered in section 2 above.

The series of discussions amongst the team that lead to the set-up and design of round 2 were not satisfactory for those involved. The objectives for round 2 were not clear or fully consistent with what Marine Scotland felt they were asking for, and also did not provide clarity on exactly what round 2 needed to deliver. This point is made in detail in various sections above so is not explored further here. The difficulties in agreeing what round 2 should be for meant that the provisional date had to be

[20] Blank icons were introduced after the first event to reduce the risk of leading participants. However, these were not prominent and the existence of the printed icons meant the risk of leading was still present.

postponed by three weeks, which was a sensible decision and in the end only just gave enough time to get organised for the event.

Additionally, a divergence of emphasis mentioned above between Marine Scotland and Sciencewise developed that ultimately left some Marine Scotland staff feeling that half the event was not worthwhile (the part that explored specific ways in which data should be gathered from the public).

An OG member captures the sense during the project at this point by saying in interview:

"Nobody seemed to know why round 2 existed, except the fact it was written into the contractor's tender" OG member

In the end the design chosen (as represented by the facilitation plan above) was a compromise between at least three competing priorities observable by the evaluator:

- To check and validate the findings of round 1: social values and cluster headings.
- To explore how data should be gathered and the public involved.
- To explore what the public wanted to see to feel more comfortable with offshore renewables i.e. what mitigation measures might offset the negative social impacts.

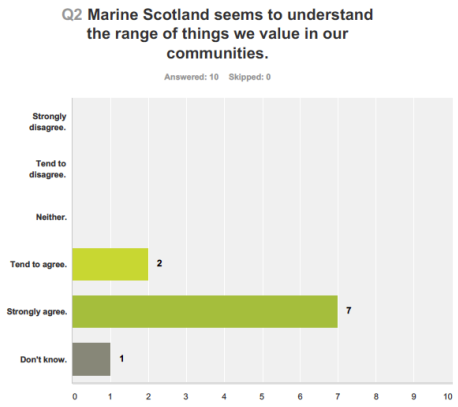
The event tried to do a little of all of these, although the third bullet above was not prioritised. There simply was not enough time to tackle each of these objectives in adequate depth to be useful or credible:

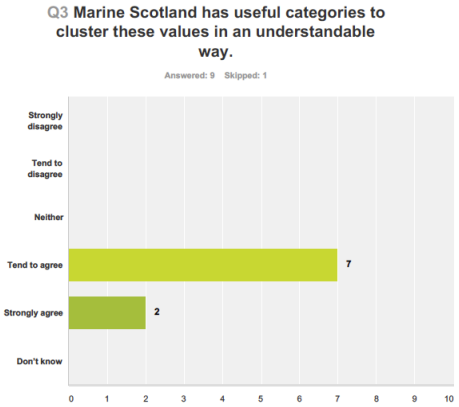
"We tried to do far too much in R2 – too compressed to be useful"
Marine Scotland

The evaluator observed round 2 and had various concerns about:

- Time constraints and the subsequent need to facilitate in a relatively heavy-handed way to keep conversations to time.
- The shallow nature of conversations and answers generated to what were complex and sometimes potentially ambiguous questions.
- The superficial and potentially misleading sense of 'validation' that round 2 participants gave to the categorization of social values identified in round 1.
- The simplistic frame of discussions around how data should be gathered, given the cognitive burden that fully understanding the SIA process and its constraints implies.
- Lack of clarity around how the input would be interpreted by Marine Scotland.

The evaluator is not convinced the output of round 2 can be relied upon to validate round 1 findings, and the results from the event should be treated with caution due to the small sample size and compression of discussions. The degree of validation of the cluster headings is also brought into question when the evaluation questionnaire feedback is considered. The two graphs below show the ten participants' responses to two questions at the end of round 2.





It is notable that the participants feel that Marine Scotland has a fairly good handle on what it considers their social values to be, but significantly less confidence that the cluster headings are useful and understandable. This data is of course relatively shallow in its depth, but it indicates caution is required even from the participants' perspective.

This view was shared by at least a few of the Marine Scotland staff (bearing in mind the range of objectives they held), and marked the point at which a couple of staff became disengaged from the project as they were disappointed with its progress.

"Round 2 just seemed to go over old ground from round 1"
Marine Scotland staff

On a more positive note regarding round 2:

- The checking of the categorisation of social values raised in round 1 did not throw up any major dissatisfaction from participants, so it might be considered to at least form a start point for categorising values in future.
- The mix of participants from different locations including Glasgow (who didn't feel unduly impacted by offshore renewables) highlighted an interesting ethical debate about where the positive and negative impacts of energy developments are felt, and how this inequity could be recognised in policy. Time constraints meant this couldn't be followed up, but it arose productively.
- The session on indicators exposed how an apparently 'positive' indicator can sometimes have negative consequences. The example observed was the Ofcom broadband connectivity scale. It is generally accepted that the better a community's broadband connectivity, the better it is for the community. However, one participant cited their village, where a new broadband connection had allowed many residents to start doing their shopping online, thereby putting their local village shop out of business. This and other apparent criticisms of potential indicators were actually invaluable feedback on the deficiencies of specific indicators, and suggest a full road test with the public would be valuable as further indicators are developed.

Data collection
In both rounds 1 and 2, the facilitation team had a laptop template pre-prepared for the note-taking. This was backed up by audio-recorders, and the note-taking captured the timing on the audio-recorders to enable quick reference to specifics if required during the analysis. The audio records were used as reference, not

transcribed or used as the main base of information.

The data collection seemed well enough staffed, and each person seemed to be operating in a consistent way. Each table discussion had two team members: one facilitating, and one note-taking. This enabled both roles to be done effectively, rather than trying to combine the two. Combining the facilitation and note-taking roles was attempted during the first round 1 event in Orkney and changed for all other events because it was deemed unworkable.

Analysis

The approach used to analyse the data is set out above. The main issue arising was the lack of open discussion and debate about the analysis framework before it was too late to change it. This was a major stumbling block for a few Marine Scotland staff, especially as the project at times claimed to test the existing Vanclay framework:

"We asked for the analysis framework several times, but never got it" Marine Scotland staff

"The analysis framework wasn't shared in advance, so people couldn't input to it: they stuck with it despite it being unclear" OG member

This project really required a clear conversation and decision about whether the existing framework of SIA categories was the start point for analysis, or whether data was being analysed from scratch from the participants' perspective. The result is a coding tree and an analysis that is somewhere in the middle of the two: the results and conclusions are hard for the SG and OG to interpret.

Reporting

The approach to reporting is set out above. The problems that arose are largely covered already in this report under other sections, but by way of summary:

- Specifications for reports were not present or not clear despite Marine Scotland having clear views about what each report should look like. This left significant ambiguities between Marine Scotland and the contractor about what was required and to what depth.
- Deadlines were missed by the contractor team. This caused delays as Marine Scotland staff had set time aside to comment on reports on specific days, and once a window of time was missed, they couldn't prioritise it for days or even weeks given other workload commitments.
- The frequent absence of the project manager at Marine Scotland meant that comments took longer than expected to return to the contractor team, and it was sometimes unclear whether comments were being compiled or not.
- The process for discussing and agreeing the final Dialogue Report was not consciously discussed and agreed. Rather than a detailed narrative report which then was a huge amount of work to alter, it might have been more effective to present a 'headline findings' report which included conclusions, for discussion with the SG and OG. A full narrative report could have been developed which built on their comments and views on conclusions.

There is general acceptance but disappointment with the report amongst most of the

Marine Scotland team, and for a couple of staff their view is less positive than this.

"The report doesn't take us any further forward"
Marine Scotland staff

"Line has been drawn too early on the path to a new methodology"
Marine Scotland staff

"The list of social values is useful, but it is still just a list" Marine Scotland staff

The final recommendations from the Dialogue Report are highlighted in the box below.

Recommendations from Dialogue Report

Develop the dialogue materials: the materials developed and used in this dialogue have the potential to be developed further and used by Marine Scotland (and others, for example in the Scottish Government) in SIAs of future sectoral marine plans and potentially plans in other sectors. The materials could usefully be developed into a standard 'toolkit' (e.g. a set of 'pieces' within a 'board game' design) that would be portable and reusable, supporting deliberative engagement with communities on social values and impacts.

Provide training for Marine Scotland personnel in undertaking / managing deliberative engagement: it is sometimes more appropriate for community engagement on proposed plans and developments to be undertaken by a third party (e.g. a contractor, a community group or a third sector organisation) for reasons of independence, credibility and impartiality. Notwithstanding this, it could be useful for Marine Scotland staff involved in planning and policy-development to be trained in deliberative engagement techniques, either to deliver engagement themselves or to manage others effectively.

Undertake social research to validate social values: the social value clusters developed through this dialogue were identified on the basis of qualitative data and analysis and are not representative of the views of the wider population (e.g. Scotland as a whole, coastal communities in Scotland etc). In order to validate and refine these value clusters, it could be beneficial to undertake a quantitative study (e.g. a face-to-face or online survey) with a representative sample of the population of interest.

Consider the implications for the private sector: the dialogue was undertaken with Marine Scotland and with SIAs of sectoral marine plans in mind. The use of social value clusters would need to be taken through from the plan level into the development of individual projects. Marine Scotland may therefore also consider the value of developing specific guidance for developers on how social values can be better incorporated within project Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

Conclusions and lessons from this section

- A Project Management Team could usefully be formed to stabilize the project management function within the commissioning body.
- Oversight Group meeting dates should be booked in as part of the overall

project plan, to ensure clarity and visibility of planning milestones.

- Oversight Group meetings need clear facilitation when conversations get difficult or complicated: either the commissioning body or contractor can do this, but the role needs actively allocating otherwise it doesn't happen.
- There should be a clear contractually-based formal warning system and termination process to guide the resolution of tensions between a commissioning body and contractor (in case other routes fail).
- Advance discussion and agreement of the analytical framework is essential before the events start, on a project which claims to test and develop an analytical framework.
- A presentation of headline findings and conclusions to the Steering Group or Oversight Group is useful and can help streamline the reporting process, before the contractor writes up a full narrative Dialogue Report.

7 - IMPACT

The key attribute evaluated here is *the extent to which the dialogue delivered the desired outcome.*

Achieving the objectives / Meeting the challenges
This project put at its core six challenges that had to be met. The Invitation to Tender for the contractors – the main document that specified the project – was built around these challenges. They are used here to evaluate how well the project performed, taken one by one:

Challenge 1: Giving the public the opportunity to participate and influence policy.
This challenge was a generic 'backdrop' challenge that the existence of the project was almost inevitably going to achieve. The project certainly did give public participants and their views a chance to be heard in policy circles regarding offshore renewables. The public participants felt able to participate, with 97% of participants saying that they were *"able to contribute my views and have my say"*. Marine Scotland staff were pleased with the level of participation from the public participants during events. The opportunity for the project to influence policy existed, even if little influence has occurred to date (discussed later). This challenge was well met.

Challenge 2: Getting the right representation.
The ITT was clear that the project should engage members of the public that would not normally get involved in consultations that Marine Scotland would run. It implied the use of a recruited sample, incentivised to ensure a cross-section of society got involved. This is what was designed into the project, and achieved largely to everyone's satisfaction. This challenge was well met by the project.

Challenge 3: Asking the right questions - Assessing Social Impact.
The project did focus on social impacts and the general challenge of how to identify, measure and assess them. To this generic extent, the challenge was met. However, the divergence of view in Marine Scotland and other stakeholders (such as Sciencewise and the OG) about which exact questions the project should focus on within SIA was problematic, leaving almost everyone with some sense of dissatisfaction with the project. At this more specific level, it is hard to say the challenge was met: there are many gaps left in what most Marine Scotland staff involved wanted the project to deliver. This is particularly pertinent given that this challenge was the most important – and hardest - challenge to get right from the point of view of the Marine Scotland staff.

Challenge 4: Meeting multiple policy objectives.
This challenge acknowledged that although social impacts were being explored in the context of offshore renewables, the findings should be transferrable to other policy areas both within marine planning (such as marine protected areas) and beyond. The project focussed ultimately on offshore renewables alone and did not attempt to explore other areas to allow a comparison. This was a conscious choice due to budget limitations: it was felt better to focus efforts on one area than spread the budget too thinly. The Dialogue Report does not discuss the transferability of the findings to other policy areas beyond offshore renewables. The challenge cannot really be considered to have been consciously met by the project, although it is true that many will feel the results have relevance in other policy areas. Equally, it does not cause concern amongst interviewees that the project did not focus more on this.

Challenge 5: Up-skilling Marine Scotland staff.

The ITT explained that the project also aimed to build the skills of Marine Scotland staff *"in consultation process design, facilitation and collaborative negotiation"*. At the start of the project this was envisaged by the contractors – and approved by the tender assessment panel – as a training course for staff. The course was to be run by the contractors and built around a mixture of theory and practical exercises designed in the light of the upcoming public dialogue. Over time, it was decided that the events were the main priority and the budget from the training should be reallocated to help pay for the trial event and other costs. Everyone interviewed by the evaluator said that this had been a good choice.

The evidence is mixed regarding the extent to which Marine Scotland staff learned from the project itself, with many interviewees essentially saying *"we are already pretty good at public consultation through events such as these"*, or highlighting relatively small learning such as *"it was interesting to see new tools and materials used"*. This challenge was therefore not significantly met by the project. It is perhaps however questionable how much the challenge needed to be met in the first place: the whole team has extensive and direct experience of public consultation from previous processes and did not need up-skilling in this area, as suggested by the ITT (which focussed[21] on public consultation, not public dialogue).

The evaluator observes that in conversation, various Marine Scotland staff frequently appear to conflate 'public consultation' in a generic sense with 'public dialogue' in the specific sense of using an incentivised purposive sample to explore an issue, such as was used in this project. This subtle but important difference was perceived and well maintained by staff with a social science background, but less so by those with a policy-focussed interface with the practice of public engagement. There is the danger that some staff *feel* they know more than they do about different public engagement approaches.

Challenge 6: Interacting with other research.

This challenge aimed to ensure the project was carried out in the knowledge of other research projects that were relevant. The contractors drew from previous SIA work in the literature, and the University of Edinburgh input from its perspective of continuing to conduct associated work. Beyond this, the delivery difficulties of the project rather occupied the minds of all involved, and this challenge was not prioritised. However, the lack of continual reference to wider research projects was not raised by any interviewees as problematic.

Impacts

Impacts are covered from different perspectives: policy impacts, organisational impacts, impacts on participants, and potential future impacts.

Impacts on policy

The consensus among the SG and OG members is that there are no real changes in thinking or actions emerging as a result of this dialogue. This is for three main reasons. First, the operational difficulties in delivering the project diminished the credibility of the dialogue in the eyes of staff. Second, the project just didn't get far enough along the path to a new SIA methodology to be useful in impacting Marine Scotland's processes: *"It's a good list of impacts, but that's all: we still have to develop our whole process of SIA".* Third, it is early days for the results of the

[21] Paragraph 3.32 is the part of the ITT which explains Challenge 5 regarding Up-skilling.

dialogue: the influence of the dialogue's findings can only really be assessed when a full SIA methodology is in place and people start using it.

Impacts on organisation and individually

Over half the interviewees felt that the project had not contributed to their learning, mainly as they felt they were already experienced at public consultation and related public dialogue in previous work. They as individuals, and Marine Scotland as an organisation, were already keen and willing to engage the public and this has not been changed significantly by the dialogue. For these staff, any change was seen as *"increasing our confidence that we can do this already"*.

Others pointed to specific aspects of the public dialogue process that they had spotted as particularly interesting, new or useful, that was learning for them. These things included:

- Tools. The use of posters, maps and the concentric circles.
- Generic framing. The use of hypothetical scenarios and communities to get people talking. Some people were skeptical about this, although also saw value in it.
- Independent facilitation. The splitting of the facilitation role from the policy role was acknowledged and reflected on, either into an independent consultant (as on this project), or to a different Marine Scotland team (possible in future if budget not available).
- A recruited and incentivised sample. The cross-section of public views aired was seen as refreshing and helpful for Marine Scotland, and certainly something they could benefit from in future. *"I am convinced that we do need to engage the public in this kind of way: having a recruited sample gives a completely different perspective".*
- Trust in the public. A self-directed reminder that *"we can trust the public more to be able to get their heads around these tricky things: we should put challenging questions to them more often"*.
- Contract management. The introduction of a clear dispute resolution and termination process in contracts has already been implemented on other projects as a result of learning on this dialogue.

Impacts on participants

Participants enjoyed the dialogue. 99% were satisfied with the events overall, which indicates a very positive experience from their perspective. 91% felt that they had *"learned something new by taking part"* and 69% said that the events had *"affected my views on the topic"*. Some participants – just over a third – said that the dialogue events had even affected what they might do as a result, citing various things including *"the way I see the benefits of renewables"* and *"be more engaged with consultations in future"*.

Impacts in future

It is too early yet to firmly assess the influence a dialogue such as this has had, in particular because it is contributing to a foundation upon which much work yet has to be done to develop a full SIA methodology. As with any journey along a path, each step contributes to the overall distance travelled. Specific impacts in future might occur in the following places:

- The dialogue results will be one input to the SpORRAn[22] project, a Marine Scotland research project that includes a socio-economic strand of work. It is meeting early in 2016 so could pick up on the dialogue results.
- The dialogue results will necessarily be *"one input to another potential project that will develop an SIA methodology"*, as described by a Marine Scotland staff member, although this is not planned yet.
- If a new SIA methodology emerges in coming months or years, then it is likely that guidance for developers will also be published, setting out how Marine Scotland expects renewable developers to conduct and present SIAs at a project level (as opposed to the plan-level SIAs that Marine Scotland will need to conduct).
- Revisions to the draft Sector Marine Plans are possible given timings, although none are anticipated in the light of the dialogue results.

Tangible outputs
The dialogue process has produced a series of tangible outputs:

- Materials from dialogue events: concentric circles pictures, posters, maps, scenarios, presentations, and diagrams. These, subject to copyright ownership, could be used in other situations as appropriate.
- Framework of social values: the list of social values, clustered into headings, is the main output of the dialogue, embedded within the Dialogue Report.

Dissemination
The Dialogue Report has been circulated amongst all of the nine SG members and the five OG members, as well as a small selection of wider Marine Scotland staff that have an interest. The results of the dialogue were presented as workshop session within a conference held by Scottish Natural Heritage on 12th February 2016. It is also expected that once the Dialogue Report is finalised and published, it will be forwarded to additional Marine Scotland staff such as the Head of Marine Protected Areas.

What was valued, and cost/benefit
Despite the difficulties in the project, various aspects of the dialogue were seen as valuable by the range of people interviewed. These included:

- Engaging with a real cross-section of laypeople in Scotland. A Marine Scotland staff member spoke for most of their colleagues interviewed by saying *"Hearing from the public who don't normally get involved in our consultation events was good, as by definition we never hear from these people"*. There was the sense that this was a key success for the project.
- The independence and style of the facilitation enabled the public to feel at ease quickly, and share their views freely both positive and negative.
- The identification of social values of communities and the differences between the communities, together with better evidence to underpin them.
- The collection of data that could be analysed further in future. The evidence is qualitative and seen as largely anecdotal in places, but it is clear and

[22] SpORRAn stands for Scottish Offshore Renewable Research Framework Network, a new initiative led by Marine Scotland to coordinate research about the marine environment.

personal which is useful.

- The corroboration and confirmation of Marine Scotland's understanding of the nature and range of social impacts, and improving the evidence base of this.
- Some anecdotes from the public that staff can use to illustrate points. To cite one example, a phrase that stuck in one interviewee's mind was a member of the public saying *"I used to be a fisherman but now I'm a taxi for mechanics to the wind turbines: I take along a bucket for mussels while I'm out"*.
- Being *seen* to go to speak to the public and listen: rather than generating an SIA methodology 'in a back room' in Marine Scotland. It will boost the credibility of the resultant SIA methodology.

There were specific insights that some interviewees referred to as being valuable for them individually, even though these weren't acknowledged by more than one interviewee each:

- There was the possibility of having a champion in each community to act like a middleman between Marine Scotland and the community members, similar to a fisheries liaison officer in the fishing industry.
- It is the small communities that need to be protected from job fluctuations, whilst bigger towns or cities can cope with change better.
- There was public challenge of a Government policy that consents projects without ensuring that manufacturing jobs are at least partly ring-fenced to a geographic area.

It is not possible to definitively judge the balance between cost and benefit in the project from available data, partly because there is a range of views, partly because there is no definitive benchmark, and partly because it is too early to definitively assess impact. However, it is true to say that views are at best mixed amongst interviewees, and an opinion on the cost/benefit balance is perhaps best reflected by a selection of their quotes which illustrate the range and emphasis of view.

"The project fundamentally didn't work" Marine Scotland staff

"Quite expensive for the benefits" Marine Scotland staff

"Money should be spent on this kind of project so I won't say it shouldn't have happened, but I'm not sure it's taken us much further on" OG member

"Probably was worth it, but it did take a huge amount of money and effort" Marine Scotland staff

8 - Conclusions and Lessons

The drivers for this dialogue were clear and it was well timed to influence relevant decisions: Marine Scotland wanted to improve its process for assessing the social impacts of offshore renewables. The specific objectives of the dialogue were less clear or absent, and were not adequately clarified during the project despite there being a divergence of view amongst Marine Scotland staff, and sometimes Sciencewise, about where the emphasis of the project should be. This caused tensions and delays to sort out and reach a compromise each time it arose.

Marine Scotland supported the project well across all relevant teams, contributing a commendable effort to the work. Resourcing in terms of funding was adequate and did not unduly constrain the design or delivery. Resourcing a stable project management function was more challenging, with workload pressures, frequent illness and contractual changes disrupting the smooth running of the dialogue.

Lessons regarding Context:

- Objectives and outputs must be clearly spelled out in the initial documentation including the ITT. If not clear in the ITT they should be drafted soon after an Inception Meeting and discussed and agreed by all parties *before* the project gains further momentum.
- When major or repeated ambiguities arise about the objectives of the dialogue, progress should be halted until they are resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The benefits of doing so cannot be overestimated.
- A stable project management function in the commissioning body is essential to the smooth running of a dialogue: any threat to that stability is a threat to the success of the project and needs to be actively resolved.

The scope of the dialogue was open to input from a variety of Marine Scotland staff, and an Oversight Group of five external organisations. This gave plenty of opportunity for a diversity of perspective to inform the scope and design. In terms of the design of the dialogue, stakeholders felt an absence of 'the overall picture' of where the dialogue was heading and what it would look like, and would have appreciated an overall roadmap of the dialogue near the start, rather than tackling each round of events separately. This would have allowed more discussion about the role and profile of the academic underpinning to the work.

The number of events and locations chosen were seen as a positive aspect of the project: there were enough events, and the locations chosen were useful and meaningful within the context of qualitative work. The sample of public also satisfied stakeholders involved including Marine Scotland, in terms of the number and profile reached. Indeed, the use of a recruited incentivized sample to reach 'fresh' members of the public was seen as a particularly positive aspect of the project, enabling Marine Scotland to hear from people that would never normally attend one of their open consultation events.

Lessons regarding Scope and Design:

- Design of the overall dialogue trajectory at the start could have provided clarity to the objectives for both rounds of events, as well as a single unified picture of where the project was trying to reach.
- An internal 'trial event' can provide tangible improvements to the design and materials, as well as reassurance to everyone on the reliability of delivery.

The team at Marine Scotland involved in the project was large, with nine people inputting to discussions. This is valuable, but could have benefited from streamlining by the setting up of a Project Management Team to stabilize the project management function, in addition to the wider Steering Group. The Oversight Group added value to the key choices and commenting on the Dialogue Report, although some members found it difficult to participate with meetings organised at short notice. Clearer allocation of the facilitation role in OG meetings would at times have helped conversations be more productive.

The relationship between Marine Scotland and the delivery contractor was difficult much of the time. Problems arose around the writing of the Inception Report, with widely different expectations on both sides about what the report needed to do, at what depth, and with what academic underpinning. This tension continued throughout the project - albeit lessening during round 1 when everyone was focused positively on getting the best out of the events – and was still present at the end. Overall, Marine Scotland felt the contractor did not properly understand what they wanted out of the project, regularly missed deadlines, and weren't writing reports to the standard they expected. Overall, the contractor felt that Marine Scotland were unclear themselves about what they wanted to get out of the project, the specifications for reports were absent or unclear, and key links with Marine Scotland were often absent or intermittent due to illness and other factors. This tension reached such a level before the first event that the first event was postponed and Marine Scotland requested a 'trial event' to test the design and materials as well as gain reassurance on the ability of the team to deliver. The trial event was well-received and helpful, although did not resolve all the problems, and the first event in Orkney was in the balance right up to the night before it happened. On reflection at the end, some Marine Scotland staff felt they should have halted the project at this point.

Once the first event had been run, everyone felt committed to see the project through. The six round 1 events all went well, with all involved pleased with how they were received. The contractors prepared well, prioritised logistics and set-up appropriately. Their lead facilitation was independent, professional and effective, and contributed directly to the public quickly feeling at ease and wanting to contribute. Their note-taking was well planned and comprehensive, backed up by audio-recordings. The materials used were imaginative and professional, although the use of icons to represent social values on a map was potentially a distraction and risked leading participants to generate particular answers or restrict what they would otherwise say.

The design of round 2 was less successful. It suffered from a disagreement about the objectives and focus of the event, and ultimately tried to fit too much into the one session with depth being sacrificed for the sake of breadth in coverage. The evaluator remains unconvinced of the degree to which the round 1 findings can be considered 'validated' at this point.

Analysis of data from the workshops was conducted in detail using a software package. However, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the fact that the analysis framework was not discussed adequately in advance, so the significant choices about how existing academic frameworks could be tested (or left behind) could not be debated until it was too late. For those with social science experience, this was problematic in terms of the credibility of the work as it became 'too light touch'. For those without social science experience, the use of any academic frameworks reduced its credibility as it became 'too academic'. The contractor was

caught between a rock and a hard place in this situation: but an open discussion of the choices and their pros and cons would have brought this into the open to enable resolution.

Reporting was effective but followed a relatively drawn-out and convoluted process: although a structure for the report was agreed in advance, there was no discussion of headline findings or conclusions in advance of the contractors writing the full narrative report. This exposed the report to the risk that the conclusions were out of step with Marine Scotland's expectations, which in turn led to significant redrafting prior to finalisation.

Lessons regarding Delivery:

- A Project Management Team could usefully be formed to stabilize the project management function within the commissioning body.
- Oversight Group meeting dates should be booked in as part of the overall project plan, to ensure clarity and visibility of planning milestones.
- Oversight Group meetings need clear facilitation when conversations get difficult or complicated: either the commissioning body or contractor can do this, but the role needs actively allocating otherwise it doesn't happen.
- There should be a clear contractually-based formal warning system and termination process to guide the resolution of tensions between a commissioning body and contractor (in case other routes fail).
- Advance discussion and agreement of the analytical framework is essential before the events start, especially on a project that claims to test and develop an analytical framework.
- A presentation of headline findings and conclusions to the Steering Group or Oversight Group is useful and can help streamline the reporting process, before the contractor writes up a full narrative Dialogue Report.

The dialogue was specified in the Invitation to Tender as needing to meet six challenges. Some of these were met, and some were not. The most important challenge that was only partly met was the need to 'ask the right questions' regarding social impact. Overall the project clearly *did* explore how the public participants perceived the social impacts of offshore renewables, but there was a wide range of interpretations within Marine Scotland about which questions should have been emphasised, leading to an inherent dissatisfaction on the part of most staff involved about how far the project got.

It is too early to identify any policy-related impacts. Possible future uses of the results include that the data gathered and the initial framework of social values can act as inputs to future steps along the path towards developing an SIA methodology. The SpORRAn[23] research project could use the dialogue's data and findings in future, and from this could arise a project that develops a full SIA methodology. It is only at this point that impact of the dialogue can really be assessed, much like the utility of a foundation of a house can only be judged when the house is complete and people move in. However, the project didn't get far enough along the path to a new SIA methodology to be useful in impacting Marine Scotland's current processes: *"It's a good list of impacts, but that's all: we still have to develop our whole process of SIA".*

[23] SpORRAn stands for Scottish Offshore Renewable Research Framework Network, a new initiative led by Marine Scotland to coordinate research about the marine environment.

There has been some useful learning from the project. Some Marine Scotland staff interviewed identified specific things that had been interesting or useful for them as learning: tools and materials used, the generic framing of the workshops, use of independent facilitation, use of a recruited incentivized sample, contract management learning, and a reminder that *"the public can be trusted with tricky topics"*. However, most Marine Scotland staff interviewed felt that they were already able to deliver this kind of work as an organisation, so the dialogue had not contributed tangibly to their learning although it might have boosted their confidence.

Participants enjoyed the dialogue, with a 99% satisfaction rate and 91% *"learning something new by taking part".*

Various aspects of the dialogue were seen as valuable for policy makers in Marine Scotland, including: the use of a recruited incentivized sample as a way of reaching people who wouldn't normally attend consultation events, use of independent facilitators, collection of data on social impacts in communities, confirmation of Marine Scotland's understanding of social impacts, a range of anecdotes from the public that illustrate the diversity of social impacts, and *demonstrating* that Marine Scotland has explored this area from the public's perspective.

It is not possible to definitively judge the balance between cost and benefit in the project from available data, but it is true to say that views are at best mixed amongst interviewees.

Overall, some useful data was gathered and the initial set of workshops with the public worked well. However, the lack of clarity about objectives and outputs, and continuous problems with project management and delivery, significantly reduced the achievements and impacts of the project.

The evaluator at 3KQ thanks everyone who contributed their views and time to the evaluation: it would not be possible without their generous and honest participation.

END

Appendix 1 – Recruitment Screener

Recruitment questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is ... We are looking for members of the public to participate in a conversation about the possible impacts of generating renewable energy in the seas around Scotland. The purpose of the public dialogue is to understand what the Scottish people think about the social impacts of offshore renewable energy developments like wind, wave or tidal energy and how members of the public would like to be involved in discussing these issues with Marine Scotland in the future. As part of this work Marine Scotland and Sciencewise are running group discussions with local people in a number of localities in Scotland.

Just a bit of background, you may have heard of Marine Scotland, they are responsible for planning and managing Scotland's seas and carry out consultations to get the views of organisations and members of the public on its proposals. They want to improve the way that they take account of the potential impacts of their work on people's lives so that their decisions reflect what is important for local people and communities.

Your involvement would include participating in a public dialogue workshop, to take place in [venue] on [date] with 15 participants / members of the public. A small number of specialists from Marine Scotland and experts would also attend / participate to provide information and background for the discussion. The event is expected to last a total of 6 hours, including breaks for coffee and lunch, which we will be providing. As a thank you for your time a £75 cash incentive will be provided upon completion.

This Public Dialogue will offer valuable input in developing an understanding of the hopes and concerns of local communities in Scotland with regards to the development of offshore renewable energy. Would you be interested in participating?

Thank you. May I please ask a few questions to confirm your eligibility for this dialogue?

1. Are you a resident of Orkney?
   Yes
   No - ***THANK and close***

2. Have you, in the last 6 months, participated in any consultation about offshore renewables?
   Yes ***GO TO Q3***
   No ***GO TO Q4***

3. ***ASK IF Q2=YES*** Have you submitted a response individually or as part of an organisation (e.g NGOs, local /community groups)?
   Individually
   As part of an organisation - ***THANK and close***

4. Are you part of any organisation (e.g. NGOs, local /community groups) that is actively involved / interested in the area of renewable energy?
   Yes
   No
   Unsure / Don't know

Interviewer Note
Despite not qualifying for this workshop if respondent is still interested please ask them to email the Marine Scotland offshore Renewable Energy team: OffshoreRenewableEnergy@scotland.gsi.gov.uk for further details

5. Interviewer to record sex of respondent:
   MALE FEMALE

6. Which of the following age categories do you belong in:
   15 years old or younger - ***THANK and close***
   16-24 years old
   25-34 years old
   35-44 years old
   45-54 years old
   55-64 years old
   65-74 years old
   75 years or older
   Prefer not to answer

7. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?
   A. White
      Scottish
      Other British
      Irish
      Gypsy / Traveller
      Polish
      Other white ethnic group
   B. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
   C. Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British
      Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British
      Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British
      Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British
      Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British
      Other
   D. African
      African, African Scottish or African British
      Other
   E. Caribbean or Black
      Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British
      Black, Black Scottish or Black British
      Other
   F. Other ethnic group
      Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British
      Other

8. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
   Employed
   Self-Employed or freelance
   Retired
   Student
   Unemployed
   Long-term sick or disabled
   Other
   Prefer not to answer

9. **ASK IF Q8= EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED FREELANCE** Which sector / industry are you currently employed in?

10. Which of the following best describes the highest qualification you have attained or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*
    Grade, Standard Grade, Access 3 Cluster, Intermediate 1 or 2, GCSE, CSE, Senior Certificate or equivalent
    SCE Higher Grade, Higher, Advanced Higher, CSYS, A Level, AS Level, Advanced Senior Certificate or equivalent
    GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate, SVQ level 1 or 2, SCOTVEC Module, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent
    GSVQ Advanced, SVQ level 3, ONC, OND, SCOTVEC National Diploma, City and Guilds Advanced Craft or equivalent
    HNC, HND, SVQ level 4 or equivalent
    Degree, Postgraduate qualifications, Masters, PhD, SVQ level 5 or equivalent
    Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy)
    No qualifications
    Other qualifications
    Prefer not to answer

Interviewer Note: **Check available quotas and if appropriate recruit for dialogue group.**

- Thank you for your time. Unfortunately we can't interview you on this occasion.

OR

- Thank you for time. I can confirm you are eligible to participate in this public dialogue. Can I please record your contact details so that we may contact you in the near future to confirm the details of the time and venue of the meeting?

Record participant contact details
Name:
Last Name:
Telephone no:
Email Add

Appendix 2 – Profile of public participation

This data is duplicated from the Dialogue Report, appendix 2.

Kirkwall (Total N° participants = 15)

Gender	Male			Female		
	6			9		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	1	2	2	4	4	2
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	12		2	0	1	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	1		6	6	2	

Islay* (Total N° participants = 13)

Gender	Male			Female		
	8			5		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	1	3	2	1	4	1
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	10		1	0	1	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	8		2	2	1	

*One female participant was a last minute recruit and details were not provided.

Helmsdale (Total N° participants = 15)

Gender	Male			Female		
	8			7		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	4	2	3	4	3	3
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	9		2	1	3	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	8		4	3	0	

Stranraer* (Total N° participants = 18)

Gender	Male			Female		
	9			9		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	5	2	4	2	3	2
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	7		6	2	3	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	-		-	-	18	

*The recruiter did not provide information on the educational qualifications of the Stranraer participants

St Andrews* (Total N° participants = 17)

Gender	Male			Female		
	7			10		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	2	3	3	4	2	3
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	13		0	1	3	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	-		-	-	17	

*The recruiter did not provide information on the educational qualifications of the St Andrews participants

Glasgow (Total N° participants = 17)

Gender	Male			Female		
	8			9		
Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	4	2	5	2	2	2
Employment status	Employed		Unemployed	Student	Retired	
	14		0	2	1	
Educational level achieved	Primary/Secondary		Further	University	Not available	
	7		8	2	0	

Appendix 3 – Participant evaluation data from Round 1

Data overleaf. Combined evaluation data from all six round 1 events. 95 participants.

Appendix 4 – Participant evaluation data from Round 2

Data overleaf. Evaluation data from the single round 2 event. 10 participants.