

15/10/15 - Obtaining Views

By Jerry Barnes - WP C Stakeholder Participation



Between May and September 2015, we have undertaken a series of 15 interviews. Key organisations and their representatives, from both the public, private sectors and NGOs were invited to partake in semi-structured interviews.

The same series of 12 questions was asked to the participants regardless of who they were and what they represented. The fruitful exercise provided us with key information to progress the project.

The one-on-one interviews enabled us to collect a wealth of primary data as well as a wide range of opinions. It would have been easy to assume that because participants could be roughly split into three groups (environmental, economic and social), three distinct philosophies would emerge from the interview process. Should it be the protection and enhancement of marine environment? Should we facilitate the use of marine resources? Or should social benefits be regarded as the key to good marine planning?

This is not, in any way, a new debate. This is sustainable development or the tricky balance of the environmental, social and economic objectives for a better, greener society. What is new on the other hand, is that we are now dealing with an environment that we do not know fully. The spectacular discovery of cold-water coral along the Porcupine Bank Canyon in June 2015 reminds us how little we know about our marine environment. So many unknowns in a dynamic and fluid environment will make decision-making difficult and we should strive to work collectively in a coordinated and rational framework where all demands and needs can be balanced.

Those interviewed indicated a broad acceptance that marine spatial planning was a good tool with which to manage conflicting demands in the marine environment.

We have now completed the Stakeholder Participation package and would like to take the opportunity to thank all the interviewees who kindly gave their time and shared their opinions with the Research Team.

We will keep you updated as the project progresses, so please watch this space and if you have any comments get in touch at info@mspframework.com