



## About the MMO

The MMO was established by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA). We are a non-departmental public body delivering the Government's priorities for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas.

We deliver a range of functions for government departments including the Department for Energy and Climate Change, Department for Transport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which is our lead sponsor. We also work in collaboration with a wide range of partners, including businesses, industry representatives and environmental groups.

Our principal activities lie in:

- marine licensing
- marine planning
- marine conservation and enforcement
- regulating the fishing industry, fisheries management, compliance and enforcement; and
- administering European funding to the fishing industry and coastal communities.

## Marine licensing

Our mission is to enable sustainable development in the marine area. As part of this we are responsible for regulating the depositing or removal of substances or objects from the seabed or elsewhere in tidal waters. This means that developers seeking to carry out various activities in the marine area must first apply to the MMO for approval. A wide range of activities may require such consent. This can be anything from dredging and port construction to offshore renewable energy projects and burials at sea.

## Better regulation

A top priority for the MMO is supporting the Government's ambitions in enabling sustainable growth. By following the principles of better regulation and working constructively with other regulators, stakeholders and businesses, we cut red tape and reduce our impact on industry.

Since the MMO vested we have continued to develop licensing systems and processes, resulting in a quicker turnaround and improved experience for applicants. This began with the introduction of a new streamlined licensing system in April 2011 which removed the need to apply for multiple permissions from different public bodies.

## Performance improvements

We publish our marine licensing performance statistics on our website (<http://bit.ly/1003g1e>).

We are now determining more marine licensing applications within our 13 week target. Between October to December 2013 we determined 87% of licensing applications within 13 weeks. This is

up from 76% for the 2012/13 financial year. By comparison, prior to the new streamlined licensing system which came into effect in April 2011 66% of applications were determined in 13 weeks during 2009/10 and 63% in 2010/11.

In total 443 projects were determined during the last financial year. This represents a 40% increase on the previous year.

### Exemptions from licensing

In April 2013 legislation was amended to exempt certain small-scale activities from licensing altogether. This means activities including sediment and other scientific sampling, removal of objects accidentally deposited on the seabed, removal of marine mammal carcasses and small-scale maintenance dredging, may no longer require consent from the MMO. (More information <http://bit.ly/Z6dlUt>.)

### Fast-track system

A fast-track system is now being used to process licence applications for some activities that have been identified as being low risk. The range of projects included in this scheme was extended from 6 April 2014 and covers:

- burials at sea
- certain maintenance activities
- deposit and removal of marker buoys and marker posts
- minor removals
- certain non-navigational dredging

As long as the project meets eligibility criteria, standard licence conditions have been included to replace consultation with statutory advisors. This reduces the time and resources required to process the application. (More information <http://bit.ly/1dtiT7H>.)

### Revised fees and charges

We have listened to the concerns of small businesses about the disproportionate cost of an application to the capital cost of their activity. We have obtained agreement from Cabinet Office and Treasury to enable us to subsidise 50% of the cost of licensing smaller activities.

On 6 April 2014 we revised our charging structure into clear bands of fixed ceiling costs for smaller standardised marine activities, and fixed hourly charges for more complex and time consuming activities. The new fees allow the MMO to recover 96% of costs and subsidise the remaining 4% to limit increases in fees for smaller projects. (More information <http://bit.ly/Wz7HJn>.)

Application type (<total project cost)	Maximum Fee ceiling
Fast track	Max fee £175
Routine <£5,000	Max fee £450
Routine <£20,000	Max fee £700
Routine <£50,000	Max fee £1400
Routine <£200,000	Max fee £2200
Routine <£1M	Max fee £2700

### Involving businesses in our work and decisions

We are committed to involving stakeholders in decision making and policy setting. Developments such as the fast-track system and marine planning are examples of this. We also hold bi-monthly customer service discussions with a customer insight group, using feedback from this to help shape our work.

The MMO's approach to customer feedback was highlighted as a positive example in the Government's Focus on Enforcement review (<http://bit.ly/1k6MQxY>).

The MMO's SFG meets quarterly and has 22 member organisations who between them annually contribute over £14 billion to the UK economy. Membership of the SFG gives stakeholders the inside track to our decision-making. It has really challenged our thinking and helped us understand the impact of our decision making.

Since 2011 the group has met 14 times. This represents over 50 hours of direct engagement with key stakeholders through this one group alone.

### Industry Interchange

The findings of the Government's review of the implementation of the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive in England included recommendations for an industry interchange programme to improve partnership working between businesses, statutory nature conservation bodies and regulators. The MMO was acknowledged in the report as already having started this work (<http://bit.ly/QKLf4g>).

Interchange activities have so far happened between the MMO and Lafarge Tarmac, Dong Energy, Peel Ports and Cemex.

### Responding to Government regulatory reviews

In 2012 the Better Regulation Executive led a Focus on Enforcement (FoE) Review of Coastal Projects and Investment. As part of the initiative we worked with businesses and the relevant trade and industry bodies to see what concerns business had with the way we regulated coastal activities and how we could reduce our impact on those businesses. This work sat alongside the Cabinet Office "Red Tape Challenge" which sought to reduce red tape for business. (More information [bit.ly/1gPQEMz](http://bit.ly/1gPQEMz))

### The Coastal Concordat

Defra's response to the FoE report included a commitment to lead on rapid agreement and conclusion of a Coastal Concordat to enable sustainable coastal development in England.

The Concordat aims to improve co-ordination between regulators. It is intended to apply to the consenting of coastal developments in England where several bodies have a regulatory function, and will form the basis of individual agreements between signatories and coastal Local Planning Authorities.

<b>SFG member organisations</b>	
<b>The UK Chamber of Shipping</b>	<b>The British Marine Federation</b>
The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	The Local Government Association's Coastal Special Interest Group
The RSPB	Subsea Cables UK
The Association of IFCAs	the Shellfish Association of Great Britain
The Royal Yachting Association	The Angling Trust
The Crown Estate	Oil and Gas UK
The Wildlife Trusts	Renewable UK
The UK Major Ports Group	Wildlife and Countryside Link
The National Trust	WWF
British Ports Association	The Marine Conservation Society
British Marine Aggregates Producers Association	the Seabed User and Developer Group

It sets out key principles which marine regulators and advisors and estuarine/coastal planning authorities will follow when working together on such projects. Key principles include reducing unnecessary regulatory duplication, providing better sign-posting, streamlining assessments and increasing transparency and consistency of advice.

The Concordat is a significant part of the MMO's work to make sure our processes are as streamlined and efficient as possible so that we are easy to do business with. It has also been adopted by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Department for Transport, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association's Coastal Special Interest Group, representing authorities in estuarine and coastal areas, and National Parks England.

## Marine planning

Another area of the MMO's work is also seeking to facilitate appropriate development in the marine area. Through a system of marine plans, with a total of 11 covering English seas by 2021, developers ought to benefit from a quicker and simpler service when considering, planning and delivering their activities in the marine area.

The MMO is working closely with stakeholders on the marine plans which will interpret and present at a sub-national level the policies within the government's Marine Policy Statement (MPS). These plans will become the main decision-making tool for licensing decisions, as they will give clear direction as to the nature of activities that are possible or appropriate in a given location.

The plans will help clarify to developers, at an early stage, where they might best invest in new activities in the marine area. For example, some areas will be better suited to particular activities, taking into account the environmental and socio-economic impacts. Some areas may also have characteristics that would allow more than one activity to take place in the same area.

The first two marine plans cover the East coast - from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe inshore and further offshore too, and were adopted in April 2014. The MMO has already started planning for the next two areas, in the South of England, with plans anticipated to be adopted there in 2015.

## Contacts

Marine regulation and licensing has been devolved in Scottish inshore and offshore waters to the Scottish Executive, in Northern Ireland's waters to the Northern Ireland Executive and in Welsh inshore waters to Welsh ministers.

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