
Information for marine environment protection and management: getting it and using it (a short tutorial)

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Introduction

There is no shortage of information to assist in marine environment protection and management. The problem is:

1. you have to find it;
2. you have to have the skill to use it competently, and
3. it is incomplete and will not therefore provide a definitive answer to many questions.

Whatever you do, don't re-invent information that is already available.

But do keep on improving it.

The below are the sorts of information you should be looking for.

Understanding the issues

The following questions (about biology) are the ones that environmental advisors should be able to answer.

1. What's where, how much is there and how does it change?
2. What do I call them (species and biotopes)?
3. What is 'important' (for marine natural heritage)?
4. What is 'important' (socio-culturally)?
5. What is 'important' (economically)?
6. How do I assess 'quality'?
7. How do I identify 'sensitivity'?
8. How do I identify change that 'matters'?
9. How do I decide what is relevant research to undertake (to inform environmental protection and management)?
10. How do I take account of ecosystem structure and functioning and associated processes?

Bringing information together

1. How do I make decisions?
2. How do I judge feasibility?
3. How do I judge success?

There are structures and criteria available to process your information to support decision-making. They are mentioned in the paper and emphasis is given to the DPSIR (Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact, Response) approach and to how to take information through an assessment of sensitivity, then importance to decide 'will it matter' in relation to developments and accidents.

The full paper is on:

http://www.marbef.org/modules.php?name=Downloads&d_op=viewdownload&cid=145