

IFCA vision and Success Criteria

Vision:

"Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry."

Success Criterion 1:

IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

Definition:

IFCAs will be visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users; and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.
- The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published.
- The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level
- The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible.

Indicators

- **SC1A:** The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year
- **SC1B:** The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.
- **SC1C:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.
- **SC1D:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.
- **SC1E:** The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.
- **SC1F:** By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.

IFCA self-assessment – please make sure you have explained how your IFCA has addressed all of the outcomes in Success Criteria 1, evidencing your answers with reference to the relevant indicators.

Communication strategy

A specific section of each year's KEIFCA annual plan and subsequent report identifies the key actions, and outputs needed for KEIFCA to meet success criteria 1, and as such lays out KEIFCA's annual communication plan. Whilst KEIFCA have agreed an overarching communication strategy document most of the Authorities focus is on the annual communication plan and how it identifies and delivers the key structures/actions that are needed to facilitate effective communication. An important part of the plan has been the use of minimum size stickers, posters and information leaflets which have been distributed by officers whilst on patrol or at public events like angling completions or at harbour festivals (Whitstable, Leigh, Harwich etc.) and help raise awareness of KEIFCA and important legislation (e.g. over 5,000 stickers distributed since 2015).

KEIFCA also have worked hard to communicate and involve the wider community, and in partnership with local schools and colleges have developed an education pack and 'Learning Zone' section of the website that helps introduce children to the coastal waters off Kent and Essex and their habitats and species. The resources are aimed at key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils within the science national curriculum and look at basic identification of species and the habitat in which they live, marine food webs and caring for the coastal environment.

Website, social media and stakeholder databases

In 2015 the KEIFCA website had a major refresh and upgrade and moved to a question led menu system with an infographic style to help stakeholders more easily navigate around the site. The website is a key part of the communication plan and is regularly updated with a news feed on the home page.

KEIFCA publishes its quarterly meeting papers on its website (a week prior to each meeting) and promotes them with an e-bulletin (features 3 front page stories with pictures, the agenda of the upcoming meeting and a brief guide to items discussed in the previous meeting). The e-bulletin (over 350 subscribers) helps create a regular link to stakeholders and encourages involvement by referring recipients to the website, but as significantly by encouraging attendance at the Authority meeting. The e-bulletin also helps support and regularly update our stakeholder database (which underwent a review in 2017 to make it compatible with the new General Data Protection Regulations). Since 2016 KEIFCA has also used twitter to promote and support key communication themes as well as highlight enforcement activities and specific KEIFCA projects.

National engagement and co-operation

KEIFCA contribute an annual £13,000 to the AIFCA and have strongly supported the Association, with Cllr John Lamb, (Chairman of KEIFCA) acting as a Chairman for the Association for 7 years (2011 – April 2018). The KEIFCA chief officer is also a director of the Association and has taken an active role in helping to write and develop both the 2017/18 AIFCA annual plan and 2017-20 AIFCA Strategic Plan.

Working with the AIFCA, KEIFCA also strongly supports the IFCA national officer groups and has provided the chair of COG for 1 year (prior to this the vice-chair for 2 years), the secretary of NIMEG for 4 years, and the secretary of TAG for 3 years.

Memoranda of Understanding/Memoranda of Agreement

KEIFCA participates in four Memoranda of Understanding with the MMO, CEFAS, Natural England and the Environment Agency through its national Association of IFCA. These documents enshrine the principles of joint working with four key organisations. In 2017 the MoU between the IFCA/MMO was also reviewed and updated and a series of high-level MMO board/ IFCA chiefs and chairs meetings were held which explored new potential relationships and structures between the organisations.

Partnerships and joint working

Over the last 4 years a number of initiatives and joint projects have helped develop a fundamentally closer working relationship between the MMO and KEIFCA (MMO/ IFCA intel project, shared 2-week TCG meetings, a joint officer training programme, review of co-location of offices, specific MMO/IFCA senior management meetings reviewing progress on joint work etc).

KEIFCA are also fortunate to have considerable Border Force marine assets operating alongside us in the English Channel and have developed an effective working relationship with officers of both organisations patrolling on each other's vessels. In addition to enhancing officer safety and effectiveness through the sharing of information, this working relationship has enabled IFCA to task Border Force vessels, which are already patrolling our coastline. Two one-month long taskings have been accepted by Border Force for the monitoring of fishing activity within specific Marine Protected Areas (over 120 hrs patrol time).

SC1 Case study: Working with the community - Medway No-take zone

On 22nd June 2016 KEIFCA made a byelaw that created the UK's largest no-take zone (12.1km²). The project began during a meeting with the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery (ROFF), the guild holding rights to commercial fishing in the River Medway. Officers gave a presentation explaining the importance of estuaries for juvenile fishes and the benefits of protecting vital habitats. Following the meeting, KEIFCA and ROFF negotiated an area for designation that ROFF closed to commercial fishing under their own legislation. KEIFCA then began a byelaw process in order to strengthen this across all sectors and gear types.

During the byelaw pre-consultation, officers visited sea angling shops in the Medway Towns to gather information on how and where recreational anglers use the river, and to notify them of the designation to address any initial concerns. Posters and information were left with shops to advertise the proposed byelaw and invite members of the public to a pre-consultation meeting. Officers also worked with local fishermen to make a short film promoting the site (<https://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk/im-interested-in/mpas/medway-nursery-area/>).

Following formal consultation, KEIFCA continued to promote the project and visited local schools, libraries and community groups and taught them about the fish that are present in the Medway Estuary, and why it is important to protect the habitats they use. KEIFCA also visited Defra head office with partners from the EA, Institute of Fisheries Management and ROFF to host an afternoon of activities and demonstrations to learn about the IFCA's role and the River Medway Nursery Area

Officers then worked with Medway Council to promote the site at the Medway River Festival (July 2016). Kent & Essex IFCA hosted stalls with games and information to encourage the public to find out more about how important the River Medway is to juvenile fishes. Over 3,000 wooden fish were decorated by the public and partner organisations to promote the specific fish that live in the river. These were displayed along the riverfront to create a high-impact art piece that symbolised the fish returned to the river with its protection.

Success Criterion 2:

IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

Definition:

The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.
- The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations
- The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.
- Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity

Indicators

- **SC2A:** The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year
- **SC2B:** The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures
- **SC2C:** The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.
- **SC2D:** The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.
- **SC2E:** The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.
- **SC2F:** Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development

IFCA self-assessment – please make sure you have explained how your IFCA has addressed all of the outcomes in Success Criteria 2, evidencing your answers with reference to the relevant indicators

Enforcement planning, policy and training

KEIFCA have continued to develop its risk enforcement register and has moved from a detailed 50+ page stock by stock analysis to a more straight-forward month by month analysis of the top 5 enforcement risks that forms part of the annual enforcement plan. Combining this with the joint MMO/IFCA intelligence system and running bi-weekly Tasking and Co-ordination Group meetings has been the main focus of a new post within the organisation; the lead compliance officer.

Underpinning these developments, the KEIFCA Compliance and Enforcement Strategy lays out the KEIFCA approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences. Quarterly enforcement update reports are submitted as part of the Authority quarterly papers. This information is made available in order to help to ensure that our enforcement approach is widely understood, fair and proportionate.

All enforcement officers adhere to the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs and our warranted officers have undertaken both nationally delivered training as well as bespoke courses for this IFCA. There is an annual appraisal system in place for all IFCA officers. In addition, KEIFCA has taken on a greater lead over the last 2 years in helping run the national training course and contributing significantly to the joint MMO/IFCA accredited training programme.

National reporting and monitoring

KEIFCA compile and report its enforcement outputs annually within its annual reports, as well as on its website and submits them in a standard format to the national Association of IFCA's and to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG). KEIFCA takes an active role in NIMEG (provided the secretary for the last 4 years) and it is through NIMEG that officers have worked to identify best practice and standardise enforcement activity and reporting. This has included reviewing and standardising the MG forms used for case file building across both IFCA's and MMO, the introduction of standardised IFCA search forms, development of a standardised inspection policy for fishing gear at sea and playing central role in the introduction of the national intelligence system.

Enforcement activity - Operations

From 1 April 2014 to the end of March 2018, our officers conducted 673 boardings & inspections of vessels at sea which included fixed gear inspections. A total of 440 port visits including the inspection of vessels, fishing gear and premises were undertaken which included 1,916 fish and shellfish landing inspections; a total of 3,029 compliance inspections over the four years. This enforcement activity resulted in 204 investigations into serious offences, leading to 90 verbal warnings, 55 written warnings, 91 sets of gear seized (nets, lobster and whelk pots), 2 formal Cautions, 9 Financial Administrative Penalties (FAP) and 2 individuals were successfully prosecuted in court.

Since the introduction of byelaws relating to the management of MPA designations, the work of 'Blue Jacket' (our fast RIB) has increased significantly. In response to this the Authority decided to employ a designated RIB coxswain who could maximise the ability of 'Blue Jacket' and lead on MPA compliance. This has had a positive impact on the compliance in MPAs especially the area covered by the Essex Estuaries Bottom Trawling (Prohibited Area) Byelaw.

SC2 case study: Using technology to help enforcement - VMS+ monitoring of cockle fishery

All licenced vessels in the TECFO were required to have VMS+ during the 2015 cockle season under EU law, and transmit locational and vessel speed data every 2 hours. Unfortunately, this temporal resolution was not sufficient to examine fishing activity within the cockle fishery, so the frequency of data transmission was increased at the request of KEIFCA to one report every 10 minutes. Data was sent from vessels using satellite instead of GPRS signal to ensure that data transmission was more reliable.

Live access to the system for enforcement officers enabled monitoring to take place in the office, on board enforcement vessels and along the shore by officers in ports waiting to land vessels. Officers found this a useful enforcement tool allowing for more efficient use of officer time and enforcement resources. Following the end of the fishery, analysis of this data showed good correlation between the VMS track data, information on landing time and areas fished submitted by the fishermen on the TECFO cockle line, sightings of fishing vessels by the KEIFCA patrol vessels at sea and inspections made by KEIFCA officers at ports.

Vessel tracks and subsequently an estimated footprint of the fishery was created using QGIS from the data, providing the most accurate view of the fishery on the fishing grounds to date. Although there were some limitations to the VMS+ data from 2015, these have been reviewed and alterations made for the continued use of VMS+ in the future by KEIFCA.

Success Criterion 3:

IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts

Definition:

The IFCAs were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should make a contribution to sustainable development.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions
- The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.
- The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development.

Indicators

- **SC3A:** The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority
- **SC3B:** The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website
- **SC3C:** Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of effectiveness of the intervention
- **SC3D:** The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website, and reviewed by 31 March each year
- **SC3E:** New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales
- **SC3F:** The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.
- **SC3G:** Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.

IFCA self-assessment – please make sure you have explained how your IFCA has addressed all of the outcomes in Success Criteria 3, evidencing your answers with reference to the relevant indicators

As with reporting on previous Success Criteria, KEIFCA assign a specific plan to identify the main actions that need to be taken during that financial year, thus the annual reports reflect the steps taken to meet the Success Criteria 3 Outcomes and indicators. In addition, quarterly meeting papers reflect the detailed quarterly progress on MPA assessments and the development and application of management measures. The statutory byelaw making process and the associated impact assessments also provide topic specific assessments reviewing the appropriateness of existing measures, evaluating different management options and develop and implementing proportionate marine management solutions.

MPA management

The end of 2016 saw the culmination of the 3½ year long Defra revised approach to fisheries in European Marine Sites as well as the deadline for Tranche 1 Marine Conservation Zone management measures. Delivering this work stream was exceptionally challenging as many of the management tools and measures were being applied for the first time in a fisheries context.

Since the beginning of the project the byelaw developed to ban the use of bottom-towed gear on key sensitive features/ areas of SAC and MCZ sites has been updated three times and now protects chalk reef in Thanet SAC, seagrass in Essex Estuaries SAC, Ross worm and honeycomb reefs among others in Folkestone Pomerania MCZ as well as key areas of sandbank in Margate and Longsands SAC. Other more specific MPA byelaws have also been developed including the River Medway Nursery Area byelaw and the Essex Estuaries Bottom Trawling (Prohibited Areas) byelaw protected key areas of mud habitat in Essex Estuaries SAC.

In conjunction with this KEIFCA working with Natural England to undertake the required tests of likely significance (366) and appropriate assessments (26). Although this is not the end of the process with the likelihood of new T3 MCZ sites, reviewing HRAs and most importantly working with the community to enforce the byelaws, significant progress has been made in just over 3½ years by KEIFCA staff, members and a wide range of stakeholders.

Fisheries management

KEIFCA have worked with partners and stakeholders to develop a short list of keys 18 fin-fish and shellfish species that KEIFCA management focuses on (KEIFCA long term strategy). Developing a short list has helped officers and the Authority prioritise and focus their work. Within this framework there are a range of regional shellfish fisheries that KEIFCA naturally leads on (cockles, whelks, native oysters, mussels etc.) and has developed detailed management plans and legislation over time.

Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery management

An important strand of KEIFCA work has been the continued management of the Thames cockle fishery, one of the largest cockle fisheries in Europe, and the major part of which is managed under a Regulating Order.

It is assumed that environmental conditions are by far the largest factor governing recruitment. This makes long-term management difficult with high dependence on continued new recruitment into the fishery. For this reason, it is vital, for the sustainable management of the fishery, to assess the spawning stock on an annual basis. The management of the cockle stocks aims to

regulate exploitation of the stock and maintain a core spawning biomass of adult cockles.

To achieve this, KEIFCA officers survey cockle stocks twice a year on land and at sea to assess their density and size distribution. Quad bikes are used to carry out the shore surveys and samples are collected using a 0.1m² quadrat and each sample is sieved, and the cockles separated into different year classes, identified by the number of growth rings visible on the outside of the shell. Boat surveys are carried out using grab samples on 'Tamesis' during periods of high tide. In total over 1,500 samples are taken annually covering an area of 218km². The results of the surveys are used to examine the distribution and density of cockles, and to produce estimated values of population size. (Video of surveys <https://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk/about-us/media/>)

Based on the survey results an annual meeting is held with the licence holders and a package of management measures discussed (Total Allowable Catch for the fishery, the number and distribution of the trips, opened and closed areas and the duration of the fishery). The survey results, proposed management measures, HRA assessment and letters from the industry are then discussed at the May Authority meeting, where the annual management is agreed. Cockles outside the regulating order are managed in a similar way using a permit byelaw.

Native oyster management in Essex - Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone Native Oyster Flexible Permit Byelaw

The harvesting of native oysters is an iconic local industry in Essex, however the Essex Estuaries have a number of international MPA designations, protecting the underlying seabed habitats as well as the birds that use the site. Since being designated in 2013, the management of the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ site (designated to protect native oyster species and habitat) site has posed significant unique challenges due to its complexity.

Over the course of five years, between 2013 and 2018, KEIFCA has worked with all of the stakeholders to develop a flexible and community lead management system, which respects the conservation objectives of the designated MCZ, but at the same time provides a structure where native oysters can continue to be harvested by oystermen, as they have been for generations on the Essex coast. This ambitious aim resulted in the largest, and longest, byelaw consultation process in the history of KEIFCA; including a series of seven meetings between February 2017 and March 2018, four Authority meetings and two written consultations. Balancing these needs has been challenging, however significant engagement has developed a management plan, process and a new byelaw that includes the knowledge of stakeholders and sets out a framework where by sustainable exploitation can take place once the native oysters have recovered.

SC3 case study: Example of using a flexible byelaw to respond to a changing stock

Since the introduction of the KEIFCA Whelk Fishery Permit Byelaw in 2011, the whelk fishery in Kent and Essex has burgeoned and is now one of the most important fisheries in the district with about 30 permit holders a year and a first sale value of £1-1.5 M.

Using evidence gathered by working with the local industry, CEFAS and universities (see Success criteria 5) the flexible nature of the byelaw has allowed the Authority, following a review, to respond to new whelk stock information and respond by increasing the riddle gap for sorting retainable whelks, from 22mm spacing between riddle bars to 25mm as well as increase the size and number of escape holes. This amendment helps safeguard future stocks by reducing the number of immature whelks being retained and thereby increasing the rate of successful reproduction within a stock. Although this is part of KEIFCA's everyday work it is a

valuable example of flexible local legislation responding to changing stocks and working to ensure a sustainable long-term fishery.

Draft

Success Criterion 4:

IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year.
- Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed.
- The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders.
- IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972

Indicators

- **SC4A:** The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- **SC4B:** After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- **SC4C:** IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.
- **SC4D:** An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.
- **SC4E:** The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.

IFCA self-assessment – please make sure you have explained how your IFCA has addressed all of the outcomes in Success Criteria 4, evidencing your answers with reference to the relevant indicators

KEIFCA has adopted a number of working documents, which are regularly reviewed, to aid the smooth and transparent working of the Authority (i.e. Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, register of members' interests and a policy on Members' Allowances/Expenses). KEIFCA is subject to an annual internal audit by Kent County Council, with the subsequent report presented to the Authority. As well as this, KEIFCA uses Kent County Council for legal, constitutional, financial and HR support, as well as one-off support on procurement and other key activities.

IFCA members attend the quarterly IFCA meetings, with some members also attending specialist Technical Panel meetings where specific issues are discussed in greater detail; recommendations from these meetings are then taken forward to the next full meeting of the Authority. All new members are provided with an IFCA Members' Handbook and are encouraged to develop their knowledge of the organisation by meeting and spending time with officers as well as going out to sea on the patrol vessels.

KEIFCA publishes an Annual Report that meets the standards as set out in Defra guidance, setting out the main achievements of the Authority for the previous year. This report is provided to Members at their meeting in September for comment with a final draft presented to the Authority at their November meeting before being submitted to the Secretary of State and uploaded to the website once approved. Similarly, the IFCA provides their Members with an Annual Plan that sets out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the following year. This plan is provided to Members at their January meeting for comment following which it is submitted to the Secretary of State and uploaded to the website. Details of all IFCA meetings are publicised on the IFCA's website with a copy of the agenda and links to the papers provided to Members for discussion at that meeting (see Success Criteria 1).

KEIFCA currently apply a system used by Kent County Council for staff performance monitoring. This system is based on a yearly review of an employee's performance using a series of objectives that are agreed between the employee's line manager and the employee. The objectives and the outputs of the employee relate back to the overall objectives in the annual plan. Dependent upon how well an employee meets, or exceeds, the targets set during this process, an employee may receive a small percentage increase related to their salary dependant on budgetary constraints and pay scale. Feeding into this process is a tasking process which allows staff to report on their progress every quarter and identify new goals. This has developed into a useful tool to help both staff members and senior management prioritise work streams and identify key issues and training requirements for both new and established staff. This practice complements the induction process that the IFCA has in place for new staff and allows it to monitor the effectiveness of each element for the individual.

Success Criterion 5:

IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

Outcomes

- A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources
- Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners
- A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review
- Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community

Indicators

- SC5A:** The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year
- SC5B:** The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making
- SC5C:** The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report

IFCA self-assessment – please make sure you have explained how your IFCA has addressed all of the outcomes in Success Criteria 5, evidencing your answers with reference to the relevant indicators

The KEIFCA Strategic Evidence Plan 2017-2022 defines the direction, resources and capabilities of evidence gathering activities for the organisation. These activities broadly fall under 3 themes; Marine Protected Areas, Sustainable Fisheries and Access to Information and Development of Evidence. The month by month annual research plan then highlights the resources needed and the time required for annual surveys and specific projects.

Working through TAG and by attending TAG training courses and conferences KEIFCA officers have worked to standardise operating procedures with other IFCAs and organisations. All non-confidential meta-data gathered by KEIFCA is published in MEDIN (The Marine and Environmental Data and Information Network), with KEIFCAs annual data sets (cockle and oyster surveys) and research outputs are published in stand-alone reports and summarised in the Authority's Annual Report.

Annual surveys

Ongoing cockle and oyster stock assessments are conducted at the same time every year to provide consistency in the data sets and, in the case of the cockle fishery, are related to the timing of the cockle harvesting season in order to inform management (see Success criteria 3). The ongoing small fish surveys in the Medway Estuary are carried out in collaboration with the EA and the timings of these biannual surveys are determined by the EA to fulfil the Water Framework Directive monitoring requirements. New projects that satisfy the project evaluation criteria are planned into the timetable depending on the needs of the project (e.g. to target a seasonal fishery) and the resources available (e.g. vessel and staff time).

Examples of standalone projects

University of Essex PhD

Since 2014 KEIFCA have helped fund and support a Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) PhD studentship with the University of Essex, to work on native oyster restoration in the BCRC MCZ.

Active oyster management trials

From 2015 – 2018 KEIFCA have worked with Essex oystermen to test the effectiveness of harrowing oyster ground to encourage spat settlement. Over the course of 3 years the sea bed was surveyed at various time points before and after cleaning (12 surveys) using side scan sonar and using a day grabs (scan sonar purchased with a DEFRA grant).

SUMARiS

The 2 million Euro, Interreg project brings together regional fishermen, scientists and fisheries managers from France, England, Belgium and the Netherlands to discuss and develop future cooperative sustainable management of the shared rays and skates' stocks. Working at an international regional level KEIFCA is leading a review and developing new management options for 4c and 7d stocks.

Whelk population research

Working with Dr Phil Hollyman of Bangor University and whelk permit holders a project was undertaken to look at differences in size at maturity and the growth rates of populations from the

4 whelk areas in the Kent & Essex district. The findings of the project were written up, discussed with local fishermen and presented to the Authority as part of the whelk permit management process (see success criteria 3).

Draft

Draft