

SSMEI Update Winter 2005

The Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative (SSMEI) will deliver greater sustainability in the use and management of the seas and coasts of Scotland. This unique 3 year initiative led by the Scottish Executive will develop & test marine management frameworks in pilot areas around Scotland. Pilot locations include the Shetland Isles, Firth of Clyde and the Berwickshire Coast, which are about to start, and the Sound of Mull which remains under development. A brief update on each pilot's progress is presented below.

Information and reports on the pilots are available on the SSMEI website: www.scottish-marine-sustainability.co.uk.

Ministerial support

The Environment and Rural Development Minister, Ross Finnie, officially launched three SSMEI pilots in September 2005. The fourth pilot for the Sound of Mull will be launched in the coming months. Mr. Finnie highlighted the need for participation from all stakeholders stating that *"the challenge we face is to manage our marine and coastal activity in a way which enables each sector to be successful without either compromising the ability of others to deliver their full potential or damaging the marine environment on which those jobs depend"*.

Shetland Pilot

The Shetland pilot will be managed by Shetland Isles Council (SIC) and North Atlantic Fisheries College (NAFC). The position of SSMEI Project Officer is now being advertised with interviews in the near future.

This SSMEI pilot will develop a **marine spatial plan** for aquaculture expanding on existing SIC marine planning to create a more integrated and robust framework for wider marine planning and management in Shetland. It will integrate sectoral planning initiatives, **ensuring communities understand and participate** more effectively in decision-making. Significant research efforts are proposed to ensure a more objective basis to marine planning.

Clyde Pilot

The Clyde pilot is tasked with developing an agreed **marine spatial plan** for natural resource use, development control and management of the marine and coastal areas of the Firth of Clyde. The pilot will also work to provide decision support mechanisms to deliver more **integrated decision making**.

This SSMEI pilot will offer added capacity and value to the work and profile of the Clyde Forum. The SSMEI Clyde Project Officer will be employed by SEPA and housed with SNH, alongside the Clyde Forum Project Officer. A Clyde Marine Advisory Group will be established to guide and inform the pilot and Project Officer. It is hoped that the Project Officer will be in place by January 2006.

Berwickshire Pilot

The Berwickshire pilot will promote more sustainable management of the marine environment through **enhanced community engagement**. This aims to assist communities in adapting to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances. Community stewardship will be encouraged through **targeted initiatives** related to sustainable marine resource use including fisheries, harbour management and tourism.

The Berwickshire SSMEI Project Officer will be employed by the Scottish Borders Council, to be in post by January 2006. A pilot steering group will be established to provide project direction to the Project Officer who will also work closely with Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Partnership to ensure complimentary effort.

Sound of Mull Pilot

The Sound of Mull pilot is progressing, with a launch expected in the coming months. It is anticipated that the Project Officer, employed by Argyll & Bute Council, will be in post by April 2006. The minister is keen for all stakeholders to participate and engage in this exciting pilot throughout its lifespan.

This pilot will develop and deliver integrated and sustainable management through the preparation and implementation of a **marine spatial plan**. A **partnership** will be established between regulators and stakeholders to guide the pilot in the delivery of research and community consultation to develop the marine spatial plan.