

Research and analysis: Environmental carrying capacities

Requirement R020

Requirement detail

To better understand how activities including but not limited to fishing, transport, energy, and recreation influence the ongoing functioning of the marine environment by exerting physical or chemical pressures.

Evidence on how activities influence the ongoing functioning and capacity of the marine environment is limited. It is important that this knowledge is improved to support the development of policies for the English marine plans, and to better assess licencing applications to ensure they maximise the sustainability of the environment.

At present, marine licensing is undertaken on a first come, first served basis except where marine plan policies provide a steer. In order to deliver sustainable development, consideration of environmental carrying capacities is required to allow effective prioritisation of projects within the limited capacity.

This work would seek to establish a methodology to identify areas most likely to be at risk from exceeding environmental capacity.

This work should focus on a case study area and include:

- analysis of activities currently taking place including any likely increase or decrease in activity which will influence the pressure they put on the environment's carrying capacity and any associated thresholds
- identify and test approaches that can be used to measure environmental sustainability and support the marine planning and marine licensing process