

Balanced Seas county meetings

At the end of November 2009, Balanced Seas organised five stakeholder meetings throughout the project area as follows:

- Monday 23 November Hampshire (Southampton); 46 participants
- Tuesday 24 November Sussex (Brighton); 60 participants
- Wednesday 25 November Essex (Chelmsford); 53 participants
- Thursday 26 November Kent (Canterbury); 70 participants
- Monday 30 November Isle of Wight (Cowes); 25 participants

All five meetings followed the same format and had the following objectives:

1. Participants to understand the aims and general approach of the Balanced Seas project
2. Develop ideas about how to establish a Regional Stakeholder Group
3. Decide whether we need, and how we could set up, sub regional advisory groups

In total we had 254 participants, excluding the project team and facilitators. Representation across different interests sectors was generally good, with over 30% of participants from the fisheries sector.

Percentage representation by different sectors

	Hants	Sussex	Essex	Kent	IOW	Total %
Commercial Fisheries	15	38	40	39	32	34
Angling	9	7	11	4	8	7
Industry	15	5	6	6	4	7
Local and national Government	20	18	15	19	20	18
Coastal Partnerships	2	3	4	3		3
Environmental NGO	20*	8	4	7	12	9
Research & Consultants	11	12	11	13	4	11
Recreation	7	8	8	9	20	9
Archaeology & Heritage	2		2	1		1

*4 members of Solent Protection Society

The meetings provided very useful feedback for the stakeholder analysis, and we hope it was useful for stakeholders to start thinking about the question of how they could be represented. Discussions about how to achieve adequate representation on the Regional Stakeholder Group were very useful with many ideas and suggestions generated. The process to establish this Group will be finalised when we have the permanent facilitator on board in January, and have completed the stakeholder analysis.

There was consensus that sub regional groups are needed, and a range of suggestions for the boundaries of these. The project team will collate recommendations and find an option that suits most people.

A joint report of all five meetings will be sent out to all those who attended as well as to those who were unable to do so. We were over-optimistic in our plans to send this before Christmas, but it will be ready in the New Year. It will include a pdf copy of the presentation about the project that was given at each meeting.

We wish all our colleagues, partners and those we work with in the Balanced Seas project area a merry Christmas and happy New Year!