

## Inshore Ireland

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### ALL-INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT REQUIRED FOR CLEW BAY



Gillian Mills reports

Despite the many positive outcomes since the formation of the Clew Bay Marine Forum (CBMF) five years ago, the organisation believes a lack of coordination still exists between activities and agencies.

"Coordinated area strategies have not been developed, which has led to policy gaps, duplication and at times even conflicting policies," the development manager Niall O'Boyle told Inshore Ireland, reports Gillian Mills.

The CBMF was established in late 2000 to represent a wider range of viewpoints on behalf of bay users. Activities include: oyster and scallop dredging; lobster, shrimp and prawn potting; shellfish farming of oysters, mussels and scallops; finfish farming of trout and salmon; ferry operators; marine services; seaweed harvesting and whelk picking and angling. Recreational activities include: sailing; adventure centre holidays; pleasure boating and diving.

CBMF operates a weekly 'on water' multi agency sampling programme for water quality, shellfish safety and compliance with EU water quality monitoring requirements. It provides a practical project management and co-ordinating role, overseeing trials of farmed oysters and lobster restocking. It also provides practical assistance with stock conservation and enhancement, provides assistance to research institutions, and has input into several EU projects.

One of the CBMF's initial tasks was to assist BIM to establish a Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management System (CLAMS) group.

"As CLAMS was the only State supported management system within the bay, it became clear that there were many areas and activities that were not being managed. No one entity was responsible for bay management," O'Boyle explains.

#### Development proposal

In February 2002, the CBMF made a submission to the Mayo County Council Development Plan in which it highlighted the following issues:

1. establishment of an ICZM initiative for Clew Bay
2. water quality and the Protection of Shellfish Waters Directive 79/923/EEC
3. infrastructure
4. Clew Bay marina
5. navigation aids
6. boat service facilities
7. development of home markets
8. improvements to tourism and leisure products, and
9. safeguarding and development of the traditional seaweed industry

Now, three years later, CBMF contends that a "management vacuum" still exists, but says that improvement was evident in many areas. "Much of this is happening as a result of marine users themselves having a coordinated input to policy. But a broad, holistic perspective to bay management supported by central policy is still required."

O'Boyle points out that with current practice, authorities and agencies targeted their management expertise at specific marine activities.

"Agency focus is set on achieving vertical integration (agency to industry) within their sector and as yet, horizontal integration with other agencies and sectors is not a consideration."

#### Co-ordinated voice

Stressing that whilst this input is of a very high calibre, the CBMF believes the focus is not on the bay as a whole. "One of our roles is to co-ordinate and voice marine users concerns and requirements, and to liaise with the authorities and agencies to find solutions."

On an issue-by-issue basis, CBMF believes that the procedure is producing management structures and improvements within sectors

such as aquaculture, fisheries, marine infrastructure and research.

Nevertheless, many issues remain unresolved. These include:

1. suitable areas for aquaculture development
2. proliferation of leisure moorings in navigation channels
3. general responsibility for water quality & monitoring
4. codes of practice for pier use
5. generic levels of scientific data to aid bay management
6. hazard navigation marking
7. mapping of traditional fishing grounds
8. pier and infrastructure development
9. an active 'on water' management presence and an 'on water' focus on safety at sea.

#### **Need for diversification**

CBMF believes the challenge will be to develop policies that not only allow for diversification but which understand, promote and plan ahead for them. "Management efforts should not be solely sectoral but should encompass the other activities taking place, and in context in which they are set."

Looking forward, the CBMF suggests that a government-led strategy is required to support existing initiatives, encourage agencies and authorities to co-ordinate their resources and to focus on building a framework of bay management that will deliver "real and noticeable benefits" to all marine users.

"The current practice of controlling the foreshore but not actively managing it must be reviewed. We need a dedicated team to promote liaison and co-ordination between the various agencies and departments to shift the focus towards integrated bay management that can key into future Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policies."