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# **The Development of Meaningful Indicators Of Estuary Management Partnership Success**

**Summary of Final Report to English Nature  
November 2000**

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Citation.

Fry, V.E. & Jones, P.J.S. (2000) *The development of meaningful indicators of Estuary Management Partnership success*. Report from UCL to English Nature (Estuaries Initiative Review)



## Summary.

### Introduction.

Estuaries are an essential and integral part of the coastline. In Britain, estuaries cover a total estimated area of 530,000 hectares. They support a diversity of environmental, social and economic activities and are crucial to the existence of many plant and animal species.

Integrated estuarine management is a long-term process, but Estuary Management Partnerships (EMPs), developed under the 1992 Estuaries Initiative, have only been developing for up to seven years. Many of the 23 EMPs in Britain have only recently entered their implementation stages and there is therefore a critical need to identify the benefits derived from EMPs so that:

- The institutional momentum behind EMPs is maintained and increased.
- The commitment of stakeholders to EMPs is maintained and increased.
- Further investment may be captured to support the development of EMP strategy implementation.

Three challenges were identified in the process of developing meaningful indicators:

- All EMPs are less than ten years old with strategy implementation in their initial stages. The focus was therefore on process indicators rather than outcome indicators.
- Individual EMPs are diverse and unique in their locally orientated strategies.
- Specific benefits and successes are difficult to demonstrate and attribute to the EMP.

### The Research Aim.

The aim of this study was to develop process indicators to evaluate EMP success: those that identify a strategy, as well as a process for implementing a strategy, in response to an identified socio-economic or environmental issue.

The following sources were drawn upon in a review prior to formulation of possible indicators:

1. The original objectives published in English Nature's *Campaign For A Living Coast* (1993).
2. The indicators developed in the Estuaries Initiative Review (Jemmett *et al.*, 1999).
3. Coastal and estuarine sustainability indicators.
4. Indicators implicitly put forward by EMP Project Officers in funding bids, strategy documents, etc.
5. Wider literature on international experiences in evaluating ICM initiatives.
6. Parallel experiences from Urban Regeneration Partnerships which date from the late 1970's.
7. Indicators arising from discussions related to this project with Project Officers, relevant authorities, etc.

Indicators were shaped so that they:

- Focused specifically on the infrastructure of the 'partnership.'
- Integrated elements of a changing economic, social and environmental climate.
- Allowed for their adaptation in response to the varying characteristics of estuaries.
- Ensured their applicability to EMPs by employing the MUM criteria test.
- Took into account natural estuarine fluctuations.
- Enabled the accumulation of information over time and space.

Twenty indicators of EMP success were proposed under four categories:

- A. Stakeholder Participation.
- B. Leverage.
- C. Steering Group Participation.
- D. Involvement in Other Strategic Initiatives.

The Indicators were presented in the form of a questionnaire which was sent to 39 Project Officers (POs) and members of Relevant Authorities (RAs). Each respondent was requested to assign values to the indicators with reference to the following MUM criteria:

**Meaningful:** Is the subject and theme of the indicator meaningful to the evaluation of EMP success? May it be deemed as important and relevant to the various processes of an EMP? **31%\***

**Useful:** Will this indicator be useful and realistic as a tool for actively measuring specific EMP successes? **43%\***

**Measurable:** How easy would this indicator be to measure quantitatively and/or qualitatively? **26%\***

\* *Relative weighting (%) agreed by the POs and RAs attending the indicators workshop in Peterborough.*

## Results

Table 1. The proposed indicators of EMP success ranked using the total score allocated against each criteria<sup>†</sup>.

1) <b>D8:</b> Codes of practice developed through the EMP? (3.95) ↑ 1 <sup>†</sup>
2) <b>A5:</b> Number of consultation responses from those mailed? (3.95) ↓ 1
3) <b>B2:</b> Who are the EMP funders & how long has each been funding? (3.81) ↑ 1
4) <b>D4:</b> How has the EMP facilitated LEAPs? (3.81) ↑ 3
5) <b>C1:</b> Members of the EMP steering group? (3.79) =
6) <b>B1:</b> Amount of EMP core financial support for the year? (3.79) ↓ 3
7) <b>D6:</b> How has the EMP facilitated LBAP processes? (3.72) ↑ 1
8) <b>A6:</b> Is an EMP website up and running? (3.7) ↓ 2
9) <b>C2:</b> Seniority of representation on the EMP steering group? (3.57) =
10) <b>D2:</b> How has the EMP acted as a platform for LDPs? (3.5) ↑ 1
11) <b>D1:</b> How has the EMP facilitated co-operation between LPAs? (3.49) ↑ 2
12) <b>D3:</b> How has the EMP acted as a platform for EMS processes? (3.45) =
13) <b>D7:</b> Industry related initiatives mobilised by the EMP? (3.43) ↑ 1
14) <b>A1:</b> Total number of action groups? (3.3) ↓ 4
15) <b>A4:</b> Number of expressions of interest received from newsletters? (3.26) ↑ 1
16) <b>D5:</b> How has the EMP acted as a platform for SMPs? (3.26) ↑ 1
17) <b>A3:</b> Number of people on the partnership's mailing list? (3.25) ↓ 2
18) <b>A2:</b> Number of consultation workshops and attendance figures? (3.08) =
19) <b>B3:</b> Former EMP funders? (3.05) ↑ 1
20) <b>A7:</b> Contribution by PO to environmental education programmes? (3.03) ↓ 1

<sup>†</sup> *Represents the extent to which the rank with criteria weighting deviates from the rank without criteria weighting (some changes are revealed by figures beyond 2 decimal places)*

Three key points were gathered from this study and the questionnaire feedback:-

1. The general opinion of the respondents was that indicators D8 and A5 are the most meaningful, useful and measurable for evaluating EMP success.
2. In table 1, indicators are not notably sensitive to the criteria weighting applied. The majority increase or decrease in rank by only 1 or 2 positions when compared to ranking without criteria weighting.
3. The range of scores is quite low: highest 3.95, lowest 3.03, a difference of only 0.92, representing only 23% of the difference available. This reveals that the POs did not consider there to be a great deal of difference between the value of the best and the worst indicators, and that all were of medium (score 3) to high (score 4) value.

The indicators were revised on the basis of the written feedback and workshop discussion as follows:-

A. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION.

1. The total  $n$  of topic groups that are currently active/  $n$  of forum members?
2. The  $n$  of consultation workshops and their corresponding attendance figures?
3. The  $n$  of addresses on the partnership's mailing list/s? Comments on target audience?
4. The  $n$  of expressions of interest received from newsletters *eg.* return card/slip?
5. The % of consultation responses from those mailed?
6. Is an EMP website up and running?
7. The  $n$  of days spent by the PO providing resources for community education on estuarine management issues?

B. LEVERAGE and LONG TERM FUNDING.

1. The amount of core financial support obtained for the year?
2. What long term funding commitments have been made to the EMP?
3. The length of the Project Officer's contract?
4. The EMP funders and length of time each has been funding?
5. A summary of the former EMP funders and reasons for their support terminating?

C. STEERING GROUP PARTICIPATION.

1. The  $n$  of representatives on the EMP steering group?
2. Seniority of representation on the EMP steering group?
3. Frequency of steering group meetings and the corresponding level of attendance from members?
4. The degree of representation on the steering group within and between sectors for estuary interest groups?

D. INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES.

1. Has the EMP facilitated co-operation between LPAs?
2. Has the EMP acted as an influence, support *or* platform for EMS processes?
3. Has the EMP developed *or* facilitated LA21 strategies?
4. Has the EMP been involved in the development of local sustainability indicators?
5. Depending on Environment Agency policy, has the EMP strategy been integrated with the LEAP?
6. Has the partnership played a part in the wider consultation of SMPs?
7. Has the EMP facilitated the development of LBAP processes? What are the key functions?
8. Industry related initiatives initiated *or* supported *and/or* delivered by the EMP?
9. Has the EMP supported *or* facilitated local regeneration schemes?
10. Has the EMP developed *and/or* maintained relationships with Tourism Development Partnerships?

11. Codes of Practice developed *or* supported/publicised by the EMP?
12. Time spent by the PO lobbying *and/or* responding to regional, national and international issues and estuary related initiatives?

The following general conclusions were also drawn:-

1. The need to introduce a mechanism, allowing indicators to be tailored to unique and diverse EMP objectives was identified in discussion with workshop attendees. Many of the indicators have been phrased again so that varying levels of PO participation are considered. A 'Not Applicable' option has also been included for each indicator.
2. The rolling evaluation of indicators is considered beneficial to each EMP; including indicator performance assessment annually through periodic review. Each of the proposed and revised indicators are mutually compatible with this approach.
3. Such evaluation is also likely to be beneficial for EMPs at a wider level by promoting the development and demonstration of 'good practice'.
4. It is suggested that indicators of EMP success could be adapted as standard headings in an EMP reporting format.