Research impact

Turning marine research into real-world outcomes



HMC

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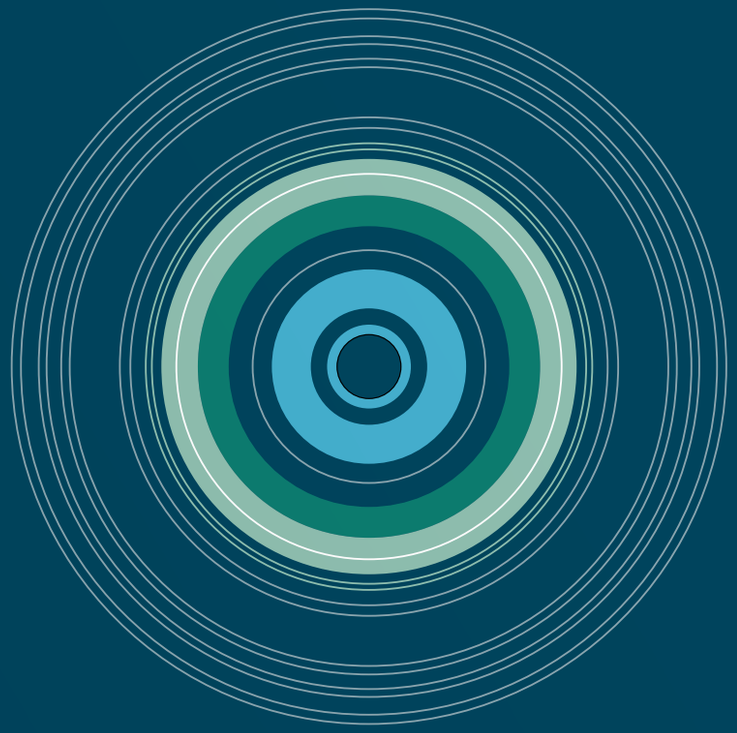
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Howell Marine Consulting (HMC) enables science to make a difference. We bridge the divide between research and decision-making, embedding impact pathways from commissioning through to legacy delivery.

Our work ensures that marine and environmental research not only generates knowledge, but also drives tangible policy, regulatory, societal, environmental and industry outcomes.

HMC's Research Impact service integrates programme design, governance, management, evaluation, science advice, communication and foresight into a single end-to-end pathway. Real impact happens when people come together, connecting funders, researchers, policymakers and industry to create outcomes that are greater than the sum of their parts.

This provides funders, government and industry with assurance that research investment translates into outcomes that matter.

With a track record spanning over **£30 million of science programmes**, including **INSITE**, **ECOWind**, **ECOFlow**, and **VALMAS**, HMC has defined how research impact is delivered, evidenced and sustained across the UK's marine science and policy landscape. Our methods are now used as templates across UKRI's marine environmental applied research programmes.

Science programmes spanning over

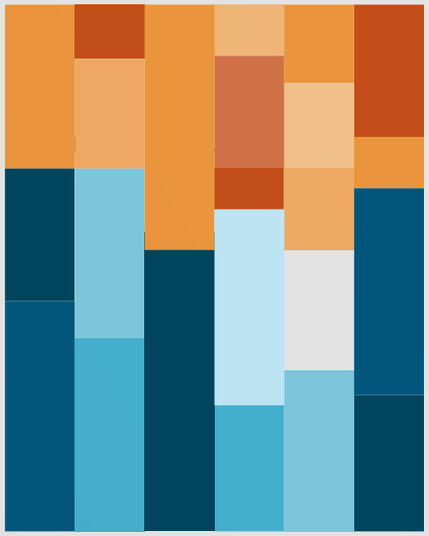
£30m

From commissioning to delivery: an end-to-end impact pathway

Commissioning and programme design

HMC ensures impact begins at the point of commissioning. We help funders and research councils define priorities, shape calls and mobilise programmes that align with real policy and industry needs, while safeguarding scientific independence and integrity.

Services include:



Consortium development
Building credible cross-sector research partnerships that combine scientific excellence with policy relevance.

Evidence gap analysis and foresight
Identifying what knowledge is needed, by whom and on what timescale.

Call design and specification
Embedding clear objectives, deliverables and impact pathways into programme design.

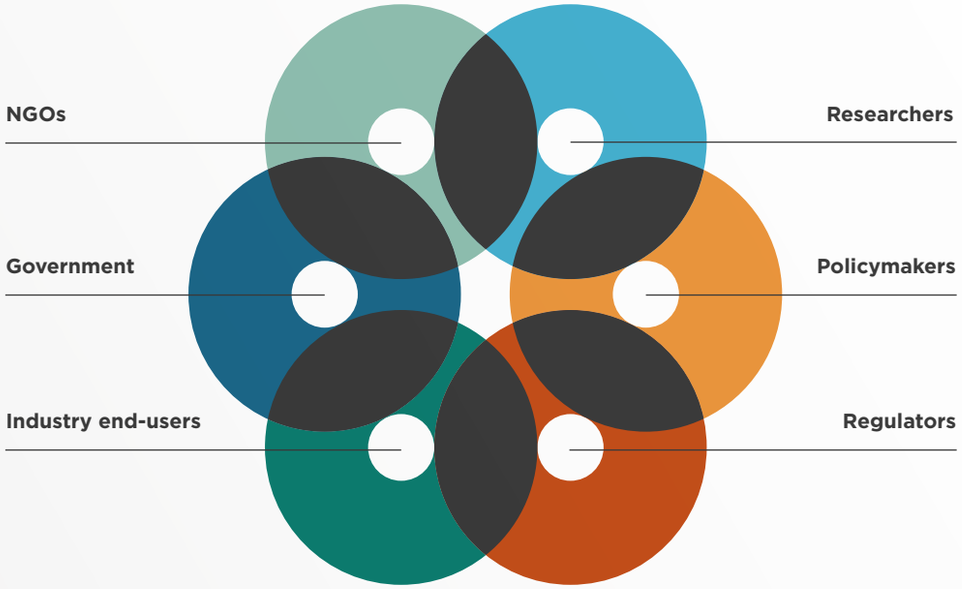
Governance and mobilisation
Establishing delivery structures, evaluation frameworks and stakeholder mechanisms.

This upstream role positions HMC as a neutral convener between funders, governments and researchers, reducing duplication, de-risking investment and ensuring alignment with live policy priorities, while upholding the highest standards of scientific rigour and impartiality.

Impact management

Impact management is not a communications exercise; it is a delivery discipline.

HMC provides active facilitation throughout programme delivery, linking researchers with policymakers, regulators, NGOs, government and industry end-users.



Services include:

Strategic impact planning
Defining long-term pathways that align outputs with policy and investment goals.

Tactical 90-day cycles
Agile planning to seize opportunities as they arise and respond to shifting policy contexts.

Stakeholder engagement
Structured networks, events and recurring meetings that keep funders, researchers and users connected.

Impact tracking
Using dashboards, typologies and feedback loops to evidence progress in real time.

Integration with policy windows
Aligning outputs with consultations, legislative milestones and regulatory reviews.

Impact evaluation

Funders increasingly demand credible assurance that research delivers value. HMC provides independent evaluation built on transparent, repeatable frameworks. We assess how research can influence decisions, shape guidance, and generate environmental or economic benefits.

As shown in the **2025 NERC Offshore Wind Impact Study**, which quantified a 23-fold return on investment from environmental science funding, HMC's evaluation approach connects narrative and numbers, providing funders with both accountability and confidence.

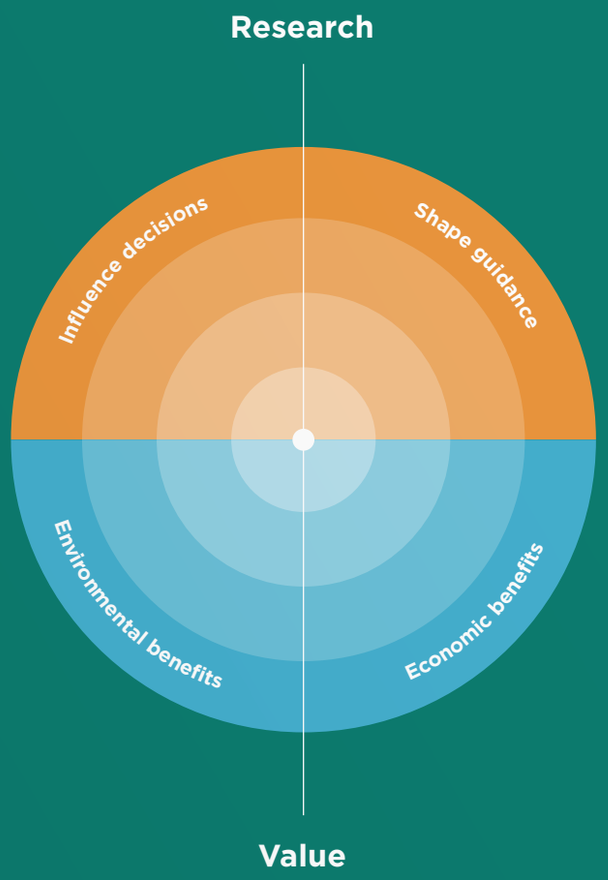
We deliver:

Outcome and uptake tracking
Tracing how evidence enters policy, regulation or operational practice.

Portfolio-level evaluation
Measuring collective value across multi-funder or multi-project portfolios from the World Bank's ProBLUE programme and the Blue Planet Fund to programme-level evaluation such as the Crown Estate's Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme and the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund.

Return-on-investment analysis
Quantifying benefits relative to funding, drawing on methods developed through NERC and Crown Estate programmes.

Legacy and learning reviews
Capturing insights to inform future commissioning cycles.



More than

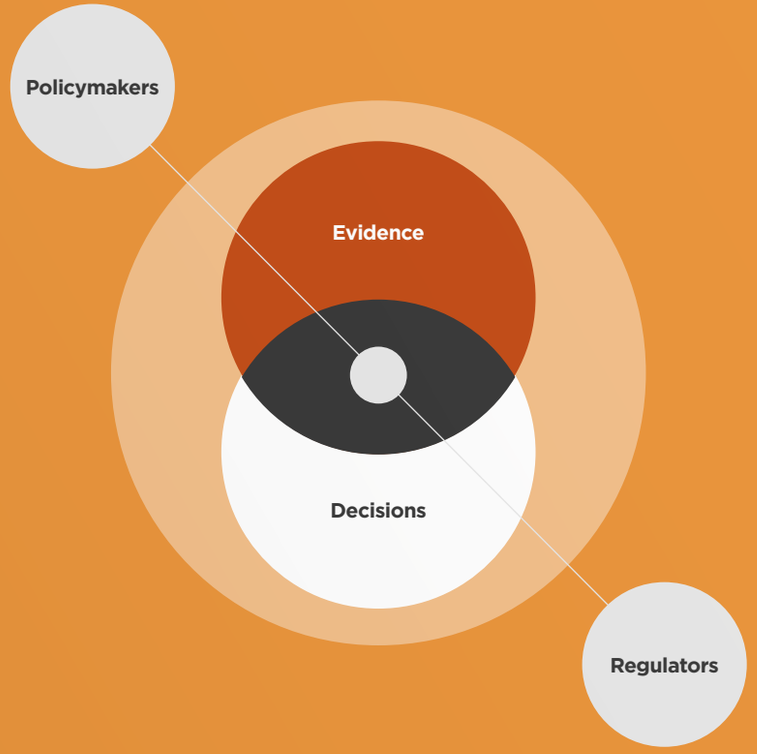
£30m

of UK research funding mobilised

Science advice and rapid evidence appraisal

Independent, policy-ready science advice

HMC provides neutral, policy-literate science advice that connects evidence to decisions. We synthesise findings across disciplines and present them in formats that policymakers and regulators can use immediately.



Our science advice offer includes:

Evidence synthesis and translation
Turning technical results into actionable, decision-focused guidance.

Policy contextualisation
Aligning science with legislation, licensing frameworks and marine plans.

Neutral convening
Facilitating cross-sector interpretation of evidence where policy questions are contested.

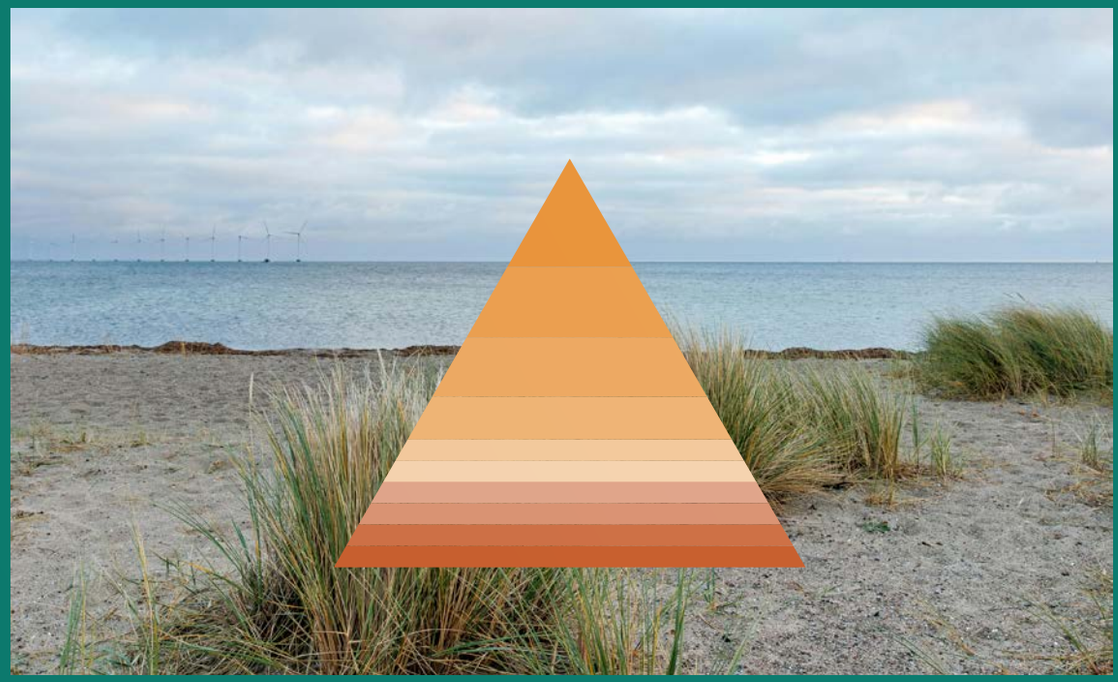
International advice
Contributing to global forums such as **OSPAR**, ensuring UK science informs international standards.

Advisory participation
Serving as independent experts on programme boards, steering groups and technical panels.

Rapid evidence appraisal (REA) approach

When governments, regulators or industry face urgent evidence needs, HMC delivers clarity fast. Our rapid evidence appraisal (REA) model provides trusted, time-bound analysis that balances rigour with responsiveness.

Building on principles applied in the ECOWind, ECOFlow, INSITE and VALMAS programmes, HMC's approach uses workshops, desk reviews and stakeholder engagement to combine:



1. Structured framing
Clarifying the question with the commissioning client to ensure relevance and policy alignment.

2. Evidence mapping
Rapidly collating existing studies, data and expert knowledge using reproducible search and screening methods.

3. Critical synthesis
Assessing quality, reliability, and applicability of evidence; identifying consensus, uncertainty and gaps.

4. Translation and advice
Summarising results in concise, policy-ready formats, with clear implications for decision-makers.

5. Validation and peer sense-check
Light-touch review with subject experts to maintain credibility under tight deadlines.

6. Delivery and briefing
Presentation of findings through short reports, webinars or verbal briefings to enable immediate uptake.

Our REAs typically run over **3–8 weeks**, depending on complexity, and are designed for use in:

- regulatory or consenting questions
- rapid responses to ministerial, parliamentary or public inquiries
- investment and strategic planning decisions by funders or developers
- cross-programme synthesis where multiple research outputs must be integrated quickly

HMC's REA outputs are deliberately concise, typically **8–10 pages**, with executive summaries, evidence confidence scores and clear 'so-what' recommendations. This ensures decisions can be made with confidence, even where the evidence base is complex or incomplete.

Science communication: making evidence accessible

Research impact depends on communication that not only informs but connects.

HMC designs science communication strategies that translate technical outputs into narratives with purpose.

Services include:

Strategic impact planning
Identifying target audiences, key messages and dissemination routes.

Policy briefs and guidance notes
Concise, action-oriented summaries tailored for regulators and funders.

Creative products
Infographics, videos, dashboards and podcasts to present findings clearly.

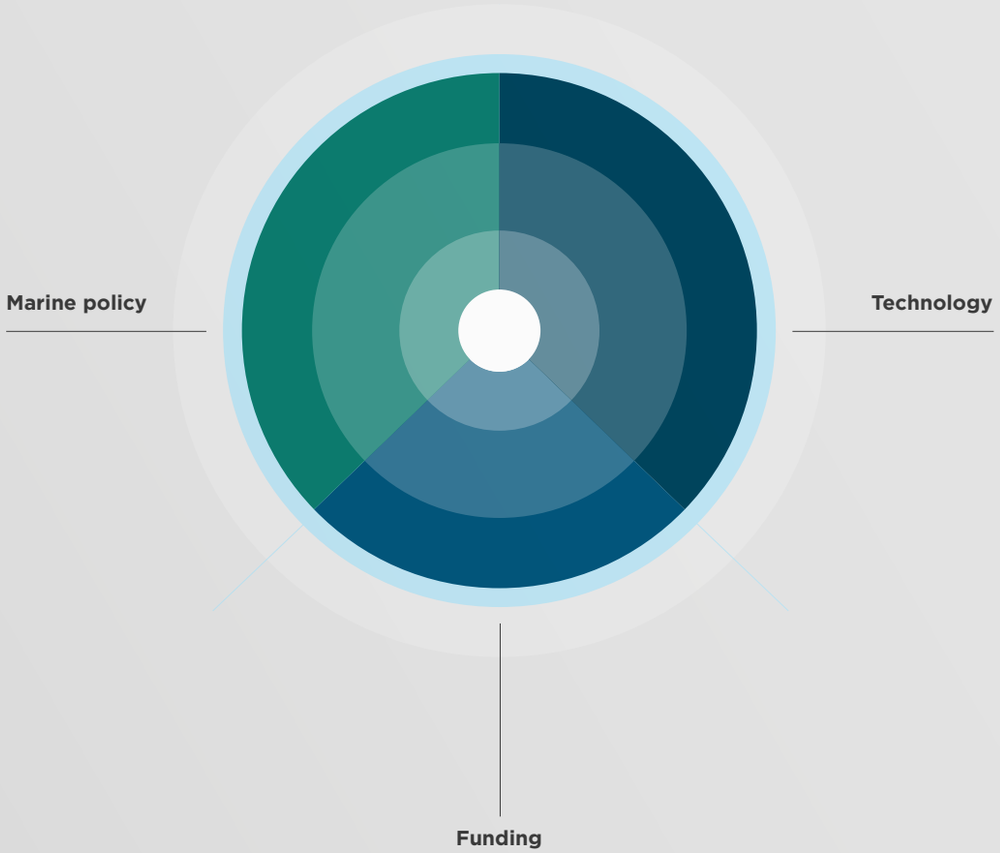
Web and event delivery
Managing websites, conferences, events, newsletters and webinars that sustain visibility across programme lifecycles.

Engagement metrics and evaluation
Tracking reach, engagement and influence with consultations, legislative milestones and regulatory reviews.

Our work across **INSITE**, **ECOWind** and **ECOFlow** demonstrates how integrated communication builds communities of practice and amplifies policy uptake.

Horizon scanning and policy-ready intelligence

Impact also means anticipation. HMC provides horizon scanning that identifies emerging trends, risks and opportunities across marine policy, technology and funding.



Our foresight services include:

Systematic policy monitoring
Tracking national and international policy developments relevant to marine management across all sectors.

Trend analysis and scenarios
Exploring plausible futures and their implications for funders and regulators.

Early warning intelligence
Identifying upcoming consultations, legislative shifts or funding opportunities.

Integrated foresight products
Concise policy-ready intelligence briefs that merge horizon scanning with practical recommendations.

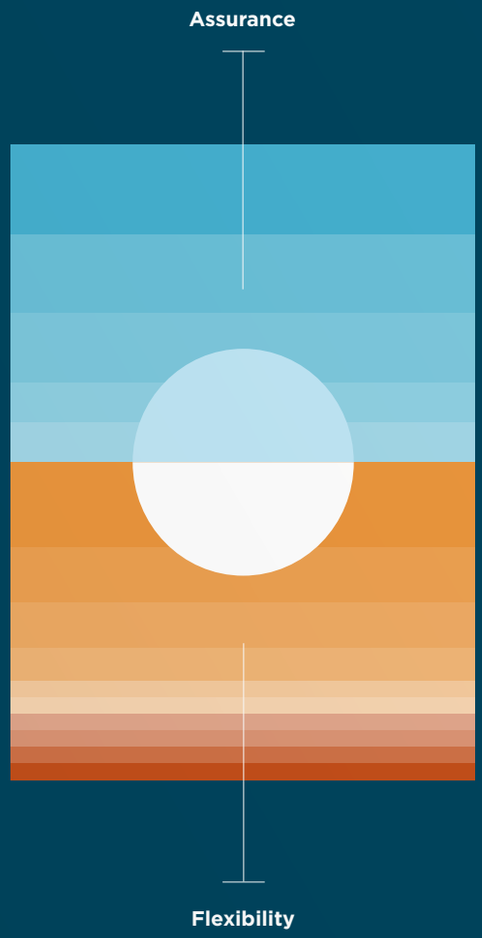
This capability supports funders to invest strategically, regulators to plan ahead, and researchers to align with future policy windows.

Programme and project management

Effective governance underpins credible impact. HMC's programme management approach is light-touch but rigorous, balancing assurance with flexibility.

Our services include:

- Governance design and secretariat functions
- Financial and risk management, including reputational and delivery risks
- Coordination of steering and advisory boards
- Stakeholder engagement frameworks that connect research and policy communities
- Integrated monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems
- Reporting and synthesis for funders, combining scientific, financial and impact narratives



Our model embeds impact management directly within programme governance, rather than treating it as a separate workstream.

Why HMC?

Neutrality and trust
We are independent and apolitical, enabling us to convene stakeholders across government, academia and industry in sensitive policy areas.

Policy literacy
Our consultants combine marine science expertise with deep understanding of legislation, licensing and strategic planning. We translate science into the language of regulation and delivery.

Integration and continuity
HMC covers the entire research lifecycle, from agenda-setting to legacy, providing seamless coordination and minimising duplication for funders.

Evidence of value
HMC worked with Human Economics to demonstrate £3.3bn of economic value in UK offshore wind development to NERC-funded science, supported by HMC-led impact mechanisms – a 23× return on investment.

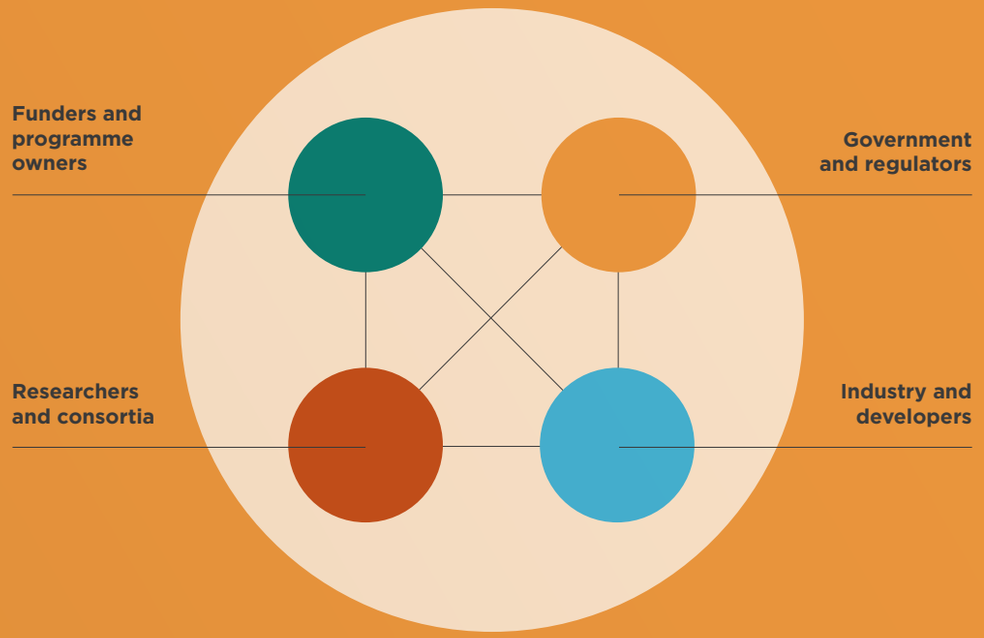
Credible track record
We have delivered impact for:

- **INSITE and VALMAS**
  Defining ecological and socio-economic value of marine artificial structures, informing decommissioning and net-zero strategies.
- **ECOWind**
  Leading impact management for £9.45m of NERC–Crown Estate research, integrating science into marine policy.
- **ECOFlow**
  Aligning ecosystem functioning research with offshore wind consenting and net-gain development.
- **Blue Planet Fund MEL**
  Evaluating international marine investments and building impact assurance frameworks for ODA programmes.

More than
£30m
of UK research funding mobilised

Who we work with

Audience		Value proposition
Funders and programme owners	→	• Design, govern and evaluate research portfolios • Demonstrate impact and return on investment through independent, transparent assessment
Researchers and consortia	→	• Embed impact and communication strategies • Connect with end-users • Evidence outcomes for funders
Government and regulators	→	• Receive credible, policy-ready evidence and rapid advice through structured engagement and REA products
Industry and developers	→	• Access science that informs investment, licensing and decommissioning • Engage via neutral forums for evidence exchange



Legacy

HMC's legacy lies in the systems, relationships and confidence that remain after each programme ends. From INSITE to ECOWind and ECOFlow, our work leaves behind structures and cultures that make research more connected to policy, more responsive to change, and more capable of driving real-world outcomes.

We view legacy as a deliberate outcome, not an afterthought. Every programme is designed to build lasting capacity — strengthening how funders, researchers, and policymakers work together.

The relationships forged and lessons learned create durable communities of practice, improving coordination and understanding across the science–policy interface.

Our approach delivers:

- **institutional learning** shared across programmes to accelerate future impact
- **capacity building** that equips people to communicate and apply evidence effectively
- **cultural change** that embeds the expectation that science must influence decisions, not just publish results

Through this, HMC transforms how impact itself is achieved. Each programme leaves a stronger, more confident system – one that can generate, interpret and apply evidence more effectively. This is our legacy: a resilient, connected research landscape where knowledge continually informs better choices for ocean sustainability, economic growth and societal wellbeing.



HMC are always interested in hearing from people working in the Blue Economy and keeping up to date with emerging research, policy and practice.

Howell Marine Consulting
Northumberland
England

info@howellmarine.co.uk
howellmarine.co.uk

@Howell Marine Consulting

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