

Unique Anglo-French initiative to help protect the Dover Strait

England's iconic white cliffs of Dover have long been protected from reckless development under planning rules — as has the more windswept beauty of Cap Gris Nez on the French side of the English Channel.

But the busy waterway itself is to now come under a new international code intended to help planners assess any proposed developments in the Dover Strait and to its coasts.

The new Seascape Character Assessment, developed by Kent County Council in the UK and the Pas-de-Calais Council in France, is believed to be the first cross-border marine assessment of its kind ever produced.

Rather than merely another set of strict planning rules, it aims to

take into account the sometime conflicting economic, social and environmental impact of change.

Matthew Balfour, cabinet member for environment and transport at Kent County Council, said: "The Dover Strait is an iconic part of the UK's landscape. It's part of what makes Kent special.

"With its coastal communities and marine space, the strait is an environmental treasure trove, an area rich in heritage and history. It is also one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and a growing economic hub.

"All of these factors make it a complex environment to manage, develop and protect. It's essential that we all understand, look after and develop the Dover Strait for future generations — and the Sea-

scape Character Assessment provides us with a way of doing this."

For the first time, the new initiative looks at the Dover Strait as a separate entity, regardless of national boundaries. And while UK and French authorities work to different planning codes, the joint assessment is intended to provide a shared vision.

The Anglo-French project has evolved from the European Straits Initiative, which was launched in 2009 and now includes eight straits and 19 partners from Albania, Belgium, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

That initiative kick-started the Brussels-funded European Network Of Straits (NOSTRA) project in 2012.



► **MATTHEW BALFOUR:** Cabinet member for environment and transport at Kent County Council in the UK. Photo: QUANTUM PR



► **CHEQUE IT OUT!:** DGS Marine Group managing director David Skinner (right) presents DGS Marine's donation to AMAR Foundation chief executive Richard Crow at this year's DGS Marine Master's Cup cricket tournament.

Photo: DGS MARINE

Eager locals jubilant over Suez project

The people of Egypt devised various ingenious ways to express their enthusiasm about the expanded Suez Canal and their gratitude to the country's president, Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, for expediting its completion.

A mock containership adorned with Sisi's portrait was seen in a Cairo mosque, which authorities temporarily turned into a high-security clearing station for the thousands of guests about to attend the canal's opening ceremony on 6 August.

Several groups of people, often including children, stood by the roadside between Cairo and the canal, waving Egyptian flags and shouting pro-government slogans to the convoy of VIP mini-buses travelling to the site of the ceremony under heavily armed military protection.

Egypt's town and villages were literally covered by pro-Sisi posters set up by government supporters to celebrate their president for completing the canal project in just 12 months. High-rise buildings in Cairo, including five-star hotels by the Nile, blanketed their facades with giant Egyptian flags to mark the occasion.

Sisi himself was not shy about highlighting the project's politically charged, domestic character. "The Egyptian people completed the New Suez Canal under the most difficult circumstances economically and in terms of security," he said at the ceremony. "The great people of Egypt announce to the world today the message of the New Suez Canal: that we triumph over terrorism with life and over hatred with love."

(See also *New Suez Canal opening photos*, pages 18 and 19.)



► **GRATITUDE:** The mock containership, adorned with Sisi's portrait. Photo: HARRY PAPACHRISTOU

DGS Marine digs deep to help victims of conflict

DGS Marine Group, a leading US provider of maritime-insurance services, has set a shining example with a \$100,000 donation to support the health and education work of the AMAR Foundation, a London-based international charity established in 1991 that assists people and communities affected by conflict and civil disorder.

It is DGS Marine's third generous contribution to the AMAR Foundation in the past 18 months, demonstrating its belief in the importance and effectiveness of the organisation's work.

The company says it also believes the international shipping industry has a key role to play in supporting initiatives targeting disadvantaged communities in troubled regions around the world. AMAR's current focus is in Iraq and Lebanon.

AMAR employs local people and also sources goods locally to ensure that donors' money is used most efficiently, while also helping to build capacity and support local economies.

DGS Marine managing director David Skinner said in a statement:

"[We do] business all over the world, including a strong presence in the Middle East, and we believe that every business has a duty to fulfil its corporate social responsibility in those regions where it operates... We hope that our support for AMAR's essential work can play a small part in supporting the betterment of the region and we look forward to developing our relationship with AMAR in the future."

AMAR executive chairman Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne said: "In 2013 and 2014, DGS Marine Group made substantial con-

tributions to AMAR and we offer heartfelt gratitude for this additional gift, which really came out of the blue.

"DGS Marine's generosity will enable us to sustain AMAR's work with displaced families throughout Iraq, specifically supporting thousands of people with access to otherwise non-existent healthcare and training centres."

DGS provides protection-and-indemnity (P&I) cover worldwide and is one of the fastest-growing companies in the fixed-premium market.

Memorial designed to honour fallen Welland Canal workers

Ships headed to Great Lakes ports would not get very far without the Welland Canal, which bypasses the Niagara Falls to connect Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

But that key gateway linking four of the five lakes to the Atlantic came at a cost. Some 137 workers lost their lives in building the waterway, a toll that makes it possibly the deadliest federal infrastructure construction project in Canadian history.

Now, a campaign to build a memorial to honour those workers

has unveiled a design by artist Dereck Revington.

The Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force also announced that the federal government's Department of Canadian Heritage has granted the project CAD 150,000 (\$115,000). Shipowner Algoma Central has also donated CAD 25,000, and its retired chief executive Greg Wight is chairman of the fund-raising campaign.

The goal is to raise CAD 450,000 to build the memorial at the canal's Lock 3.



► **REVEALED:** The design of the memorial. Photo: CITY OF ST CATHARINES

"Through my career, I have seen and experienced the wonder of the Welland Canal," said Wight.

"Its construction continues to shape Niagara's economy and now, as an integral part of the St Lawrence Seaway system, it connects us to the world.

"I'm proud to be a part of this project to recognise the fallen workers with a fitting tribute."

The fourth and current iteration of the canal was constructed between 1914 and 1932.

The memorial is scheduled to be completed in 2017.