

[Channel demersal non-quota species Fisheries Management Plan Evidence  
Advisory Group](#)

**Meeting Minutes 29 March**

**Meeting 3**

14:00 – 15:00 MS Teams

**Agenda**

**1. Introductions**

See Annex for attendees

**2. Evidence Statement Overview**

The Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Team presented to the Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) the purpose of the Evidence Statement (ES) and outlined what the principles of evidence are and what action is to be taken when evidence is limited.

Evidence Principles;

- Evidence is to be useful
- Evidence of all kinds can be valuable
- Evidence to improve and well as to prove is necessary
- Evidence should be integrated
- A lack of evidence is not justification for inaction

When evidence is limited;

- Produce the evidence
- Seeking minimum necessary but not optimal solutions
  - Comment from EAG is that we need to be more ambitious. MMO to re-phrase.
- Learning by doing
- Precautionary approach and precautionary principles

**3. Evidence themes supporting the FMP**

MMO presented to the group the structure of the ES and what each section will contain, including the evidence collated and future evidence requirements (see slides published alongside these meeting minutes [here](#)).

Initial comments from EAG:

- Confusion over what is meant by "limitations" for the evidence gathered. MMO gave the example of student's literature review work which was not completed in full and highlights that limitations are not supposed to be negative but just state what could be improved.

**Fisheries Overview**

EAG comments:

- Include a glossary within the ES to clearly define the terms being used. MMO to add glossary.
- Question around if the emerging evidence needs have already been flagged as compared to other FMPs there are a lot. MMO responded that emerging evidence needs mean that these are the gaps that have been identified and are what need addressing.
- Question over the inclusion of “community dependency” and “historic records” in this section as they come under social. MMO to move.
- Question around exploring data sources for some of these emerging evidence needs. Fishing effort is held by MMO and there are European Union (EU) databases for EU vessels that are updated regularly. Also raised confusion over fleet registry as there is gear type information available. MMO responds that this is not just looking at evidence gaps and no evidence but proposing as something to explore.
- Need to address within the FMP questions according to national commitments under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), written records of 2023 have a full page on non-quota species (NQS) in relation to data collection and data sharing with the EU.

### **Stock overview and stock assessment**

EAG comments:

- EAG highlighted that there will always be gaps in our knowledge on ecology of species (especially NQS). Cefas could provide lots of evidence gaps for these species, but most are not relevant to the purpose of the FMP. A need is different to a gap. MMO to reword.
- Need an assessment of targeted effort at different life stages, inshore vs offshore. Need to look at seasonality and location of targeted effort and how that can impact negatively on different life stages. Cefas responded that data is very limited on this, and it could be a very ambitious evidence requirement.
- May be useful to breakdown the source of the data e.g. fishery dependent/ species dependent. Defra will have to look at all FMPs so need to look at where data is sourced from currently and if it can answer what we need for these species to make broad recommendations. Need to try and do a stock take in terms of what surveys are going on that could capture data for the species within the remit of the FMP. MMO says there are methodologies captured within the ES but could do more on this within this section.
- Confusion over the inclusion of cuttlefish as being an important recreational catch. Cefas highlighted the data gap and evidence need. Many of the species within the remit of this FMP are not recorded in the anglers diary programme and could be something the FMP would want to look at. MMO responded that any need that is identified is being recorded and put into the research plan that will then be prioritised.

### **Fisheries Management**

## EAG comments

- Members highlighted the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) legislation mapping tool maps domestic legislation. MMO aware of this.
- Question around whether management measures are on the stocks, same species or other stocks? MMO responds that management measures could affect the ability to fish these stocks.

## Ecosystem Interactions

### EAG comments

- Question around the interactions of other non-fishing pressures on the ecosystem that are important for some of these species? E.g. loss of essential fish habitat for key life stages. Something like this ties into several places such as marine plans. MMO responded that some work is being carried out within the marine natural capital ecosystem assessment (mNCEA) programme but in early stages which will include all of this information in the broader sense.
- EAG highlighted that benthic habitats are included in United Kingdom Marine Strategy (UKMS) is a cross-sectional assessment that look sat state and pressure and measures link to activities. Natural England and Joint Nature Conservation Committee can talk IFCA through the advice they have already given.

## Economic Significance

### EAG comments:

- It is important to consider access to quota. Normally look a vessel length/ gear type but there is an important part of this FMP to look at the differences and importance of these species to boats who have different levels of quota access. Important historical changes over the last few years that should be taken into consideration. A lot of sector boats that don't own quota and so majority of their catches come from NQS.

## Social Significance

### EAG comments:

- Capturing fishers' knowledge is being spoken about across FMPs. Need methodologies to use this knowledge in the assessment process. Need to know how to use qualitative information with quantitative. And how do we collect this knowledge and in what format? MMO responded that a lot of this has been done already on an international scale and we can learn from these methods and develop them for our own domestic arrangements.

## Climate Change

### EAG comments

- Some of this work, the data is not in abundance we need it for the FMP but we can engage with academics and university to look at species distribution models. We may not have capacity or time to do it but would be something to look at to gather the evidence. MMO responded that there is a section in the ES about delivering research in the absence of resources e.g. academic studies.
- EAG member highlighted a NERC social survey, [University of Gloucestershire](#).

## 2. Timeline and Next Steps:

MMO will share final version of ES with EAG on April 17 and request comments by April 25. This will give the team time to amend the ES before it is handed in to Defra.

EAG comments:

- There are a number of reports and literature that would be relevant to this FMP. Cefas to circulate to MMO.

## Annex

Name	Organisation
Rebecca Korda	Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Principal Evidence Specialist (Chair)
Rachel Thirlwall	MMO Fisheries Manager (Secretariat)
Nicholas French	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Alex Maydew	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Christopher Sweeting	MMO Senior Evidence Specialist
Rachel Holtby	MMO Senior Evidence Specialist
Leonie Remm	Defra non-quota species evidence team
Rui Vieira	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) Evidence Specialist
Tim Smith	Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority Fisheries Management Plan representative
Chloe North	South Western Fish Producer Organisation
Libby West	Natural England
Zachary Radford	Cefas Evidence Specialist
Sam Fanshawe	Blue Marine Foundation
Aubrey Banfield	Lyme Bay Four Ports Community Interest Company
Jim Ellis	Cefas Evidence Specialist
Sophy Phillips	Cefas Evidence Specialist
Gwladys Lambert	Cefas Evidence Specialist
Danny Poulding	Representative of Shark Trust
Richard Caslake (Gus)	Regional adviser for Seafish
Arina Motova-Surmava	Head of economics team for Seafish
Rachel Irish	MMO Principal Marine Officer SW
Paul Johnson	MMO Principal Marine Officer SE