

De-Minimis Assessment

For Self-Certified Measures in Defra

Title of Measure	Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP
Lead Department/Agency	Defra
Expected Date of Implementation	2027 onwards
Date of Assessment	August 2025
Lead Departmental Contact	Eden.Hannam@defra.gov.uk
Type of Measure (primary/secondary etc)	Other (FMP)

Cost of Preferred Option

Total Net Present Social Value £0m	Business Net Present Value £0m	Equivalent Annual Net Direct Cost to Business (EANDCB) £0m
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Policy overview, rationale for intervention and intended effects

The Fisheries Act 2020 places an expectation on the UK's Fisheries Policy Authorities to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)¹. The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022² sets this out in practice and lists 43 proposed FMPs. The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) set out the road map to manage five pelagic stocks in English and Welsh waters and protect the wider environment. Pelagic stock refers to fish populations that inhabit the water column, not near the sea floor. They are found both near coasts and open ocean. Once published, the policies and measures in the FMP will be implemented separately through appropriate mechanisms such as statutory instruments, licensing conditions or voluntary measures. The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP have been produced to drive progress towards the sustainable fishing of five pelagic species in English and Welsh waters.

Pelagic fisheries in the English and Welsh waters of the Celtic Sea and Western Channel contribute socially and economically to coastal communities and are also considered ecologically important as forage fish species (prey for many other commercially important, sensitive and protected species). The five pelagic species are found in English and Welsh waters within areas 7e, 7f, 7g, and 7h, which are marine zones defined by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for fisheries management:

- Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) in Subarea 7 (southern Celtic Seas and the English Channel) – a non-quota species.
- Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) - a non-quota species.
- Atlantic Herring (*Clupea harengus*) included two stocks
 - Western Channel and Bristol Channel herring – covered by TAC management unit HER/7EF.
 - Celtic Sea herring – covered by the corresponding stock management unit HER/7GK.
- Western horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) – covered by the TAC management unit JAX/2A-14.
- Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in ICES areas 7–10, 12, and 6b – covered by the TAC management unit ARU/567).

¹ [Fisheries Act 2020](#)

² [Joint Fisheries Statement \(JFS\) - GOV.UK](#)

When targeted the five species are caught primarily via pelagic gears such as pelagic trawls, ring-nets, purse seines, drift nets and in small traditional fisheries with static nets. Recreational fishers recognise the importance of these pelagic species as prey for other recreationally valued species such as bass. This highlights the indirect significance of these species within the wider recreational fishing community. The pelagic species can be a bycatch species in other commercial trawl and net fisheries, the impacts of which is not understood. There is limited fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data available for the five pelagic species around the UK, including their importance as food species. Pelagic fish are important forage fish in marine food webs, transferring energy from smaller organisms that they eat (phytoplankton and zooplankton) to the larger predators that eat them such as other fish, marine mammals, and seabirds. Many of these predators have populations classed as vulnerable or declining and are protected by law. Currently, there is little understanding of the impact these fisheries has on stock status, population dynamics and the wider ecosystem. Given these challenges, a comprehensive FMP is essential to manage these fisheries effectively.

Sustainable management requires appropriate harvesting to protect our diverse stocks and will permit us to achieve our responsibility to support vibrant, profitable, and sustainable fishing industries alongside a healthy and productive marine environment. An FMP will provide the tools to manage fishing activity towards more sustainable fisheries, and is a requirement of:

- the Fisheries Act 2020 ('the Act')
- the UK Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022
- the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England³

Government intervention is required as fish stocks are a common pool resource. This would lead to the classic economic problem of 'the tragedy of the commons', were the government not to intervene. This is because market agents would only consider the benefits of catching, and they would not weigh it against the impact it will have on the stock health, overall, leading to overexploitation of the stock. Government intervention aims to prevent this overexploitation of fish stocks, and this FMP provides the framework through which government intervention would work. Furthermore, a thriving marine environment has positive externalities to society which would not be captured by the market mechanism. Government intervention is therefore required to ensure that the optimal social benefit is achieved.

Policy Options (including alternatives to regulation)

Option 2 was decided as the preferred way forward, as the government has a legal obligation to produce the FMP under the JFS and the Fisheries Act 2020.

Option 0: Do Nothing - No FMP or related management measures developed.

- Lack of strengthened / new, evidence-based management would increase the likelihood of stocks being overexploited with insufficient protection for the wider marine environment and be legally non-compliant.

Option 1: Self-regulation - No formal Government FMP. Industry introduces voluntary measures.

- The introduction of non-regulatory measures, such as voluntary measures developed and introduced by industry, are unlikely to go far enough to ensure stocks are being fished sustainably, and the wider marine environment is protected.

³ [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/environmental-improvement-plan-2023)

- Voluntary measures are unenforceable so there is no guarantee they would provide increased protection to stocks.
- Industry introduced measures would likely not account for the impact of recreational fishing on these stocks, which can be significant.

Option 2 (preferred option): Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP.

- The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP puts forward policies designed to synthesise existing measures, information, data and evidence, identifying where there are gaps and highlighting opportunities to fill them. They provide a clear pathway for developing an improved, evidence-based management approach (both regulatory and non-regulatory), in collaboration with industry and stakeholders, and facilitate progress towards establishing a sustainable fishery for these stocks.

Description of Novel and Contentious Elements (if any)

FMPs are internationally recognised as a sustainable way to manage fisheries and are being implemented in the UK with 6 FMPs published already. The broader policy of FMPs is not considered novel.

Assessment of Impacts on Business

Whilst the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP identifies measures that could be introduced post-consultation, these proposed measures will be developed further and do not currently have sufficient detail for a full assessment to ascertain these impacts, if any. When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner. The FMP will have no direct monetisable impacts upon publication and therefore will have no direct costs to businesses.

Between 2016 and 2023, an average of 19,969 tonnes of pelagic species were landed from English and Welsh waters covered by the FMP per year. This equates to an annual average value of around £7.5m.⁴ UK vessels accounted for the majority of the catch, landing approximately 10,588 tonnes per year (53%), while EU vessels contributed the remaining 9,380 tonnes (47%). Consequently, UK vessels accounted for 52% (£3,908,008) of the annual average landed value. The businesses most likely to be affected by any measures will be the businesses involved in the fishery.

Wider Impacts (Including Assessment of Impact on SMBs and Households)

When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner. At the moment, there are not expected to be wider impacts of publishing the plan, until the measures are brought forward for implementation.

Assessment of Impact on Trade and Investment (Including Internal Market Assessment)

At the moment, there are not expected to be trade and investment impacts of publishing the plan, until measures are brought forward for implementation. When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner.

⁴ [UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

Assessment of Environmental Impacts

Alongside the Celtic Sea and Western Channel FMP, an environmental report has been produced to assess the potential positive and negative environmental effects of the FMP's proposals. This report concluded that the current evidence shows targeted pelagic fishing in English and Welsh waters has a relatively small environmental impact on the marine environment.

Fishing for the five pelagic species is mixed, with only sardine, anchovy, horse mackerel and herring currently targeting commercially. Of these Sardine is currently the most economically and socially important. In England, commercial fishing is managed by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) byelaws with the potential impacts in the 0-6 nautical mile zone managed, and outside 6 nautical miles by the MMO. In English waters, the impact of fishing in MPAs was screened during the change of approach to European marine sites, and the pelagic gear was considered not to impact benthic features, which are habitats and species that live on or near the seabed. In Welsh waters the management of fishing, and the assessment of effects is conducted by the Welsh Government. The contribution of pelagic fishing to climate change issues was also considered and actions included in the FMP. The potential for bycatch or prey depletion was identified as the main potential risks to Good Environmental Status (GES) of UK Marine Strategy (MS).

The assessment of likely negative effects identified a low risk of significant adverse effects on the environment from implementing individual policies and actions, and where appropriate these policies will be developed to avoid potential negative effects which have been identified. The policies and actions will also be monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, allowing remedial action to be taken.

Rationale for producing a DMA (as opposed to an OA/IA)

A DMA has been produced because the FMP itself will have no direct monetised impacts and as such, falls below the £10m threshold necessary for an OA / IA. The implementation of specific individual measures, whether by statutory or non-statutory mechanisms, will have their own impact assessments completed separately. The FMP is not considered to be novel or controversial.

Will the policy be reviewed (yes/no):
Yes

Review date if applicable: By 2032

Review Provision Detail and Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

The effectiveness of the FMP will be regularly assessed, and the results reported at least every three years as part of the JFS report, as required by the Fisheries Act 2020. These reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in FMPs have been implemented and have affected stock levels in the UK

The Fisheries Act 2020 requires the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP to be reviewed at least every 6 years to assess the extent to which the policies in the plan have been implemented and how the stocks have been affected.

	Name, Role	Date
Internal Directorate Clearance		
Policy sign off	Eden Hannam, SEO	02/10/25
Senior Analyst sign off	Alastair Johnson, Head of Marine and Fisheries Economics	02/10/25

Central Sign Off

Better Regulation Unit (Policy) Sign off		29/1025
Office of the Chief Economist (Central Appraisal Team) Sign off		29/1025

Supporting Evidence

1. The Policy Overview and Rationale for Government Intervention

1.1 Policy Background

The United Kingdom (UK) government has responsibilities under both national and international law to manage our fisheries in a sustainable way. Meeting our responsibilities will support vibrant, profitable and sustainable fishing industries alongside a healthy and productive marine environment. The UK Government White Paper 2018 on Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations⁵ states the objective of ‘a more competitive, profitable and sustainable fishing industry across the whole of the UK and setting a gold standard for sustainable fishing around the world’.

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP is a requirement of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement 2022 and includes five pelagic species. The Five pelagic species are in the English and Welsh waters of 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h are:

- Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) in Subarea 7 (southern Celtic Seas and the English Channel) – a non-quota species.
- Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) - a non-quota species.
- Atlantic Herring (*Clupea harengus*) included two stocks
 - Western Channel and Bristol Channel herring – covered by TAC management unit HER/7EF.
 - Celtic Sea herring – covered by the corresponding stock management unit HER/7GK.
- Western horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) – covered by the TAC management unit JAX/2A-14.
- Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in ICES areas 7–10, 12, and 6b – covered by the TAC management unit ARU/567).

These species are commercially exploited in English and Welsh waters. The five pelagic species cover a wide range of water depths, salinities and temperatures and therefore can thrive in diverse environments. Rising water temperatures have potentially initiated a northward migration, with anchovy potentially moving towards becoming commercially reliable in the plan area.

1.2 Rationale for Intervention

The government has a legal obligation under the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) to produce Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) which will contribute towards the sustainability of both the fishery and the wider marine environment. Therefore, the government must act to produce the Seabream FMP.

Government intervention is required as fish stocks, such as the five pelagic species, are a common pool resource. That is, that they are non-excludable, yet rivalrous. Rivalrous here means anyone can catch a fish but once a fish is caught and retained it cannot be caught again. They are non-excludable because it is not possible for one actor to exclude another

⁵ [Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations](#)

from catching fish. These characteristics would lead to the classic economic problem of 'the tragedy of the commons', were the government not to intervene. This is because market agents would only consider the benefits of catching. They would not weigh it against the impact it will have on the stock health, overall, leading to overexploitation of the stock. Government intervention would prevent this overexploitation of fish stocks, and this FMP provides the framework through which government intervention would work.

Furthermore, a thriving marine environment has positive externalities to society which would not be captured by the market mechanism. For example, a healthy marine environment can capture carbon emissions, helping reduce the impact of climate change for all individuals, which would provide social benefit far greater than the private benefit of an individual taking actions to protect the marine environment. Industry alone would not be able to provide adequate protection of the marine environment as this requires coordination and enforcement that is not possible within markets. Government intervention is therefore required to ensure that this optimal social benefit is achieved.

1.3 Policy Objectives and Intended Effects

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP have been produced with the intention of outlining a pathway to sustainably manage pelagic stocks in English and Welsh waters, ensuring the long-term social and economic viability of fisheries and the health of the marine ecosystems.

The UK government has responsibilities under both national and international law to manage our fisheries in a sustainable way. The UK government White Paper 2018 on Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations⁶ states the objective of 'a more competitive, profitable and sustainable fishing industry across the whole of the UK and setting a gold standard for sustainable fishing around the world'. The Welsh government also has commitments under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The subsequent Fisheries Act 2020 sets out the legal framework governing fisheries in the UK and provides for UK Fisheries Policy Authorities to prepare and publish FMPs, setting out policies designed to restore stocks and maintain them at sustainable level. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Act, the FMP also supports the implementation of wider commitments on protecting the marine environment, restoring biodiversity, and addressing climate change.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Act, the FMP also supports the implementation of wider commitments on protecting the marine environment, restoring biodiversity, and addressing climate change. In particular, the Environment Improvement Plan 2023⁷ restated the commitment to deliver FMPs. The FMP supports commitments under the UK Marine Policy Statement⁸, the UK Marine Strategy⁹, the Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative¹⁰, UK Marine Plans¹¹ and the Climate Change Act 2008¹².

There is insufficient evidence to determine MSY or a proxy for MSY for sardine, anchovy, and Bristol Channel and Western Channel herring stocks included within this FMP. This FMP sets out the proposed steps to build the evidence base for these data limited

⁶ [Fisheries white paper: sustainable fisheries for future generations - GOV.UK](#)

⁷ [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)

⁹ [UK Marine Strategy](#)

¹⁰ [Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative](#)

¹¹ [UK Marine Plans](#)

¹² [Climate Change Act 2008](#)

stocks to support progress towards defining and measuring stock status and reporting on stock sustainability.

1.4 Policy Options Considered, Including Alternatives to Regulation

The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state outside of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The Act requires the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to prepare and publish fisheries management plans (FMPs) to help deliver our ambition for sustainable fisheries. The plans were decided during the JFS, a collaboration between the UK fisheries authorities.

FMPs are an internationally recognised mechanism to manage fisheries sustainably. Many UK stocks are data poor and lack management. FMPs provide a framework to fill data gaps and introduce management measures to protect stocks now and into the future. Therefore Option 2, publishing the FMP, was selected as the preferred way forward.

Option 0: Do nothing - No FMP or related management measures developed.

- The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP are a legislative requirement of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement, meaning that the UK government must act to introduce the FMP or be legally non-compliant.
- The species included within the FMP are commercially and recreationally fished, however the evidence base is extremely limited, meaning that they are at risk of potential over-exploitation if we do not seek to improve our understanding of these stocks.
- Failure to produce an FMP may also risk insufficient protection for the wider marine environment, and potential social and economic harm to coastal communities if the exploitation of the stocks is not sustainably managed.

Option 1: Self-regulation - No formal Government FMP / Industry introduces voluntary measures.

- Current management measures for these stocks are notably piecemeal and lack an understanding of the wider scope of factors affecting their distribution and prevalence. Reliance on non-regulatory, voluntary measures developed and introduced by industry, would unlikely go far enough to gain a better understanding of the stocks and ensure they are being fished sustainably.
- Industry introduced measures would likely not account for the impact of recreational fishing on these stocks and ensuring these are mitigated will be key to ensuring a good outcome for the species listed in the FMP. A coherent, joined-up approach is therefore critical.

Option 2 (preferred option): Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP.

- A comprehensive FMP is essential to manage these fisheries effectively and ensure they remain ecologically and socioeconomically viable to coastal ecosystems and communities.
- The first iteration will focus on understanding the status of the stock and considering implementing management measures, whilst also filling evidence gaps associated with these fisheries to understand their current status and future management needs.
- Future iterations will strive to account for the variability in life history traits, the different species' vulnerabilities, and the effectiveness of different management practices, ensuring the long-term sustainability of these populations and balancing ecological needs with those of the fishing community.

2 Expected Level of Business Impact

2.1 Summary of Preferred Option

As the FMP itself will not implement any measures upon its introduction, there will be no direct impacts on businesses through its adoption. Whilst the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP identify measures that could be introduced post-consultation, these proposed measures will be developed further and do not currently have sufficient detail for any economic analysis to be completed. As detailed costs and benefits cannot be provided in this DMA, background figures to understand the potential scale of impact and scope have been provided below. When individual measures are implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner.

Between 2016 and 2023, an average of 19,969 tonnes of pelagic fish species were landed in scope of the FMP annually from English and Welsh waters, with an estimated yearly value of £7,530,447. These landings included five species: sardine, anchovy, Atlantic herring, western horse mackerel, and greater silver smelt. UK vessels accounted for the majority of the catch, landing approximately 10,588 tonnes per year (53%), while EU vessels contributed the remaining 9,380 tonnes (47%). Consequently, UK vessels account for 52% (£3,908,008) of the annual average landed value.¹³

2.2 Benefits

There are potential benefits to the introduction of an FMP for Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic species. For example, evidence gathering to better understand their status and location could lead to a stock assessment that allows for the sustainable management of these fisheries. Improved knowledge of the impacts of fishing on pelagic populations would also provide insight into the long-term viability of the live fishery and ensure that wider ecosystems are not being negatively impacted.

Pelagic fish are recreationally important species, and a well-managed stock could also benefit coastal communities through increased levels of angling, drawing individuals to areas where the stock can be caught.

2.3 Indirect Costs and Benefits

The majority of the policies within the FMP will be focused on what occurs within the fishery and therefore are likely to only have impacts on those working directly within the fishery. That said, some of the proposals will include measures designed to support the sustainability of the wider environment, such as coastal communities and species, so some indirect benefits may be observed.

The marine environment has positive externalities in that it provides ecosystem services, though these are not solely attributable to the Pelagic species. Instead, they are derived from health and biologically diverse marine environment of which Pelagic are a part. There are many ecosystem services, some examples are it provides provisioning services such as providing food, regulating services such as biological control and can provided cultural impacts in the form of cultural heritage.

No sensitivity analysis has been produced for this DMA, as there are no quantified impacts of producing an FMP at this stage.

2.4 Risks and Unintended Consequences

There are no direct risks stemming from the introduction of the FMP. The implementation of future measures may potentially have risks and those will be considered in assessments if sufficiently large.

¹³ [UK sea fisheries annual statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Any fisheries management intervention will result in a range of social, economic and biological impacts. When implementing a new management measure, there is a statutory requirement to estimate the anticipated wider national benefits (for example, improved stock status of target species), as well as the likely impacts on stakeholders, and how negative impacts can be mitigated. Broader impacts on local communities, and economic, social and human rights impacts, will be analysed in associated impact assessments, which will be required as part of the development of measures.

3 Wider impacts

There is expected to be minimal impact on the wider society, as the impacts are likely to be specific to those involved with fisheries. However, indirect benefits are assumed from the measures which support wider environmental sustainability such as for coastal communities and species.

3.1. Assessment of Impact on Small and Micro Businesses

The primary focus of the legislation is on the fishing industry, which is predominantly composed of small and micro businesses defined by the Better Regulation Framework as being 10-49 employees or 0-9 employees respectively¹⁴. Within the catching industry in 2024, 94% of employers were micro-businesses, 6% were small, and there were no medium or large employers, all of which gives an indication of the scope of businesses liable to be impacted by the introduction of the FMP¹⁵. As all businesses in scope sit within the small or micro business bracket, it would mean the policy would be ineffective if they are exempt from the FMP.

3.2 . Impacts on Households

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic Fishery Management Plan is not expected to have a direct impact on households. If implemented, certain measures proposed in the FMP could have some impact on households. Any potential impacts will be assessed in future De Minimis Assessments. The direction and scale of the impacts will depend on the specific measures adopted and their scope.

The group most likely to be impacted by any changes to fishing regulations are those that derive all, or part, of their income from capture fisheries. Households that work in industries that are downstream to the fishery, such as aquaculture business, or other fisheries could also be partly affected, though likely to a lesser extent than those directly involved in the fishery. Also, if the measures are sufficient in scale to change the price of fish, households that consume fish could be affected, though the risk of this is believed to be low.

3.3. Assessment of Impact on Trade and Investment (Including Internal Market Assessment)

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP will not have a significant impact on trade and investment on publication. Though if measures proposed in the FMP are implemented later, if the scale of impact on trade and investment is higher enough a Trade and investment assessment will be conducted.

3.4 Assessment of Environmental Impacts

The policies and actions included within the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP have been developed with due regard to the relevant Environmental Principles, however there is still potential for some negative environmental impacts as and when the policies are finalised and implemented.

¹⁴ [Better regulation framework guidance 2023](#)

¹⁵ [UK business: activity, size and location - Office for National Statistics](#)

Fishing for the five pelagic species poses some risks to the quality status of the marine environment. These environmental risks may change in the future in line with the anticipated changes of these stocks in English and Welsh waters. This could change the prey availability for predator species of interest as well as changing out these species interact with fishing gear. Potential future management measures such as introducing a national Minimum Conservation Reference Size(MCRS) or changes to minimum mesh sizes could lead to increased discards, and management to reduce opportunities could lead to spatial changes in fishing effort, increasing the pressure elsewhere.

Conversely, there is also potential for positive impacts stemming from the development of the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic FMP. The extensive gathering of data to better inform management will enhance understanding of the wider biodiversity within these fisheries and potential to move to a more ecology inclusive approach to MSY. The FMP also signposts existing national programmes that collect data on the contribution of fisheries towards climate change and will help to identify opportunities to decarbonise the fleet, reducing pollution and contributing to net zero.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

Delivery of the actions for this FMP will be monitored by Defra and the Welsh Government with possible assistance from Arm's Length Bodies in the collection of data.

There is insufficient evidence to determine Maximum Sustainable Yield(MSY) or a proxy for MSY for sardine, anchovy, and Bristol and Western Channel herring stocks included within this FMP. MSY refers to the largest amount of a fish stock that can be harvested sustainably over the long term without depleting the population This FMP sets out the proposed steps to build the evidence base for these data limited stocks to support progress towards defining and measuring stock status and reporting on stock sustainability. An increase in the available evidence to define and measure stock status will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan for these stocks.

Other Actions and indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policies for restoring, or maintaining these stocks at sustainable levels are:

- An increase in the available evidence to define and measure stock status for sardine, anchovy, Bristol Channel and Western Channel herring stocks which lack sufficient evidence to determine MSY will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan for these stocks.
- As part of annual negotiations, annual reviews will be undertaken of the stocks to analyse how they are performing against these reference points, and any other reference points provided within the advice. Ongoing use of best available scientific evidence to guide management decisions for the stocks that receive scientific advice on fishing opportunities (Western Channel and Bristol Channel herring, Celtic Sea herring, horse mackerel and greater silver smelt) and continuing to work effectively with coastal State partners to ensure sustainable harvesting these stocks will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan. This recognises the limitations of the UK in joint management of a stock where maintaining overall biomass may be beyond our control and reflects the potential future variation as a result of climate change.
- An increase in wider ecological, social, and economic evidence relating to these fisheries that can be used to inform management of these stocks, including how climate change may affect the stocks and related fishing opportunities will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan.

- An increase in evidence on the extent of the wider impacts of the fisheries on the environment, as well as an increase in any measures in place to reduce any impacts identified if shown to be needed, will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan.
- An increase in understanding of the economic, cultural and social benefits of these fisheries, will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan.
- The completion and sharing of the evaluation of the application of a natural capital approach with stakeholders will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan
- An increase in evidence on the risks and opportunities for FMP stocks to inform measures to reduce negative impacts on the stocks and/or to support opportunities for the stocks, will demonstrate effectiveness against this plan.

The FMP is an evidence-based action plan designed to support the delivery of sustainable fisheries in the long-term, as well as meet the requirements of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the JFS. To remain effective, it is a legal requirement as part of the Fisheries Act 2020 for the FMP to be regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring it responds to new evidence and practical experience. In line with the legislation outlined above it will also be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once every six years.

When new measures are introduced and result in new or changed regulation, Defra will complete a monetised impact, or de-minimis assessment for the specific measures, depending on the monetised cost to business.

The results from the individual FMP assessments will contribute to the formal report on the Joint Fisheries Statement that will be published every three years. The JFS reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in FMPs have been implemented and have affected stock levels in the UK.

Annex

Table 1: Value of Landings (£) of Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic species by UK + Crown Dependency and EU vessels in the area covered by the FMP¹⁶.

Year landed	EU27	UK+CD	Total
2013	6,658,753	1,565,609	8,224,361
2014	3,000,971	2,543,275	5,544,246
2015	3,339,173	1,866,340	5,205,513
2016	5,020,369	3,413,325	8,433,694
2017	2,260,794	2,690,085	4,950,879
2018	3,570,156	4,241,126	7,811,282
2019	3,640,017	3,815,006	7,455,023
2020	2,040,539	3,081,470	5,122,009
2021	5,230,130	2,692,447	7,922,577
2022	3,434,488	4,091,237	7,525,725
2023	160,570	3,331,367	3,491,937

¹⁶ [Fisheries Dependent Information - European Commission & UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023](#)