



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Expanding the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring in England

An initial call for evidence

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We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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Introduction

From January 2021, at the end of the transition period, the UK will, as an independent coastal State, control and manage the resources in our waters. With a new way paved for our country, our marine environment and our fishing industry, it is important to think about long-term ambitions.

As part of our commitment to delivering a world class fisheries management system Defra committed to look at increasing the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring in the recent Fisheries Bill debates and our White Paper. We want to do so openly and collaboratively. This call for evidence is the first stage of that process. From this we will work with interested parties and follow up with a formal consultation next year.

We ask that any responses be sent by **30 November 2020** using the online portal at consult.defra.gov.uk

What do we mean by Remote Electronic Monitoring?

Remote Electronic Monitoring includes integrated on-board systems of cameras, gear sensors, video storage, and Global Positioning System units, which capture comprehensive videos of fishing activity with associated sensor and positional information.

Why Remote Electronic Monitoring?

Remote Electronic Monitoring can help us gather important scientific data on our fish stocks and the way the fishing industry interacts with the marine environment. The ability to gather data more accurately will help the government and industry better understand the health of our fish stocks as well as the health of our wider marine environment. It can also help fishermen show they are fishing in line with their catch allowances, supporting the sector to become more sustainable.

Remote Electronic Monitoring is not a new technology and some vessels in the pelagic fleet already use Remote Electronic Monitoring voluntarily. The English Fully Documented Fisheries scheme run by MMO has shown that Remote Electronic Monitoring can be a useful tool for ensuring compliance with the landing obligation and we know that Remote Electronic Monitoring has been effectively used for different reasons at various scales in other countries.

Defra is interested in how we can expand our use of Remote Electronic Monitoring to help us manage and monitor our fisheries and marine environment moving forward. However, we know there are a number of questions and challenges that we, industry and other interested parties must jointly work through before that expansion can happen.

Scope

Many of the purposes that Remote Electronic Monitoring can be used to deliver are devolved issues. Defra is seeking initial views on expanding the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring on English registered fishing vessels and vessels fishing in English waters. However, we will continue working with our colleagues around the UK to align our policies where it is right to do so.

Questions

1. Where are the best and worst examples of Remote Electronic Monitoring policy and usage across the world? And, what are your experiences or views of the Fully Documented Fisheries scheme?
2. Do you think it is right to maximise the benefits from any Remote Electronic Monitoring systems so that they are not just an enforcement tool, but could also be used to monitor our fisheries and collect scientific data? Have you any evidence or suggestions on how best to achieve potentially multiple outcomes from the technology?
3. If there were to be further trials of Remote Electronic Monitoring in England what should their focus be on? For example, which type of vessel, fleet segment, gear type or location would be most appropriate and why?
4. Depending on the outcome of further trials, do you think a Remote Electronic Monitoring programme should be mandatory or voluntary? Please explain your reasons.
5. If Remote Electronic Monitoring were to become a mandatory requirement for any or all vessels fishing in English waters should there be a lead in time to allow industry to prepare for this? Please provide any details or supporting evidence on how long this should be or whether you think it should be different for different parts of the fleet.
6. Are there any vessels, gears, fleets, or locations that you feel Remote Electronic Monitoring would not be appropriate for? If so, please provide further information.
7. Do you have information on the financial costs of Remote Electronic Monitoring, both initial and ongoing costs, and whether this delivers value for money?

8. Do you think there is a need to support vessels using Remote Electronic Monitoring and, if so, what do you think this support should look like? For example, financial support, training, quota etc.
9. Are you aware of any other technologies which could also be used to monitor our marine environment and/or enforce fisheries management rules and/or data collection purposes?
10. Is there anything else you would like to raise at this stage?

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