

Consultation on the draft Joint Fisheries Statement

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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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This publication is available at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/sustainability-devolution-and-legislation-team/jfs/>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

jfs@defra.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/defra

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Introduction

Marine fisheries are of great importance to the United Kingdom – our seafood sectors generate food, jobs, culture, and a strong sense of identity and pride for their communities. The stocks of fish on which they are based support recreational uses and contribute significantly to the healthy functioning of our marine ecosystems.

Now the UK has left the European Union, we wish to outline our plans to pursue sustainable fisheries policies that are tailored to the needs of our industry and our marine environment. The [Fisheries Act 2020](#) (the Act) enshrines in law our commitment to sustainable fishing, supporting future generations of fishers while allowing our marine environment to thrive. It provides a legally binding structure to protect and recover stocks, support a sustainable fishing industry, and safeguard the environment. Included within the Act is a set of fisheries objectives that set the UK's strategic direction for delivering sustainable fisheries management. The fisheries policy authorities within the UK are required to develop a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), to set out our policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the objectives.

The UK Government, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Government, and Welsh Government have a history of productively working together on fisheries management to define and achieve the UK's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas. We have jointly prepared this first JFS for consultation and welcome the opportunity to set out our policies and the steps we are taking together to deliver our shared ambition for sustainable fisheries.

Fisheries management in the UK is largely devolved. As part of the wider UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework), the JFS provides a mechanism to manage policy divergence while establishing common goals for all administrations to work towards.

As a responsible coastal State, the JFS sets our policy framework for how we will work with international partners to ensure the long-term sustainable management of the fisheries resources we share. Through the JFS and the policies and management measures which will flow from it, the UK fisheries policy authorities will together deliver a prosperous fishing industry for future generations while safeguarding, restoring, and enhancing the marine environment on which the industry and wider society depends.

This consultation document invites your views on the draft JFS. The draft has been shaped by comments we received in spring and summer 2021 from a wide range of interested parties via a UK-wide Community of Interest (CoI) stakeholder group.

The draft JFS has also been laid in accordance with paragraph 3(1) of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Act in the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Senedd Cymru and Northern Ireland Assembly, which each may pass a resolution or make a recommendation regarding the draft document. A fisheries policy authority must then lay a statement before the relevant legislature setting out its response.

The deadline for responses to this consultation document is 12 April 2022.

Purpose of the Consultation

This consultation seeks views on the draft JFS listed in ANNEX 1 of this document. It is being carried out in accordance with paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Act. We recognise the importance of engaging with stakeholders to ensure the JFS is fit for purpose and are keen to hear from any persons interested in, or affected by, the policies contained in the JFS, and members of the public.

This consultation has particular relevance to:

- Individuals, groups or businesses who are engaged in the fishing, seafood, or aquaculture sectors;
- Other individuals, groups or businesses who are sea users, for example, marine industries such as oil and gas, offshore renewables and sailing bodies; and
- National and local interest groups such as environmental and recreational non-governmental organisations, and industry federations.

Summary of this JFS

This JFS includes policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives, as required by the Act. In addition, it includes a statement explaining the intended use of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) by the fisheries policy authorities to achieve, or contribute to achieving, the fisheries objectives, and a statement on how the fisheries objectives have been interpreted and proportionately applied in formulating the policies and proposals.

This JFS has been drafted in accordance with the principles within the Fisheries Framework Memorandum of Understanding.

The JFS includes the following chapters:

The **Introduction** chapter explains what the JFS is and provides a background to the document. It explains why the JFS has been developed and how it fits in to the wider Fisheries Framework, as well as the scope of the JFS and the requirement of all fisheries policy authorities to act in accordance with the policies in the JFS.

Chapter 1: Our shared ambition outlines the UK's shared ambition to deliver world class, sustainable management of our fisheries and aquaculture, focusing on the three main themes of:

- Protecting and, where necessary, recovering our fish stocks;
- Reducing the effects of fishing on the marine and coastal environment; and

- Supporting a modern, resilient, and environmentally responsible fishing industry.

Chapter 2: The Fisheries Objectives contains a list of all the fisheries objectives, and how they are interpreted in the JFS. It also contains a statement explaining how the fisheries objectives have been applied when formulating the policies contained in the JFS, followed by a tabular summary of policy areas by each objective.

Chapter 3: Delivering the JFS outlines how the policies in the JFS will be delivered by the national fisheries authorities through the exercise of their functions and in line with the fisheries objectives. The following principles will underpin the delivery of the JFS:

- Good science and a robust evidence base to inform policy and management decisions;
- Working in partnership across the four fisheries policy authorities, and with stakeholders, other coastal States and international partners to deliver effective fisheries management; and
- Participatory decision making to provide the seafood and marine sectors, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and coastal communities with a voice in the decisions that will impact them.

An overview of the reporting and review process and monitoring is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Delivering sustainable management of fisheries sets out how the JFS will deliver the sustainable management of fisheries. It outlines the approach to fisheries management and sets out policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives.

Chapter 5: Fisheries Management Plans explains the use the fisheries policy authorities propose to make of FMPs in order to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. This chapter also describes the relationship between existing retained [EU Multi-Annual Plans \(MAPs\)](#) and FMPs. Included in Annex A of the JFS is a list of proposed FMPs.

How this JFS was Developed

The JFS has been developed jointly by the fisheries policy authorities. Alongside the drafting process, stakeholders have been engaged via the Col. The Col has a wide membership with representatives from across the sector to maximise input and ensure breadth of expertise. Involvement in the Col enabled stakeholder input during the drafting process at multiple stages.

The fisheries policy authorities have jointly conducted a narrative Impact Assessment on the JFS. This is included as ANNEX 3 to this consultation document.

How to Respond to this Consultation

The consultation will primarily be run via the Citizen Space online portal, which is available in English and Welsh. However, we will accept email and hard copy responses for those unable to access the online survey. A response form to use for email and hard copy is included in ANNEX 2 of this document or can be found on the related documents on the Citizen Space website.

Large print and braille versions of this document are available on request.

Duration of the Consultation

The consultation will run for 12 weeks, starting at 09:30 on 18 January 2022 and ending on 12 April 2022. Responses must be received by 23:59 on 12 April 2022.

Responses

Responses can be:

- Submitted online via the Citizen Space online portal:
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/sustainability-devolution-and-legislation-team/jfs/>
- Sent via email to: jfs@defra.gov.uk
- Sent via post to:

Consultations Coordinator, Defra

Kings Pool, Unit 4 Foss House,

1-2 Peasholme Green,

York, YO1 7PX

At the end of the consultation period, we will summarise the responses, and place this summary on the UK Government website and all devolved administrations' websites.

Confidentiality and Data Protection information

A summary of responses to this consultation will be published on the UK Government and devolved administrations' websites at: www.gov.uk/defra, www.gov.wales/consultations, www.consult.gov.scot/, and www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations. An annex to the consultation summary will list all organisations that responded, but will not include personal names, addresses or other contact details.

Defra may publish the content of your response to this consultation to make it available to the public without your personal name and private contact details (e.g. home address, email address, etc).

If you answer 'Yes' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, you are asked to state clearly what information you would like to be kept as confidential and explain your reasons for confidentiality. The reason for this is that information in response to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the legislation on access to information (this is primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)). We have obligations, mainly under the EIRs, FOIA and DPA, to disclose information to particular recipients or to the public in certain circumstances. In view of this, your explanation for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation to be kept confidential, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

If you answer 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

There may be occasions when Defra will share the information you provide in response to the consultation, including any personal data, with external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis and provision of a report of the summary of responses only.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office 'Consultation Principles' and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>.

Our privacy notice is uploaded as a related document alongside our consultation document.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to:

Consultations Coordinator, Defra

Kings Pool, Unit 4 Foss House,

1-2 Peasholme Green,

York, YO1 7PX

Or email: consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk

Consultation Questions

1. Would you like your response to be confidential?
2. To what extent do you think the policies articulated in the draft JFS will achieve, or contribute to, the achievement of the fisheries objectives? Please explain your answer, with reference to specific content in the JFS where possible.
3. What are your views on the proposals for developing FMPs?
4. Are there any other areas of fisheries policy you think should be included in the JFS?

Our consultation questions have been designed to be broad and hopefully have given you the chance to meaningfully feedback your views on the draft JFS. The online portal includes a free text box that will enable you to make further comments should you so wish.

Enquiries

If you have any enquiries, please contact: jfs@defra.gov.uk

The Act can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/contents/enacted>

ANNEX 1: Consultation draft of the Joint Fisheries Statement



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Executive Summary

Why a JFS?

The fisheries policy authorities have collaborated to produce a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), which arises from a legal requirement in section 2 of the [Fisheries Act 2020](#) (the Act). The JFS sets out the policies of the fisheries policy authorities for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives and forms part of the UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework). The JFS sets out the ambition of the UK to continue delivering world class, sustainable management of fisheries in line with the objectives of the Act and how it will do so.

The JFS defines how the fisheries policy authorities have understood the eight fisheries objectives and how we will apply them to fisheries policy. We have also identified through the document where each of the objectives applies to any given policy, noting that, due to the inter-linked nature of the objectives, one policy will often address several objectives.

Why is fishing important?

The fishing industry forms the foundation of, and contributes significantly to, the continued prosperity of coastal communities around the UK. The industry prides itself on delivering valuable employment opportunities to otherwise remote areas and providing healthy, sustainable food to the UK as a whole. The fish stocks around the UK's coast are a public resource and national asset, and the JFS sets out how the fisheries policy authorities will ensure they continue to benefit fishing communities and the UK now and into the future.

What policies are in the JFS?

The JFS recognises the importance of fishing to the UK and many of our coastal communities, as well as the need to work with industry on succession planning, training, access to domestic labour, and fair remuneration to encourage new entrants. The fisheries policy authorities commit to promoting the consumption of locally sourced seafood as a healthy, low-carbon protein source, and to supporting prosperous and resilient UK and international markets. The JFS also commits the fisheries policy authorities to supporting the health, safety, and wellbeing of those working in the seafood sector.

The JFS sets out the UK's approach to implementing the climate change objective by identifying and supporting changes to mitigate and reduce emissions across the fishing industry to support decarbonisation. It also recognises the importance of protecting and restoring blue carbon habitats to support resilience to climate change, whilst ensuring a commitment to work with the scientific community to develop the evidence base.

The JFS recognises a healthy and resilient marine environment is the foundation for a prosperous seafood sector and thriving coastal communities, and sustainable use and conservation of the sea is central to the fisheries management approach. It commits to

working with industry to reduce and, where possible, eliminate bycatch and entanglement of sensitive species. It will also inform our international work to ensure we act as global leaders in international sustainable fisheries management.

Why Fisheries Management Plans?

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) play a key role in the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing. The JFS sets out the overall purpose of FMPs, including their link to the fisheries objectives and the wider fisheries framework set out in the Act, together with the plans the fisheries policy authorities will publish.

The fisheries policy authorities will jointly publish individual FMPs for those stocks of key commercial interest, and each fisheries policy authority will consider whether to bring forward its own regional FMPs to manage fishing activity within its jurisdiction or collaborate with another fisheries policy authority where appropriate.

UK FMPs will focus on stock management, with regional FMPs extending their scope to consider wider fisheries management concerns.

How will we evaluate progress?

In line with the Act, the JFS will remain in place until such time as the fisheries policy authorities review and consider it necessary to amend or revise the statement, and in any event, no more than six years from its most recent review.

The fisheries policy authorities will publish a report every three years on the extent to which the policies set out in the JFS have been implemented and have achieved or contributed to the achievement of the fisheries objectives. The report will also evaluate the extent to which the policies contained in the relevant FMP have been implemented and have affected fish stock levels.

Introduction

The UK's seafood sector is an important part of the economy of coastal communities and has a rich cultural heritage from which many of those communities draw a sense of place and identity. The UK's relationship with the sea is rightly celebrated. All along the coast, from the largest port to the smallest quayside, fishers and fishing communities take pride in delivering high-quality, sustainably caught produce, which contributes to food security. In addition, the UK is recognised for its investment in fisheries science, not just in assessing the health of fish stocks and ecosystems, but also in developing and adapting its fishing methods and using new technologies - something more important than ever given the need to address the challenges of climate change. In this time of change, the UK will continue to value the importance of fishing to its many coastal communities and will deliver a prosperous fishing industry for future generations while safeguarding, restoring, and enhancing the marine environment on which the industry and wider society depends.

Our fisheries face a range of challenges and opportunities on which all four UK administrations will need to work together during the lifetime of this JFS. Continuing to rebuild fish stocks, reducing the environmental effects of fishing, as well as minimising the adverse effects on and supporting adaptation to climate change, will be vital to ensuring a vibrant seafood sector which is fit for the future. Delivering sustainable fisheries is essential to achieving the UK's vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas'¹.

Sea fish are a public resource and, having now left the European Union (EU), the UK has a responsibility to manage its fisheries so as to ensure their sustainable stewardship in a way that recognises the specific needs of our diverse seafood industry and marine environment.

The [Fisheries Act 2020](#) (the Act) sets out eight fisheries objectives that provide the basis against which the fisheries policy authorities of all four UK administrations will manage their fisheries. This JFS sets out the policies agreed jointly between the fisheries policy authorities on sea fisheries (catching and processing), recreational sea fishing, and aquaculture management for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. These policies, together with the fisheries objectives, will be reflected by fisheries policy authorities in their own policy development. Individual fisheries policy authorities may also have existing devolved strategies and policy documents, which already reflect policies within the JFS, and therefore the fisheries objectives.

¹ UK Marine Policy Statement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>)

As fisheries policy authorities, the Secretary of State, Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland have jointly prepared and published this JFS in accordance with the process set out in section 2 of the Act. As national fisheries authorities, they and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), are obliged to exercise their functions in accordance with the policies in the JFS and applicable FMPs, in line with section 10 of the Act.

Importance of fishing to all nations in the UK

The seafood sector in the UK includes catching (including recreational sea fishing), marine aquaculture, and processing.

In the catching industry, commercial fisheries across the UK range from large pelagic vessels which can catch hundreds of tonnes of fish in a single haul, to small inshore fishing vessels and intertidal hand gatherers of shellfish. Fleet composition varies considerably between each nation, and fishing plays an important role in sustaining some vulnerable coastal communities.

Recreational sea fishing is also a popular form of fishing in the UK and, like commercial fishing, provides important economic and social benefits.

As one of the UK's strategic food production sectors, marine aquaculture helps to underpin sustainable economic growth, both in rural and coastal communities and in the wider economy. Aquaculture policy is fully devolved within the UK and as such each of the fisheries policy authorities operates under devolved legislation and policies.

The seafood processing and export sector is a locally significant employer in the UK. It consists of primary processing (like filleting and freezing) and secondary processing (like portioning, packing, smoking, breading etc.), as well as facilities for exporting unprocessed fish. Seafood processing sites are situated across the UK, ranging from small sites to larger processing businesses with multiple sites, often clustered in key regional hubs. The sector's output is for both domestic and international markets, varying around the UK. In some parts of the UK fish are also exported as live, unprocessed goods, predominantly to the EU market.

The UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework)

Fisheries management in the UK is largely devolved. This JFS forms part of the wider UK Fisheries Framework. The Fisheries Framework sets out areas where a joint approach to fisheries management across the UK will be followed, and the UK-wide legislation, policies, and principles of joint working to achieve this. The Fisheries Framework consists of the Act and associated statutory instruments, relevant retained EU law, the JFS, FMPs, and the Fisheries Framework Memorandum of Understanding. The latter sets out principles on ways of working and collaboration on fisheries management between the fisheries policy authorities.

Differences in approach to policy development will occur in each nation, reflecting the devolved nature of fisheries management across the UK. However, the fisheries policy authorities' approach to partnership working and collaborative management through the Fisheries Framework strives to achieve agreed common outcomes while recognising the ability and need to instigate policy divergence and to respect devolution.

National and International Agreements

The fisheries policy authorities, in delivering their functions in accordance with the policies in the JFS, are also required to have regard to the requirements of established national legislation and commitments the UK has made under international agreements and declarations. These include the [UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\)](#), [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#), the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#), the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species \(CITES\)](#), and the [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic \(OSPAR\)](#).

Following the UK's exit from the EU, the TCA includes annual negotiations on fishing opportunities and access to waters, and establishes a Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) between the EU and UK to facilitate cooperation on fisheries management. The agreement recognises the UK's regulatory autonomy to decide on the fisheries management rules that apply in UK waters.

The [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) (SI 2010/1627) require fishery bodies in the UK to take action to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in all UK waters (subject to certain exceptions). The [UK Marine Strategy \(UKMS\)](#) is a key pillar of marine policy in the UK and the JFS is a cross-cutting measure which will help to deliver GES for commercial fisheries. Further, the JFS will help ensure that fishing practices do not compromise the overall achievement of GES through impacting on other elements of GES such as biodiversity or seabed integrity.

Northern Ireland Protocol

Collaboration in fisheries management across the fisheries policy authorities sits within the context of the [Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol \(the Protocol\)](#). The Protocol sets out the arrangements agreed between the UK and the EU to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland introduced by the UK's departure from the EU. Northern Ireland is a part of the UK, including being a part of the UK's customs territory, and the Protocol continues to apply certain provisions of EU law to Northern Ireland to avoid the introduction of a hard border (as set out in Annex 2 of the Protocol). This will continue to apply until such a time as the Northern Ireland Assembly decides otherwise.

The Scope of the JFS

The JFS covers sea fisheries policy and management within UK waters, and in negotiations with other coastal States. The JFS will also inform our approach to

international agreements and engagement with international fora. It does not apply directly to UK Overseas Territories or to the Crown Dependencies (CDs)². However, policies within the JFS will inform our approach to collaborative working with the CDs to deliver effective fisheries management throughout UK and CD waters.

The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) will need to have regard to the Act, the JFS, and FMPs, where required by any guidance issued by the Secretary of State about performance of their functions or where undertaking a relevant function delegated to them by the MMO.

Effect of the JFS and FMPs

The fisheries policy authorities and the MMO (in their role as national fisheries authorities, as defined by the Act), are required by the Act to exercise their functions relating to fisheries, fishing, or aquaculture in accordance with the policies contained in a JFS or FMPs that are applicable to the authority unless a relevant change of circumstances indicates otherwise³.

The relevant circumstances include, in particular, changes relating to—

- The international obligations of the UK;
- Things done (or not done) by the government of a territory outside the UK that affect the marine and aquatic environment;
- Available scientific evidence; or
- Available evidence relating to the social, economic or environmental elements of sustainable development.

It is the policy of all fisheries policy authorities that any deviation would not be taken lightly. Reasons for departing from policies in this JFS and/or FMPs in any decision making will be explained and published⁴.

Accountability

Policies set out within this JFS will be implemented and evaluated through the normal procedures of the relevant fisheries policy authorities and any relevant national oversight mechanisms, and through the Fisheries Framework processes if required.

² The Crown Dependencies are the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

³ Fisheries Act 2020 section 10

⁴ Fisheries Act 2020 section 7 (5) and 10 (2)

1. Our Shared Ambition

1.1 Our ambition is to deliver world class, sustainable management of our sea fisheries and marine aquaculture across the UK, and to play our part in supporting delivery of this globally.

1.2 As part of being an independent coastal State, the UK's fisheries policy authorities will work together to support a vibrant, profitable, and sustainable fishing industry, underpinned by a healthy marine environment that is resilient to climate change.

1.3 We aim to deliver this ambition through three main areas:

- **Protecting and, where necessary, recovering our fish stocks.**

Wild fish are a public natural resource and provide significant benefits to the UK, as a source of food and employment, through the provision of ecosystem services, and social and well-being benefits. We will work together to ensure fish stocks are managed and, where necessary, recovered for the wider benefit of all, maximising the benefit to coastal communities.

- **Reducing the effects of fishing on the marine and coastal environment.**

We recognise a thriving fishing industry is underpinned by a healthy marine environment and that healthy stocks are resilient stocks. The fisheries policy authorities will ensure fisheries policy decisions take account of this relationship, including adopting an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. Using a range of approaches such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and technical measures, we will significantly reduce the effects of fishing on the marine environment and on stocks of marine carbon during the lifetime of the JFS.

- **Supporting a modern, resilient, and environmentally responsible fishing industry.**

The fisheries policy authorities will work together in support of a profitable and resilient fishing industry. We will support the continued development of robust supply chains, a diverse, low emission and modern fleet, and a skilled workforce, which are collectively able to respond swiftly to changing market and environmental conditions and new opportunities, while ensuring sustainable fisheries and biodiverse ecosystems for future generations.

As the marine environment changes, we will help our fishing and aquaculture industries to adapt accordingly, both to ensure economic viability and reduce impacts that may be undermining marine ecosystem resilience.

2. The Fisheries Objectives

The fisheries objectives, as set out in the Act, provide the basis for the policies set out in the JFS. They collectively define sustainable fishing and are designed to help the fisheries policy authorities balance the achievement of a thriving profitable seafood sector with a healthy and resilient marine environment in the long term.

The fisheries objectives are complementary, and one policy may contribute to the achievement of several objectives.

2.1 Interpreting the Objectives

2.1.1 **(1) The ‘sustainability objective’** is that:

(a) fish and aquaculture activities are—

(i) environmentally sustainable in the long term, and

(ii) managed so as to achieve economic, social and employment benefits and contribute to the availability of food supplies, and

(b) the fishing capacity of fleets is such that fleets are economically viable but do not overexploit marine stocks.

2.1.2 Sustainable fishing means environmental, economic, and social considerations are appropriately balanced when managing our fisheries to benefit present and future generations. It means ensuring that fish stocks can be fished, commercially and recreationally, both now and in the future. In doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will consider both the short-term and the long-term impacts of decisions on fish stocks and the fishing industry before acting; short-term socio-economic decisions should not significantly compromise the long-term health of the marine environment. These decisions will need to recognise the cultural importance of fishing through maintaining and, where possible, strengthening coastal communities and livelihoods alongside the requirement for fish stocks to reach and maintain sustainable levels.

2.1.3 To strike this balance, the fisheries policy authorities will take fisheries management decisions that are informed by the best available evidence.

2.1.4 During the lifetime of this JFS, the fisheries policy authorities will place emphasis, where required, on rebuilding stocks and protecting the environment. This will need to be delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of fishing interests and takes account of wider environmental factors.

2.1.5 **(2) The ‘precautionary objective’** is that—

(a) the precautionary approach to fisheries management is applied, and

(b) exploitation of marine stocks restores and maintains populations of harvested species above biomass levels capable of producing Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).

- 2.1.6 The Act defines a precautionary approach to fisheries management as ‘an approach in which the absence of sufficient scientific information is not used to justify postponing or failing to take management measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species, non-target species or their environment’.
- 2.1.7 The fisheries policy authorities will respect the precautionary approach, with a specific focus on ensuring that demands for additional evidence are not used to avoid taking difficult management decisions.
- 2.1.8 The Act defines MSY as ‘the highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken on average from a marine stock under existing environmental conditions without significantly affecting the reproduction process’.
- 2.1.9 The objective of maintaining biomass levels above levels capable of producing MSY provides fisheries policy authorities with a valuable tool to assess and manage the status of fish stocks. However, MSY assessments require a data-rich approach which limits the number of stocks that can be assessed on this basis. Throughout the JFS, reference is made to MSY or suitable proxies. The use of these suitable proxies alongside MSY, both to assess the state of stocks and inform management choices, will help drive improved sustainability across a greater number of stocks.
- 2.1.10 **(3) The ‘ecosystem objective’ is that—**
- (a) fish and aquaculture activities are managed using an ecosystem-based approach so as to ensure that any negative impacts on marine ecosystems are minimised and, where possible, reversed, and
- (b) incidental catches of sensitive species are minimised and, where possible, eliminated.
- 2.1.11 An ecosystem-based approach is defined in the Act as ‘an approach which (a) ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of GES within the meaning of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010, and (b) does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes.’
- 2.1.12 The sea fishing industry operates in, and depends upon, a high-quality marine environment, and the fisheries policy authorities will have an awareness, and

appreciation, of the varied interactions which occur between fish stocks, fisheries, and the environment.

- 2.1.13 The fisheries policy authorities will achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the ecosystem objective and GES through management regimes, which maintain or, where required, recover, protect, and improve the health of marine ecosystems by minimising the impacts of fishing on the environment beyond individual stocks, such as damage to seabed habitats and bycatch of sensitive species, while allowing appropriate human uses of our seas for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 2.1.14 **(4) The 'scientific evidence objective'** is that—
- (a) scientific data relevant to the management of fish and aquaculture activities is collected,
 - (b) where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities work together on the collection of, and share, such scientific data, and
 - (c) the management of fish and aquaculture activities is based on the best available scientific advice.
- 2.1.15 The scientific evidence objective means fisheries policy authorities will always take an evidence-based approach and make full use of the best available scientific advice to support decision making. This includes improving our collective understanding of how fishing and aquaculture impacts the marine environment with other marine sectors/activities.
- 2.1.16 **(5) The 'bycatch objective'** is that—
- (a) the catching of fish that are below minimum conservation reference size, and other unwanted bycatch, is avoided or reduced,
 - (b) catches are recorded and accounted for, and
 - (c) bycatch that is fish is landed, but only where this is appropriate and (in particular) does not create an incentive to catch fish that are below minimum conservation reference size.
- 2.1.17 The bycatch objective looks to avoid or reduce the catching of fish that are unwanted or below the minimum conservation size. The fisheries policy authorities are committed to ending the wasteful practice of discarding and to increasing the level of accountability for fishing activities at sea, while building the confidence we have in our seafood products.
- 2.1.18 The fisheries policy authorities are committed to ensuring that all catches of fish are accounted for with a preference that all catches of fish managed by Total Allowable Catch (TAC) are landed, unless:

- There is strong evidence fish will survive the capture process or
- There are limits to the application of technical mitigations or
- Landing the fish will result in excessive disposal costs

2.1.19 **(6) The ‘equal access objective’** is that the access of UK fishing boats to any area within British fishery limits is not affected by—

(a) the location of the fishing boat’s home port, or

(b) any other connection of the fishing boat, or any of its owners, to any place in the United Kingdom.

2.1.20 The fisheries policy authorities recognise any vessels registered and licensed in the UK have an equal right to fish in UK waters. On this basis, the equal access objective means no fisheries policy authority will put in place any measures to restrict the access of any UK-licensed vessel to any part of UK waters on the basis of a vessel’s home port.

2.1.21 Restrictions on a vessel’s ability to fish are a key tool of the fisheries policy authorities, but all such restrictions will be based on objective criteria and based on the need to protect stocks and the marine environment. In return, vessels will abide by the rules set by the fisheries policy authority in whose waters they are fishing.

2.1.22 **(7) The ‘national benefit objective’** is that fishing activities of UK fishing boats bring social or economic benefits to the United Kingdom or any part of the United Kingdom.

2.1.23 The national benefit objective means that the fisheries policy authorities will make conditions for each UK vessel they license to bring economic and/or social benefit to the UK, or any part of the UK.

2.1.24 **(8) The ‘climate change objective’** is that—

(a) the adverse effect of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change is minimised, and

(b) fish and aquaculture activities adapt to climate change.

2.1.25 As a relatively low-carbon activity, fishing as a source of food can make a valuable contribution to a low-carbon future. However, the fisheries policy authorities recognise that to realise this potential, action must be taken to minimise and mitigate the adverse effect of fishing, processing, and aquaculture activities on the climate as part of each nation’s path to net zero. To this end we will each take steps to encourage decarbonisation of the seafood sector.

2.1.26 Climate change has and will continue to alter the marine environment around the UK, changing the species composition of marine ecosystems. In accordance with the climate change objective, the fisheries policy authorities will support fisheries to adapt to these changes and challenges. The fisheries policy authorities will pursue appropriate policies to control fishing activity on vulnerable stocks and to protect, recover and enhance valuable blue carbon habitats.

2.2 Applying the Objectives

2.2.1 During the lifetime of this JFS, the fisheries policy authorities will strive to make significant overall progress in reducing the effects of fishing on the marine environment and the health of our fish stocks – particularly given the growing risks from climate change. We will also seek to ensure we maintain and improve the economic and cultural benefits we receive from our fisheries.

2.2.2 Given the complexity of UK fisheries and our marine environment, we will continue to take an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and adopt a balanced and proportionate approach to achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in a manner that contributes towards achieving and maintaining GES.

2.2.3 The policies set out in the JFS are to be read as a package, designed to meet all of the fisheries objectives. The overarching policies in the JFS will apply to the day-to-day management decisions of the national fisheries authorities.

2.2.4 Section 2.1 explains how the fisheries objectives have been interpreted. In the JFS we have used a numeric colour-coded system to identify how the fisheries objectives apply to policies and to help demonstrate how we have proportionately applied them. In section 5, we set out how we propose to use FMPs in order to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives

2.2.5 The fisheries policy authorities have an obligation to set out policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, all of the fisheries objectives, and these are set out within this JFS and the listed FMPs. All of the fisheries objectives are important, but some policies will favour particular objectives more than others. Table A in section 2.3 sets out the balance of policies against the objectives.

2.2.6 In formulating the policies in this JFS, the fisheries policy authorities recognise their interconnected relationship. For example, without the sustainable management of our stocks, we would not have a fishing industry which supports jobs and coastal communities for the future; we would not have products to market; and we would not deliver against our commitment to achieve GES with fish as a key ecosystem component.

2.2.7 It may, at times, be necessary to prioritise one fisheries objective over another in the short term. Decision making in such prioritisation will need to take place on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances. For example, to help a fishing community adjust to the introduction of a management measure, or to address an environmental challenge in a fishery such as the bycatch of sensitive species in a particular area or fleet. However, when doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will adopt an evidence-based approach, mindful of the precautionary approach whilst ensuring that management interventions are proportionate to the risk of the issue being addressed.

2.3 Objectives by Policy Areas

2.3.1 Each of the fisheries objectives has been assigned a numeric symbol from 1 to 8, as illustrated in the key below. These symbols are used in sections 3-5 of this document to indicate which policies are contributing to the achievement of individual objectives. A summary is provided in Table A below.









Objective	Number
Sustainability objective	
Precautionary objective	
Ecosystem objective	
Scientific evidence objective	
Bycatch objective	
Equal access objective	
National benefit objective	
Climate change objective	

Table A: Summary of the fisheries objectives by policy area in this JFS

Policy headings								
3.2 Science and evidence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4.1 Our approach to fisheries management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
4.2 Achieving the fisheries objectives through our policies								
4.2.1 Fishing Opportunities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
4.2.2 Non-quota stocks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.3 Wider international engagement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.2.4 Fishing capacity	Yes							
4.2.5 Approach to access to UK waters	Yes					Yes	Yes	
4.2.6 Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing	Yes		Yes		Yes			
4.2.7 Reducing bycatch and minimising catches of sensitive species	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			
4.2.8 Displacement	Yes		Yes				Yes	
4.2.9 Marine Spatial Planning	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes	

4.2.10 Marine Protected Areas			Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.11 Marine litter	Yes		Yes	Yes				
4.2.12 Coastal and freshwater	Yes		Yes					
4.2.13 Climate change		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.14 Aquaculture	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.15 Recreational sea fishing	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.16 Production, marketing and consumption of Seafood	Yes		Yes				Yes	Yes
5.0 Fisheries Management Plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3 Delivering the JFS

3.1 Principles

- 3.1.1 The national fisheries authorities will deliver the policies in the JFS through the exercise of their functions and in line with the fisheries objectives. The use of best available evidence and scientific advice, transparent decision making, and partnership working, will be core principles that will underpin delivery.
- 3.1.2 The JFS provides a transparent framework that sets out cross-Government priorities for UK waters to deliver the fisheries objectives in the Act, implemented by the fisheries policy authorities and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. This is similar to how the [UK Marine Policy Statement \(UKMPS\)](#) provides a framework for preparing marine plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment.

- 3.1.3 The fisheries policy authorities will have regard to the fisheries objectives, where appropriate, in future policy development, and will set out further policies in their respective areas of competence to support the achievement of the objectives.

3.2 Science and Evidence



- 3.2.1 Good science and a robust evidence base that commands trust and confidence will be essential to achieve the fisheries objectives in the Act. The UK has the opportunity as a coastal State to fulfil its ambition to be a world leader in science and innovation. The UK's expertise, together with its wealth of experience in gathering scientific data and information on the marine environment, means that it can continue to develop high-quality scientific fisheries and aquaculture evidence - biological, technical, economic and social.

Our Approach

- 3.2.2 In line with the scientific evidence objective, precautionary objective and ecosystem objective, the UK will take an evidence-based approach to fisheries and aquaculture management, making full use of the best available scientific evidence, and supporting the UK in continuing to meet its international obligations. This will be underpinned by a wide-ranging and coordinated monitoring programme and advisory framework, which will be further enhanced by research.
- 3.2.3 The devolved competence of each fisheries policy authority to deliver this evidence base will continue to be respected.

Best Available Scientific Advice

- 3.2.4 We will ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken across the fisheries policy authorities and externally to develop and procure scientific advice. We will seek opportunities to engage more widely with international organisations, including Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), as well as with environmental organisations, the fishing and aquaculture industries and the wider seafood sector.
- 3.2.5 The UK understands the importance and value of its continued membership of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). We will continue to play a full and active role in ICES, where UK scientists make a significant contribution at all levels of its advisory process, including on the Science and Advisory Committees and through participation in expert groups.

- 3.2.6 The UK will also utilise fully its position as an independent advice requestor of ICES, to strengthen the relationship with ICES and seek opportunities to improve fisheries and marine ecosystem science across the north east Atlantic.
- 3.2.7 Fisheries data and science can be complex, with ICES assessment areas and TAC management areas not often being directly aligned, which requires interpretation. Many stocks do not have the required data in order to make a MSY assessment and thus require other assessments in order to establish their health. In order to increase transparency, we will work with ICES and others to make it easier for everyone to understand if negotiated catch limits have been set within sustainable limits. We will also seek ways to assess the wider effects of fishing on non-commercial species and the wider marine environment.
- 3.2.8 The UK will also provide reporting on the sustainability of stocks through a combination of overarching metrics that reflect the status of a large number of stocks alongside more detailed information on individual stocks.

Scientific Data Collection and Sharing

- 3.2.9 We will ensure the continuity and consistency of fisheries and aquaculture data collection and sharing that is necessary to meet the UK's commitments and needs through having a co-ordinated programme of data collection across the fisheries policy authorities.
- 3.2.10 This will be delivered through a specific [UK Work Plan](#), in accordance with the Fisheries Framework.
- 3.2.11 We will gather a range of data and information - including scientific, technical, economic and social - from a wide range of sources. This includes fisheries independent surveys, fisheries dependent sampling and fishing activity data, as well as data and intelligence from industry and international expertise.
- 3.2.12 Effective monitoring is a key component of ensuring a well-evidenced, sustainable future for the fishing industry and marine environment. Where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities will explore the use of technologies such as vessel monitoring systems and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) for scientific purposes and to aid the sustainable management and control of fisheries.
- 3.2.13 The fisheries policy authorities will also put in place appropriate monitoring and surveillance programmes to improve our understanding of the environmental effects of fishing activities to inform our progress towards achieving the fisheries objectives and GES.
- 3.2.14 Fisheries management measures will be monitored to improve understanding of their effectiveness in order to continually improve decision making.

- 3.2.15 The national fisheries authorities will aim to provide each other with as full and open access to scientific and technical information as possible. This will provide for the continued monitoring of UK fisheries, meeting of reporting commitments and management of shared stocks.
- 3.2.16 We will make this information publicly available, where appropriate, thereby encouraging better coordination, and access to and sharing, of data in order to advance our fisheries management.
- 3.2.17 We will continue to share data where appropriate with other countries, including to support regional co-ordination of monitoring. We will engage with, and establish where necessary, appropriate fora to facilitate cooperation.

Improving the Evidence Base

- 3.2.18 The evidence base will be maintained and enhanced to support the fisheries objectives, including on sustainability, climate change and an ecosystem-based approach, including improving our collective understanding of the impact of fishing and aquaculture on the marine environment. This will be achieved through targeted research, exploring innovative approaches and capitalising on the outputs from joint partnerships across fisheries, aquaculture and marine - such as with industry, academia and international partners.
- 3.2.19 The national fisheries authorities will be open to exploring potential new and innovative sources of, and methods of gathering, scientific data and information so as to enhance the collection of high-quality data and standards of advice. Both existing and new approaches will continually be evaluated to ensure these deliver useful and relevant data and information, as well as being cost effective.
- 3.2.20 We will seek to foster collaborative innovation together with industry, seeking solutions to fisheries management problems, such as effective monitoring, optimising working practices, fishing gear selectivity and impact reduction. We will drive improved environmental performance through the operation of innovation partnerships, fostered collaborations or focussed fora on specific issues.

3.3 Reporting and Review Process

- 3.3.1 The JFS will remain in place until it is amended or replaced. The Act requires the fisheries policy authorities to review the JFS whenever they consider it appropriate to do so, and in any event within 6 years of its publication or most recent review.
- 3.3.2 A FMP will remain in place until it is replaced or revoked. A FMP may also be amended. The Act requires the relevant authority or authorities to review a FMP whenever they consider it is appropriate to do so, and in any event within 6 years of its publication or most recent review.

- 3.3.3 The Act requires all fisheries policy authorities, acting jointly, to prepare and publish a report, on a 3-year cycle, on the extent to which the policies in the JFS have been implemented, and have achieved, or contributed to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. The report must also describe the extent to which the policies contained in a relevant FMP have been implemented and have affected sea fish stock levels.
- 3.3.4 Further information on the reporting and review process for the JFS and FMPs can be found in the Act in sections 3, 8 and 11, and Part 1 and Part 3 of Schedule 1.

3.4 Monitoring

- 3.4.1 To measure the impact of the JFS, the fisheries policy authorities will, in the first instance, use the existing data sources, particularly those from ICES, in order to monitor the health of wild fish stocks, and the comprehensive socio-economic data collected on the size and composition of the UK fleet. We will also draw upon the relevant UKMS indicators and monitoring programmes. Maintaining this data continuity will allow for a consistent measurement of the impacts of the measures taken in the JFS on the health of fish stocks and the fishing fleet.
- 3.4.2 In cases where existing indicators are inadequate, the fisheries policy authorities will develop additional indicators and commission further research where appropriate.

3.5 Working in Partnership

- 3.5.1 Given the devolved nature of fisheries in the UK and the number of stocks the UK shares with other states, effective management is co-dependent on both UK-wide and international solutions. Fisheries management therefore cannot be delivered in isolation and the fisheries policy authorities will work together and with our stakeholders, other coastal States, and international partners.
- 3.5.2 To achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives, the national fisheries authorities are committed to working with our partners, and engaging widely with a range of stakeholders, who play an important role in the management of our seas and natural resources. Alignment and integration with wider marine management mechanisms is essential, including our network of protected sites, the marine planning system across the UK, and the UKMS.

3.6 Participatory Decision Making

- 3.6.1 Our future vision is that industry should take a greater, shared responsibility for sustainably managing fisheries, while making a greater contribution towards the costs. This can include, for example, work to develop new management

practices and contributing to fisheries science, being more actively engaged in fisheries management decisions, and co-designing future policy.

- 3.6.2 There are different models of participatory decision making in place across the UK, which provide the seafood and marine sectors, non-government organisations and coastal communities with a voice in the decisions that impact them. The fisheries policy authorities are committed to further developing and strengthening these arrangements for co-management of our fisheries and promoting inclusivity and involvement in our management approach across all parts of society.
- 3.6.3 The fisheries policy authorities will also continue to use established groups, where appropriate, as part of an effective and robust decision making approach, and will encourage the early participation of stakeholders, to identify issues and potential solutions, as well as to promote transparency.
- 3.6.4 The fisheries policy authorities recognise that strong, clear and transparent governance arrangements should be in place, to ensure that appropriate engagement takes place and that decisions are taken at the right level. This will include setting out in relevant policy and implementation documents, the role that sectoral, national and local groups play in supporting decision making and delivering effective management of our fisheries, whilst respecting the ultimate accountability of regulators and Ministers.

4 Delivering Sustainable Management of Fisheries

4.1 Our approach to Fisheries Management



- 4.1.1 A vibrant and prosperous seafood sector, supporting thriving coastal communities, depends upon a healthy and resilient marine environment, and this should be the basis for decision making. Fisheries are fully reliant on the ecosystems in which they operate, and these ecosystems can be compromised by human-induced pressures, including pollution, marine litter, and unsustainable exploitation of marine resources. This includes the impact of stock levels on the processes and functioning of the wider ecosystem - for example, removal of prey species.
- 4.1.2 Long-term, sustainable, and profitable fisheries therefore require management to ensure the adverse impacts of fishing activity on ecosystem functioning, and/or the resilience of marine ecosystems to deal with environmental threats such as climate change is minimised. This also recognises the obligation set out

in the UKMS⁵ to achieve GES. The JFS forms an important part of delivering GES and the UKMS on both commercially targeted and non-targeted species of fish, as well as supporting achievement of a host of other targets including on cetaceans, seals, birds, food webs, benthic habitats, and marine litter. In turn, it is recognised that measures taken to achieve or maintain GES for contaminants in seafood, contaminants more generally, and eutrophication will also underpin healthy fish stocks.

- 4.1.3 The sustainable use and conservation, for future generations, of the sea's natural capital, is therefore central to our fisheries management approach.
- 4.1.4 Fisheries management can be seen as a cyclical process. We undertake research and collect data to improve our understanding of the state of stocks, of the interaction of fisheries with the marine environment, and of the seafood sector itself. We agree and allocate fishing opportunities; apply measures to manage fishing mortality, reduce environmental impacts, and improve supply chain sustainability; assess the effectiveness of the management measures; and use this data to improve our science and evidence base, which then informs our approach to securing fishing opportunities and developing management measures. This approach includes the protection of biodiversity and healthy functioning marine ecosystems.
- 4.1.5 The vital role of the seafood sector in the provision of food and employment, as well as its significant cultural value, is also recognised. Decisions by the fisheries policy authorities on the management of fisheries should take this into account in accordance with the sustainability objective and national benefit objective in order to ensure continuity of this role, and to protect the long-term interests of the sector and wellbeing of the communities it supports.
- 4.1.6 The fisheries policy authorities will apply the fisheries objectives both in our domestic and international work. Domestically, this will include when taking decisions on allocating fishing opportunities and when developing future fisheries management policies and measures. Through fisheries negotiations with other coastal States and in international fisheries fora, the UK will seek to achieve or contribute to the achievement of the fisheries objectives in the Act.
- 4.1.7 The fisheries policy authorities and national fisheries authorities⁶ will take an ecosystem-based approach to managing our fisheries⁷. They will continue to

⁵ [Marine Strategy Part One: UK updated assessment and Good Environmental Status \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁶ National fisheries authorities are a) the Secretary of State, b) the Marine Management Organisation, c) the Scottish Ministers, d) the Welsh Ministers, and e) the Northern Ireland department (Fisheries Act 2020)

⁷ An "ecosystem-based approach" is defined in the Fisheries Act (2020) as "an approach which—

take account of the need to ensure the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems when exercising their functions and consider the impacts of fishing on the marine environment alongside other human activities. This will support the achievement of the sustainability, precautionary, and ecosystem objectives, as well as contributing to the achievement of GES. This will include measures to sustainably manage target species, to protect key forage species such as sand eels (GES: food webs), essential fish habitats i.e., key spawning areas, and sensitive species (GES: biodiversity), to minimise seabed abrasion from fishing (GES: seabed integrity) and manage fishing related litter (GES: marine litter). Such measures recognise the interdependence of healthy stocks and a healthy environment and will support a thriving fishing industry into the future.

4.1.8 The fisheries policy authorities will also take a precautionary approach to fisheries management⁸ in accordance with the precautionary objective, and will aim to fish within sustainable limits based on the best available scientific advice, including MSY or using appropriate proxies where sufficient scientific data are available. Where data are not available, this will not be used as a reason for not taking appropriate pre-emptive steps to manage or address the risk to stocks and/or the marine environment. Fisheries policy authorities will aim to mitigate against negative outcomes for the environment, whilst having regard to the needs of fishing communities as required under the sustainability objective and the national benefit objective.

4.1.9 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to work with the fishing industry and other stakeholders across a broad range of topics such as introducing additional management including, but not limited to, measures to protect spawning and nursery areas of key stocks, reducing unwanted catches, or the use of REM. These collaborations will provide a way for fishers to demonstrate they are acting in a sustainable and responsible manner. A move to a more collaborative approach to fisheries management, as noted in section 3 above, will enable the fishing sector to contribute its information on activities and impacts to help co-design management actions. In taking such an approach, the fisheries policy authorities and fishing industry can work collectively to contribute to the delivery of the fisheries objectives.

(a) ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status (within the meaning of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010/1627)), and

(b) does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes”

⁸ A “precautionary approach to fisheries management” is defined in the Fisheries Act 2020 as “an approach in which the absence of sufficient scientific information is not used to justify postponing or failing to take management measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species, non-target species or their environment”.

- 4.1.10 The fisheries policy authorities will ensure our financial support does not undermine but delivers or contributes to the fisheries objectives.
- 4.1.11 Our FMPs will set out policies for specific fisheries or stocks to contribute to delivering the fisheries objectives (section 5). Each FMP must describe the relevant indicator or indicators that fisheries managers will use to assess the effectiveness of the plan. Where possible, the indicator will be MSY values where they can be identified, otherwise suitable proxies will be used for more data limited stocks. Where feasible, a FMP will include plans for additional data collection in order to establish MSY values or will explain why no such plans are proposed.
- 4.1.12 The fisheries policy authorities understand the need to take robust action to tackle climate change. Marine ecosystems are both impacted by rising carbon dioxide levels and climate change⁹, including warming seas, reduced oxygen levels, ocean acidification, and rising sea levels, and provide us with opportunities to help us adapt to rising temperatures, and to lock up and store blue carbon. Climate resilient ecosystems are essential for healthy stocks and management of our seas must be considered in this context. In line with the climate change objective in the Act, the fisheries policy authorities aim to minimise the adverse effects of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change. The fisheries policy authorities will explore, in partnership with the fishing industry, the best pathways to contribute to net zero carbon targets within the timeframes specified by each fisheries policy authority, including through investigating and supporting reduction in fishing vessel and supply chain emissions (section 4.2.12).

4.2 Achieving the Fisheries Objectives through our Policies

4.2.1 Fishing Opportunities

This section sets out how fishing opportunities are determined, apportioned, and distributed, and how the fisheries objectives will be considered at each stage.

How fishing opportunities are determined

- 4.2.1.1 The Secretary of State may determine the maximum quantity of fish that may be caught by the British fishing fleet (a catch quota) and the maximum number of days that the British fishing fleet may spend at sea (an effort quota) following consultation with the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers, the Northern

⁹ MCCIP (2020) Marine Climate Change Impacts: Marine Climate Change Impacts Report Card 2020

Ireland department and the MMO. Collectively, catch quotas and effort quotas can be described as fishing opportunities.

- 4.2.1.2 This determination will normally be made on an annual basis and will establish fishing opportunities for that fishing year.
- 4.2.1.3 Most fish stocks straddle UK and other neighbouring coastal State waters. As such, the fishing opportunities determined for these stocks will normally follow international negotiations and will reflect any agreements from those negotiations. These negotiations are conducted by the UK Government and supported by expertise from across the fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.4 In some circumstances, fishing opportunities may be determined on a provisional basis. This could occur, for example, where international negotiations have not concluded by the time a fishing year begins.
- 4.2.1.5 For stocks found solely within UK waters and not subject to agreement with other coastal States, the fishing opportunities will be determined by the UK.
- 4.2.1.6 After the Secretary of State has determined fishing opportunities, these may be apportioned between the fisheries policy authorities by the Secretary of State. It is then for each authority to decide how to distribute its share to industry.
- 4.2.1.7 Fishing opportunities may be managed and exchanged during the fishing year by the fisheries policy authorities and any organisations permitted to carry out this function by the fisheries policy authorities
- 4.2.1.8 Fisheries policy authorities recognise the importance of managing fishing activity to account for natural change, to allow for the dynamic nature of marine ecosystems and improve resilience to fishing pressure, natural variation and climate change. We will therefore aim to agree and set fishing opportunities that allow for sustained progress towards restoring and maintaining all commercial stocks, quota and non-quota, above biomass levels that produce yields that are sustainable for the long term.
- 4.2.1.9 We recognise that in order to balance our environmental, economic and social commitments, the trajectories (towards achieving these biomass levels) may need to speed up or slow down, and achieving that balance between these three elements will be a central component of delivering the sustainability objective. These decisions should be mindful of the impact on coastal communities and yet not jeopardise the long-term recovery of stocks or delivery of a healthy marine environment.

Determining fishing opportunities through international negotiations

- 4.2.1.10 As a coastal State, the UK is subject to the requirements of UNCLOS, which obliges coastal States to manage the living resources in their Exclusive

Economic Zone (EEZ) in a sustainable manner. This includes cooperating with other coastal States on fish stocks that occur jointly in their respective EEZs.

- 4.2.1.11 It is critical that we work in partnership with our neighbouring coastal States. This will promote the sustainable use of stocks and responsible management of our respective waters.
- 4.2.1.12 The principal ways in which we do this are through formal annual consultations underpinned by international agreements, such as the TCA and our fisheries framework agreements with Norway and the Faroe Islands and in respect of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks, through engagement with coastal States or other relevant States, and in the relevant RFMOs.
- 4.2.1.13 The UK will approach international fisheries negotiations using the following principles.

Principles of International Fisheries Negotiations

Through fisheries negotiations, the UK will seek to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in the Act. In particular, the UK will aim to:

- increase the overall number of stocks fished at MSY or suitable MSY proxy, consistent with the best available scientific advice;
- ensure sustainable exploitation of stocks through the establishment of comprehensive TAC (quota) sharing underpinned by the principle of zonal attachment;
- secure outcomes consistent with wider obligations for sustainable use of the marine environment including the UKMS, and international commitments such as the Convention for Biological Diversity, OSPAR Convention, and UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- minimise the negative impacts of fishing on non-target species, marine habitats and ecosystems by applying an ecosystem-based approach;
- manage the harvesting of shared stocks sustainably including non-quota stocks;
- support the delivery of the policies contained in FMPs and existing Long-Term Management Plans;
- enable the continued reduction and elimination of harmful and illegal discarding, and address ongoing choke risks, including through supporting stock recovery;

- ensure stock-rebuilding initiatives take appropriate account of socioeconomic considerations;
 - provide certainty and profitable outcomes for the industry.
- 4.2.1.14 Establishing TACs is a key aspect of the negotiations between coastal States. TACs, alongside agreements on quota shares, are necessary to ensure that collectively coastal States remain within catch limits.
- 4.2.1.15 The UK negotiates the TACs for around 70 stocks with the EU on an annual basis. The agreed TACs are shared between the UK and EU as set out in the TCA. Policy positions on fishing opportunities for discussion with the EU are developed through consultations between the fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.16 The TCA recognises the UK's sovereign control of its waters from 1 January 2021. There is an adjustment period lasting five and a half years from that point to allow fleets on both sides time to adapt to the new access arrangements. During this period there will be continued reciprocal access to each other's waters at levels commensurate with each Party's share of fishing opportunities in nearly all stocks and, for non-quota stocks (NQS), at historic levels. As set out in the TCA, at the end of the adjustment period, access as well as fishing opportunities, will be subject to annual negotiations.
- 4.2.1.17 Trilateral negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway are conducted on an annual basis to agree TACs for North Sea jointly managed stocks. Each Party's fishing opportunities are determined by the TACs and the shares agreed as part of those negotiations.
- 4.2.1.18 Widely distributed pelagic stocks - notably, mackerel, blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring - are jointly managed through multilateral negotiations by the UK and a number of other countries in the north east Atlantic. During annual negotiations, the Parties aim to agree a global TAC for each stock in addition to other management measures and sharing arrangements. The UK advocates a science- and evidence-based approach to managing these stocks and will continue to do so as it looks to agree comprehensive sharing arrangements.
- 4.2.1.19 The UK views information on the geographic distribution of fish stocks as fundamental to establishing both the TAC and a coastal State's share of a given stock, be that in bilateral, trilateral or multilateral negotiations. This information should also form the basis for how catch advice for each biological stock should be apportioned across TAC management areas.
- 4.2.1.20 In annual bilateral negotiations with the Faroes and Norway, the UK will aim to reach agreements which see a fair and balanced exchange of opportunities, through quota exchanges and access; and return the best value to the UK fleet.
- 4.2.1.21 Fisheries in international waters (also known as the 'high seas') and for highly migratory and 'straddling' fish stocks are typically managed by Regional

Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). The UK is an independent Contracting Party to a number of RFMOs, including the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The UK's positions at RFMO negotiations will need to be informed by both our domestic and international objectives, including the fisheries objectives where relevant.

- 4.2.1.22 In addition to RFMOs, the UK is also party to the [Treaty of Paris on Spitsbergen](#) (Svalbard) 1920, which offers fishing opportunities in waters outside the UK's EEZ.

Determining fishing opportunities for UK only stocks

- 4.2.1.23 We will take the same approach to those stocks that we are solely responsible for, taking account of the fisheries objectives and using best available science and evidence to decide on our position regarding quota and NQS. The main difference is this position is not subject to negotiation, and so where managed by quota, it is something we will unilaterally implement through the process of the Secretary of State's determination (as outlined above). We will apply a precautionary approach, using best available scientific evidence and advice for stocks that exist solely in UK waters.

Apportionment of opportunities across the UK

- 4.2.1.24 The apportionment method of fishing opportunities between the fisheries policy authorities will be set out in the publicly available UK Quota Management Rules (QMR).
- 4.2.1.25 These rules may include other matters which are relevant to how fishing opportunities are managed between fisheries policy authorities. This may include, but is not limited to, how we will manage:

- Stocks that are not apportioned;
- In-year international and domestic exchanges;
- Inter-annual transfers (banking and borrowing);
- Unauthorised fishing and penalties; and
- Movements of vessels between fisheries policy authorities.

These rules will be updated from time to time by the Secretary of State in consultation with the other fisheries authorities. Where appropriate, this may also include consultation with industry and other stakeholders as well as the wider public.

Distribution of fishing opportunities within each fisheries policy authority

- 4.2.1.26 Following apportionment, it is then for each national fisheries authority to decide how to distribute its share to industry. The criteria and methods used will be set out by each authority in its respective, publicly available QMR.
- 4.2.1.27 These rules will be updated from time to time by the relevant fisheries policy authority. Where appropriate, this may also include consultation with the other national fisheries authorities, industry and other stakeholders as well as the wider public.
- 4.2.1.28 In accordance with section 25(1) and (2) of the Act, when distributing fishing opportunities, each national fisheries authority will publish and use transparent and objective criteria. These will have regard to the fisheries objectives and will include criteria relating to environmental, social and economic factors. This may, in particular, relate to:
- The impact of fishing on the environment;
 - The history of compliance with regulatory requirements relating to fishing;
 - The contribution of fishing to the local economy; and
 - Historic catch levels.
- 4.2.1.29 The national fisheries authorities will also seek to incentivise:
- the use of more selective fishing gear, and
 - the use of fishing techniques and vessels that have a reduced impact on the environment (for example, use less energy, or cause less damage to habitats).

4.2.2 Non-quota Stocks

- 4.2.2.1 In addition to those fishing opportunities that we manage through quotas and shares, we may also manage NQS through effort limits, fisheries closures, and technical measures. We jointly manage many of these stocks with the EU. The UK will prioritise the development of management approaches for NQS domestically, and will seek to develop multi-year strategies for conservation and management for NQS via the SCF. Exchanges of fisheries management data will improve both Parties' understanding of these shared stocks and help inform management strategies.
- 4.2.2.2 The UK approach to managing NQS in UK waters will inform our negotiating position on future multi-year strategies for conservation and management.

4.2.2.3 For those NQS not subject to international negotiations, the fisheries policy authorities will apply the approach to fisheries management outlined in section 4.1 and put in place, individually or acting together, appropriate measures to enhance management of fishing activity that exploits NQS. This will include how these stocks can be sustainably harvested, using the best available evidence and taking a precautionary approach where appropriate. Measures for specific NQS may be set out in FMPs or placed in alternative policy documents, as appropriate.

4.2.3 Wider International Engagement



4.2.3.1 In addition to its activities in RFMOs, described in paragraph 4.2.1.21 of this document, the UK plays an active role in negotiations and meetings related to sustainable fisheries management in the United Nations, in the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

4.2.3.2 As a responsible coastal State and leader in sustainable fisheries, the UK will actively participate in these international fora to share best practice globally and press for effective regulation of fishing activities on the high seas. The fisheries policy authorities will support engagement with these international fora where we will promote high standards in fisheries management. In doing so we will promote the principles set out in the fisheries objectives where appropriate. This will include, for example, promoting the sustainable use and protection of stocks, and facilitating international cooperation to tackle climate change, to support achievement of the sustainability, precautionary, and climate change objectives. Where possible, such agreements will also support achievement of the national benefit objective through providing direct or indirect socio-economic benefits to the UK.

4.2.3.3 The UK has signed bilateral Memoranda of Understanding with both Iceland and Greenland to enhance cooperation in fisheries. These include sharing expertise in sustainable fisheries management; encouraging collaboration between our respective private sectors; and cooperation in scientific research. These agreements provide examples of how the UK will meet the fisheries objectives and act as a responsible coastal State, and similar principles will be applied in future Memoranda of Understanding.

4.2.4 Fishing Capacity

4.2.4.1 As part of achieving the sustainability objective, the national fisheries authorities will ensure the fishing capacity of fleets is appropriately balanced between maintaining economic viability and maintaining stock health. There will be a

presumption against allocating public funding for new fishing vessels where this increases fishing capacity beyond sustainable levels.

4.2.5 Approach to access to UK waters

4.2.5.1 In relation to access by UK fishing boats to UK waters, the Act contains an 'equal access objective' to be applied to all future fisheries policy across the UK. This objective sets out that access of UK fishing boats to any area within British fishery limits is not limited based on the location of the fishing boat's home port or connection of the fishing boat, or any of its owners to any place in the United Kingdom.

4.2.5.2 The UK will continue to respect pre-existing Voisinage reciprocal access arrangements that apply to its 0-6 nautical mile limit. Non-UK vessels availing of such access will be required to comply with fisheries legislation and management measures that apply to UK vessels fishing in that area.

4.2.6 Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

4.2.6.1 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to continue to deliver on the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing and its contribution in the global fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices. The national fisheries authorities will rigorously enforce their respective IUU Regulations.

4.2.6.2 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to produce a UK strategy to tackle IUU fishing in 2022.

4.2.6.3 The national fisheries authorities will cooperate to manage the UK IUU Vessel List and the UK Identification of Non-Cooperating Third Countries in the fight against IUU fishing.

4.2.7 Reducing Bycatch and Minimising Catches of Sensitive Species



4.2.7.1 The fisheries policy authorities are committed to the principle of reducing bycatch, including fish below the minimum conservation reference size and minimising discards. The fisheries policy authorities will work in partnership with stakeholders to develop a range of management measures that support fishers to avoid unwanted catches of quota species to reduce unnecessary fish mortality and discarding of fish. The fisheries policy authorities will ensure these catches are recorded and accounted for and develop catching policies that are tailored to the UK marine environment and industry needs. The fisheries policy authorities will also detail in their national policies the approach they are taking to reduce their vessels unwanted bycatch.

4.2.7.2 Each national fisheries authority can develop appropriate discard exemptions that are appropriate for their respective waters. These exemptions will allow a

limited level of discarding for certain stocks, in certain fisheries, in clearly defined circumstances. The introduction of any new exemptions, or modification of any current exemptions, will continue to be based on robust scientific evidence.

- 4.2.7.3 The fisheries policy authorities commit to the UK applying appropriate TAC deductions, from the UK's share of the TAC, for any exemptions their fleets use in UK or external waters (subject to relevant international arrangements).
- 4.2.7.4 The national fisheries authorities are committed to working with the fishing industry to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the unwanted bycatch and entanglement of sensitive species including cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises), seals, seabirds, and elasmobranchs (sharks, skates and rays). Through the upcoming UK Bycatch Mitigation Initiative, the fisheries policy authorities will commit to actions that improve scientific monitoring and research, develop and adopt effective mitigation measures, support fishers to implement mitigation measures, and work with international partners to reduce the bycatch of sensitive species globally.
- 4.2.7.5 Where necessary, the national fisheries authorities will work with industry and stakeholders to develop and set out broader policies to achieve these objectives or fishery-specific policies within the relevant FMP.

4.2.8 Displacement

- 4.2.8.1 The fisheries policy authorities recognise there are multiple users of the sea, and this, combined with fisheries management measures for conservation purposes, can create pressures that could result in displacement of fishing effort. Displacement may have negative social, economic and environmental impacts, and we will work with sea users to identify and address displacement issues from management measures and other spatial uses including offshore wind farms.

4.2.9 Marine Spatial Planning

- 4.2.9.1 The UKMPS, along with the Marine Plans, provides a decision making framework to enable activities in the marine area to be managed in a way that protects the marine environment, whilst supporting sustainable development. An overriding principle of the UKMPS is to promote compatibility between different activities and identify opportunities for co-existence. The Marine Acts¹⁰ require

¹⁰ Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/section/9>), Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/5/contents>), and Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2013/10/section/1/enacted>)

that public authorities must take authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with the relevant marine policy documents (defined as the UKMPS and any marine plan that is in effect for the marine plan area), unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.2.9.2 The fisheries policy authorities will ensure that marine plans include policies that consider fisheries, aquaculture and supporting habitats for fish stocks (nursery or spawning grounds). The marine planning process also gives marine users an opportunity to have a say on how the marine area should be managed by requiring consultation to be carried out on draft marine plans.

4.2.10 **Marine Protected Areas**

- 4.2.10.1 As part of delivering GES, the fisheries policy authorities will continue to develop the network of protected sites at sea to protect specific habitats and species of national or international importance. The fisheries policy authorities will ensure that fishing activities are managed to enable MPAs to achieve their conservation objectives.

4.2.11 **Marine Litter**

- 4.2.11.1 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to provide support to the industry to reduce its environmental impact, and also promote initiatives such as Fishing for Litter undertaken by industry to reduce other impacts on the marine environment.

- 4.2.11.2 The fisheries policy authorities will support the growth of the circular economy by aiming to increase the amount of end-of-life fishing gear that is collected and managed sustainably in line with the waste hierarchy. In addition, the fisheries policy authorities will encourage the circular design of fishing and aquaculture gear to prevent gear loss, facilitate lost gear retrieval and reduce the environmental impact in the event of absolute loss, as well as improving wider material reusability, reparability, and recyclability.

4.2.12 **Coastal and Freshwater**

- 4.2.12.1 GES requires us to take an ecosystem-based approach to managing our marine environment. As such, the Marine Strategy includes a number of cross-cutting measures that reflect links between marine fish populations, and the management of coastal and riverine environments. It is important to also recognise these interactions in this JFS.

- 4.2.12.2 Coastal habitats and rivers are essential to a healthy marine environment and thriving fisheries. They are important to the life stages of a wide range of fish species of commercial and recreational value to our seafood sector. For example, tidal saltmarsh and estuaries provide nursery and rearing habitat for bass, seatrout and some flatfish species. Migratory species such as salmon,

seatrout and European eel also require unhindered passage within river systems to complete critical parts of their life cycles. Good water quality is critical in maintaining healthy coastal habitats and aquaculture production in estuaries and coastal areas,

- 4.2.12.3 The fisheries policy authorities recognise that measures to manage our coastal and riverine freshwater environments need to consider the impacts on the health of our marine environment. These could include, for example, improvements to water quality which would help address downstream issues within MPAs and shellfish farms, and consideration of marine fish species in coastal management.

4.2.13 Climate Change

- 4.2.13.1 Responding to climate change within the seafood sector requires consideration of both how the sector can mitigate climate change, and how the sector can adapt to climate change.
- 4.2.13.2 Mitigation of climate change needs to be considered across the supply chain. The national fisheries authorities will work towards understanding the different steps of the supply chain's carbon contribution. Identifying feasible technological, behavioural, and managerial changes to mitigate and reduce emissions across the fisheries supply chain is vital to support the transition towards a net zero carbon emissions future.
- 4.2.13.3 The fisheries policy authorities will also seek innovative solutions to realise carbon savings from engine upgrades (where these do not increase fleet capacity beyond sustainable levels), gear choices and green technology, as well as identifying opportunities for vessel emission reductions through alternative fuels. We will also support innovation to reduce seabed abrasion, recognising that damage to the seabed can release carbon.
- 4.2.13.4 The fisheries policy authorities recognise that the protection, restoration and sustainable management of blue carbon habitats provides a nature-based solution that can support adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside benefits for carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
- 4.2.13.5 The national fisheries authorities will work with the scientific community to identify gaps in the UK's blue carbon evidence base, and work to address them. The fisheries policy authorities will also conduct research into the impact of fishing activities and aquaculture on blue carbon habitats and take this into account in future decision making.
- 4.2.13.6 The fisheries policy authorities will also encourage voluntary industry initiatives to decarbonise and improve marketing of low-carbon seafood.
- 4.2.13.7 We acknowledge the positive role that aquaculture in particular can play in addressing climate change through providing sustainable sources of low-carbon

and high-quality protein, the potential role of aquaculture sub-sectors such as seaweed and shellfish aquaculture in carbon capture, and the positive contribution aquaculture makes to the blue economy. As with all sectors, the aquaculture sector will be expected to adapt to environmental and climate change. We will seek to support industry innovation and a circular economy.

- 4.2.13.8 The seafood sector must adapt to the impacts of climate change to ensure the long-term success of the sector and alignment with our climate commitments. The national fisheries authorities will continue to monitor and address the impacts of changing climatic conditions on marine species, habitats and fisheries, as highlighted by the [Climate Change Committee's Climate Risk Independent Assessment](#), through mechanisms such as the Marine Climate Change Impacts Programme. We will also ensure the findings are accessible to affected stakeholders. The fisheries policy authorities will work in partnership with the seafood sector to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change and co-develop climate-adaptive fisheries management techniques to support sustainable fishing of stocks impacted by climate change.
- 4.2.13.9 The fisheries policy authorities will seek to collaborate to take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges which may arise from climate change, such as the developments for new capture fisheries or diversification of aquaculture. Such opportunities should only be exploited where doing so is compatible with achieving GES and international commitments, and there is a market for the end product.

4.2.14 Aquaculture

- 4.2.14.1 The fisheries policy authorities support balanced, industry-led, sustainable growth of each aquaculture sub-sector based on the best available science relating to that sub-sector, and an industry which is diverse, economically viable and contributes to food security whilst minimising environmental impact. We acknowledge the various sub-sectors of aquaculture, found in the different nations of the UK, operating through various cultivation methods, can interact to varying degrees with their host ecosystems and users of a shared environment. As such, any development and expansion of any part of the aquaculture sector will be undertaken using the best available evidence, in line with the relevant regulations and strategic management frameworks, such as marine planning, and within environmental limits. This will allow aquaculture to remain diverse and economically viable, whilst contributing to food security and minimising environmental impact.
- 4.2.14.2 The fisheries policy authorities will collaborate on aquaculture where relevant to achieve common goals and will work together to maintain the high standards of aquatic animal health and animal welfare already adopted.

4.2.15 Recreational Sea Fishing

- 4.2.15.1 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to work together - where possible, practicable and appropriate - to ensure recreational sea fishing is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. We will aim, where possible, to take account of recreational sea fishing in wider fisheries management.
- 4.2.15.2 This will continue to be underpinned by encouraging data collection on catches, economic impact, and species-specific data across the recreational sea fishing sector.

4.2.16 Production, Marketing and Consumption of Seafood



Resilient industry and communities

- 4.2.16.1 The fisheries policy authorities will aim to ensure coastal communities are able to adapt to the current and future needs of the seafood sector and associated support industries, recognising the differing, yet often complementary, local dynamics with other industries.

Workforce – skills and working standards

- 4.2.16.2 The fisheries policy authorities will work with seafood sector stakeholders to encourage entry to the industry at all stages of career, with certifiable training, succession planning and improved working conditions and standards to aid development of an attractive career path. The fisheries policy authorities will seek to improve the general public's perception of the industry as a place to work and prosper, to encourage new entrants into the industry.
- 4.2.16.3 The fisheries policy authorities will work with the seafood sector to understand and promote the most suitable and fair remuneration practises to encourage new entrants.
- 4.2.16.4 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage the sector to increase the supply of domestic labour available to work in the seafood sector, and for all those working in the sector to be treated equitably.
- 4.2.16.5 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to support the health, safety, wellbeing, and in particular, safety at sea of all those associated with the seafood sector.

Supply chain

- 4.2.16.6 The fisheries policy authorities will seek to build the resilience of the seafood sector supply chain by:

- Encouraging collaboration and innovation across the supply chain to help with future proofing and response to the opportunities/challenges of the ever-dynamic food market - for example, encourage opportunities to create efficiencies by sharing knowledge on best practice and the benefits of collaboration;
- Highlighting the positive benefits of eating seafood from domestic markets, while balancing the economic benefit of international trade; and
- Encouraging transparency and traceability through the use of Sustainability and Quality Indicators to market distinctive fisheries and their products.

Processing our products

4.2.16.7 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage the processing sector to be both responsive to the fishing and aquaculture industry and consumer behaviour changes and be more sustainable and resilient by seeking opportunities to grow and change in advance of industry developments.

Markets – selling and marketing our products

4.2.16.8 The fisheries policy authorities will promote that locally sourced seafood, from both wild-capture and aquaculture, can be a healthy, low-carbon, and sustainable protein source; and will encourage better consumer awareness to make informed choices, increasing the consumption of UK seafood as a healthy option and a successful domestic market for UK seafood.

4.2.16.9 The fisheries policy authorities will work with the seafood sector to support a prosperous, resilient UK market which encourages the consumption of fish farmed in the UK and caught by UK vessels through education and promotion, highlighting the UK's responsible approach to fisheries management and aquaculture practices.

4.2.16.10 The national fisheries authorities will seek to facilitate the development of robust labelling and traceability systems which can support accreditation and are understandable to the consumer and, through this, will promote seafood.

4.2.16.11 Working collaboratively where possible, the fisheries policy authorities will aim for a prosperous, international market which ensures the best return and added value for the industry while respecting the sustainability and climate change objectives.

4.2.16.12 The national fisheries authorities will continue to work together to ensure the seafood sector can utilise the best possible markets for their products, whether these are new or existing markets.

- 4.2.16.13 The national fisheries authorities will work with the seafood sector to monitor the capacity and facilitate the induction/training of Certifying Officers to enable international trade.
- 4.2.16.14 Through these policies the national fisheries authorities will contribute to the achievement of the 'national benefit objective' in the Act by providing for an economically viable fishing industry and seafood sector that supports UK seafood businesses.

Growth, diversification, and innovation

- 4.2.16.15 Where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities will support opportunities to diversify to promote resilience and enable communities to become adaptable to the current and future needs of the seafood sector and associated support industries, whilst recognising local dynamics.
- 4.2.16.16 The fisheries policy authorities recognise the coastal communities' ambition for development and to encourage diversification to enable and maximise opportunities for the benefit of the seafood sector.
- 4.2.16.17 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage collaboration between industry, academia, and Government to find innovative opportunities for sustainable economic success and diversification.

5. Fisheries Management Plans



5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Act defines a FMP as a document that sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels. Each plan will specify the stock(s), type of fishing and the geographic area covered.
- 5.1.2 This section sets out the overall purpose of FMPs, including their link to the fisheries objectives and the wider framework for fisheries management, together with the plans the fisheries policy authorities will publish. Annex A sets out the list of proposed FMPs with their proposed publication dates.
- 5.1.3 It will be for each national fisheries authority to determine what FMPs it requires and whether to prepare those plans individually or jointly with another national fisheries authority. Each national fisheries authority will work with its relevant delivery bodies to implement the policies set out in a FMP.
- 5.1.4 The fisheries policy authorities have collectively identified those biological stocks in UK waters that plans could cover based on information from ICES, international agreements and using data on landings into the UK. The list covers

both internationally shared quota and NQS, plus those that exist entirely within UK waters and whose management is not shared. Annex A shows the stock or stocks included within each proposed plan.

- 5.1.5 All FMPs will be subject to public consultation prior to being formally published by the fisheries policy authorities.

5.2 What is a Fisheries Management Plan?

- 5.2.1 FMPs are documents that set out a policy framework to secure the long-term sustainability of our fish stocks. The Act requires FMPs to be monitored for their effectiveness and regularly reviewed and reported upon by the fisheries policy authorities.
- 5.2.2 Once a FMP is published, the Act places a duty on national fisheries authorities to exercise their functions in accordance with the policies set out in FMPs. The plans therefore place binding obligations onto the national fisheries authorities to seek to deliver the goals of each FMP.
- 5.2.3 There is an explicit requirement for a FMP to set out whether there is sufficient evidence to assess a stock's MSY¹¹. A FMP will set out policies to restore or maintain the stock at sustainable levels. Where there is insufficient evidence, the FMP must set out how the evidence will be obtained if feasible to do so. If not feasible, the FMP will explain why that is, and how sustainable limits or a suitable proxy will be established in line with the precautionary approach.
- 5.2.4 Each FMP must describe the relevant indicator or indicators that fisheries managers will use to assess the effectiveness of the plan. These indicators will help identify how the FMP is contributing to those fisheries objectives relevant to the plan. Where appropriate, these indicators will be linked to timebound targets that relate to the goals and targets of the FMP.
- 5.2.5 The fisheries policy authorities will implement appropriate monitoring against the specified indicators. The effectiveness of the FMPs will be regularly assessed using appropriate indicators and the results reported at least every three years in the JFS report required by the Act. These reports will be laid before each of the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which FMPs have affected the levels of stocks in the UK.

¹¹ MSY, as defined in the Fisheries Act 2020, means the highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken on average from a marine stock under existing environmental conditions without significantly affecting the reproduction process

5.2.6 Each FMP will be reviewed at least every six years to ensure that they remain effective, although fisheries policy authorities can carry out more frequent and regular reviews on policies within the plans when considered appropriate.

5.3 Determining the stocks included in FMPs

5.3.1 The fisheries policy authorities recognise that many species are targeted by commercial fisheries in the UK. Whilst some species have significant economic and cultural importance, there are many species that are rarely targeted, if at all. The fisheries policy authorities applied the following criteria to determine whether a stock should be covered by a FMP:

- Commercial interest where there is a risk of significant over-exploitation without management action or where current management measures are outdated or not meeting the management goal;
- The economic value of the fishery and its wider economic contribution to coastal communities;
- Socio-economic importance considering factors such as employment levels, local income, recreational fishing interest, contribution to coastal communities, and legal/political structures; and
- Ecosystem significance including factors such as the importance of the target species, the fishery's impact on the ecosystem and interactions with non-target species including protected species.

5.3.2 The stocks shown in the list of FMPs in Annex A met these criteria and were judged appropriate for including within a FMP.

5.3.3 Those stocks not qualifying under these criteria will not be considered for the inclusion in a FMP at this time. The relevant fisheries policy authority will keep the remaining stocks under review and should a stock's circumstances change, consider including it within an existing FMP or develop a new FMP.

5.3.4 The national fisheries authorities will continue to use existing conservation/management measures for some key stocks of concern such as deep-sea stocks, tuna species covered by ICCAT¹² and stocks such as sandeel and Norway pout that are targeted by industrial fisheries.

5.3.5 The fisheries policy authorities will jointly publish individual FMPs for those key commercial stocks of interest to the whole UK. The plans will focus on the

¹² International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

biological stock as defined by scientific bodies such as ICES rather than the existing management units.

- 5.3.6 Recognising there are differences between fleets across the UK, each fisheries policy authority has also considered whether to bring forward regional FMPs to manage fishing activity within its jurisdiction, or to collaborate with another fisheries policy authority where a joint regional FMP is more appropriate. These regional FMPs will either cover stocks not considered appropriate for a UK-wide FMP but important to that national fisheries authority(s), or fishing activity by types of fleet in its waters, and/or specific geographic areas. These FMPs are also listed in Annex A.
- 5.3.7 How a fisheries policy authority uses FMPs to achieve its policy ambitions will be reflected in the policies set out in each FMP. The prime focus of all FMPs will be achieving the long-term sustainability of the stock. For regional FMPs, the scope can extend to considerations addressing wider fisheries management issues such as environmental, social and economic concerns.
- 5.3.8 For example, plans could include details on governance, considerations of the wider environmental of the impact of the fishery, and the management interventions needed to meet the plans goals. Any management intervention would apply to all vessels prosecuting that fishery. A fisheries policy authority should include timebound targets to achieve these goals where appropriate.
- 5.3.9 For the stocks where the UK shares management responsibility with others coastal States, FMPs will help set the UK's negotiating objectives for those stocks, whilst recognising that the UK cannot by itself deliver on the objectives of the FMP.

5.4 How FMPs relate to Fisheries Objectives?

- 5.4.1 The fisheries policy authorities prepared the list of FMPs in Annex A for the purposes of meeting the obligation set out in section 2(1)(b) of the Act.
- 5.4.2 The design and structure of FMPs directly relate to the precautionary, scientific evidence, ecosystem, and equal access fisheries objectives by delivering sustainable management of fish, the collection and use of scientific evidence and application to all vessels fishing in the area covered.
- 5.4.3 FMPs brought forward by fisheries policy authorities that seek to address wider issues in fisheries management will contribute to the remaining fisheries objectives depending upon the specific goals/targets of each plan. Interventions seeking to tackle the impact of fishing on the environment will contribute to one or more of the sustainability, ecosystem, bycatch and climate change objectives. Plans seeking to include social and economic interventions could contribute to the sustainability and national benefit objectives.

5.5 Relationship between FMPs and Existing Management Plans

- 5.5.1 Each fisheries policy authority will continue to operate fisheries management regimes covering their waters using existing legal powers alongside any new powers from the Act. There are management plans under these provisions that already deliver management of some stocks and fishing activities. Consequently, there is no requirement to convert any such plans to a FMP at this time.
- 5.5.2 EU MAPs (as retained/amended in UK law) continue to apply to various sea basins or to species types and, where sufficient scientific advice exists for the relevant listed species, set out approaches to managing exploitation.
- 5.5.3 The fisheries policy authorities will consider which elements, if any, of EU MAPs could be retained and amalgamated into FMPs. Once FMPs are published, the EU MAPs will be repealed from UK legislation (in due course) to avoid any future conflict with the policies set out in the FMPs.

5.6 Assessing Sustainable Limits

- 5.6.1 Available fishery data and advice will determine the targets and catch limits applied to each stock. Where possible, these limits would include the MSY for data-rich stocks where biomass fluctuations can be tracked. Alternative proxies will be used for more data-limited stocks that only detect biomass fluctuations. A fisheries policy authority may develop a Harvest Standard Specification to provide a broad framework within which harvest strategies for individual stocks can be developed.
- 5.6.2 Not all stocks currently have sufficient evidence to establish MSY-type limits. It will not be scientifically feasible or economically viable to collect such evidence for some species. Where feasible, FMPs will include the strategy for developing the necessary science, approaches to data collection, modelling and monitoring and stock and ecosystem risk assessments for stocks.
- 5.6.3 The UK will need to discuss generic and specific approaches to establishing sustainable limits for shared stocks whilst developing FMPs and seek to agree appropriate targets through international negotiations. FMPs will help inform the UK's negotiating position, not least by clearly setting out our ambition to achieve sustainable stocks.

5.7 Monitoring and Review of FMPs

- 5.7.1 The fisheries policy authorities will implement appropriate monitoring against the specified indicators. The effectiveness of the FMPs will be regularly assessed, and the results reported at least every three years as part of the JFS report, as

required by the Act. These reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in a FMP have been implemented and have affected sea fish stock levels in the UK.

- 5.7.2 Each FMP will be reviewed at least every six years or sooner if relevant evidence, international obligations, or wider events require a change in the policies set out in the FMP.

Annex A: List of proposed FMPs

FMP title	Timetable for publication	Type of stock	Predominant fishing type ¹³	Fishing area	Lead Authority	Joint plan?	Authorities responsible for joint plan				Reason if not joint?
							DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Govt.	
North Sea Cod Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Cod	Demersal trawls	North Sea	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
West Coast of Scotland Cod Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Cod	Demersal trawls	West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Atlantic Cod Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Cod	Demersal trawls	Rockall, North East Atlantic	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Haddock Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Haddock	Demersal trawls	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Atlantic Haddock Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Haddock	Demersal trawls	Rockall, North East Atlantic	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
West Coast of Scotland Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Whiting	Demersal trawls	West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Whiting	Demersal trawls	North Sea	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

¹³ Each FMP will set out in detail all the types of fishing covered by the plan; the entry in the table only refers to the technique most commonly employed to harvest the stock.

FMP title	Timetable for publication	Type of stock	Predominant fishing type ¹³	Fishing area	Lead Authority	Joint plan?	Authorities responsible for joint plan				Reason if not joint?
							DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Govt.	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Saithe Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Saithe	Demersal trawls	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Northern Shelf Hake Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Hake	Demersal trawls	Northern Shelf	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Monk/Angler Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Monk	Demersal trawls	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Megrim Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Megrim	Demersal trawls	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Northern Shelf Ling Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Ling	Demersal trawls	Northern Shelf	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea Nephrops Fisheries Management Plans	2021-2022	Nephrops	Demersal trawls	North Sea	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
West Coast of Scotland Nephrops Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Nephrops	Demersal trawls	West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Northern Shelf Mackerel Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Mackerel	Pelagic trawls	Northern Shelf	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Atlanto Scandian Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Herring	Pelagic trawls	North Sea and Arctic	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Herring	Pelagic trawls	North Sea	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
West Coast of Scotland (and Clyde) Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Herring	Pelagic trawls	West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Sea Greater Silver Smelt Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Greater silver smelt	Demersal trawls	North Sea	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

FMP title	Timetable for publication	Type of stock	Predominant fishing type ¹³	Fishing area	Lead Authority	Joint plan?	Authorities responsible for joint plan				Reason if not joint?
							DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Govt.	
West of Scotland Greater Silver Smelt Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Greater silver smelt	Demersal trawls	West Coast of Scotland	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Northern Shelf Blue Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Blue whiting	Pelagic trawls	Northern Shelf	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bass Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Bass	All gears	English and Welsh waters	Defra (England)	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Cockles Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Cockles	Dredges	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Cockles Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023/2024	Cockles	Hand-gathering	Welsh waters	Welsh Govt.	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Crabs & Lobsters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Crabs, lobsters	Pots and traps	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Crabs & Lobsters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024/2025	Crabs, lobsters	Pots and traps	Welsh waters	Welsh Govt.	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
King Scallop Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Scallops	Dredges	English and Welsh waters	Defra (England)	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Whelks in English waters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Whelks	Pots and traps	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Whelks in Welsh waters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2022	Whelks	Pots and traps	Welsh waters	Welsh Govt.	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Queen Scallop Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Queen scallop	Dredges	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Irish Sea Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Plaice, cod, haddock, sole, whiting, Nephrops	Demersal trawls	Irish Sea	DAERA (Northern Ireland)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Irish Sea Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Herring	Pelagic trawls	Irish Sea	DAERA (Northern Ireland)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	

FMP title	Timetable for publication	Type of stock	Predominant fishing type ¹³	Fishing area	Lead Authority	Joint plan?	Authorities responsible for joint plan				Reason if not joint?
							DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Govt.	
Northern Ireland Inshore Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Edible crab, velvet crab, lobster, king scallops and queen scallops	Pots and traps, Dredges	Inshore area within Northern Ireland zone	DAERA (Northern Ireland)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2025	<i>Monkfish/anglerfish, cod, haddock, megrims, Nephrops, sole, whiting</i> Monkfish/anglerfish, plaice, thornback ray, sole, blue ling, deep water sharks, saithe, small eyed ray, round nose grenadier, red seabream, skates and rays, shagreen ray, blonde ray, sandy ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, four-spotted megrim, pollock	Demersal trawls, Drift and fixed nets, Demersal seines	Celtic Sea and Western English Channel	Defra (England)	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2025	Herring, pilchard, greater silver smelt, horse mackerel, anchovy	Pelagic trawls, Drift and fixed nets	Celtic Sea and Western English Channel	Defra (England)	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	<i>Plaice, sole, turbot, witch</i> Brill, lemon sole, sole, dab, flounder, halibut	Demersal trawls, Demersal seines	Southern North Sea and Eastern English Channel	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
North Sea Horse Mackerel Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Horse mackerel	Pelagic trawls	North Sea	Defra (England)	No					Partial commercial interest
North Sea and Channel Sprat Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Sprat	Pelagic trawls	North Sea and English Channel	Defra (England)	No					Partial commercial interest

FMP title	Timetable for publication	Type of stock	Predominant fishing type ¹³	Fishing area	Lead Authority	Joint plan?	Authorities responsible for joint plan				Reason if not joint?
							DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Govt.	
Black Seabream Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2025	Black seabream	Demersal trawls	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Wrasses complex Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2025	Goldsinny wrasse, ballan wrasse, wrasse species complex, corkwing wrasse, rock cook	Demersal trawls, drift and fixed nets	English waters	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Southern North Sea Non-Quota Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Red gurnards, tub gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John Dory, surmullet, lesser spotted dogfish, grey gurnards	Demersal trawls, Demersal seines	Southern North Sea	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Channel Non-Quota Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Red gurnards, tub gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John Dory, surmullet, lesser spotted dogfish, grey gurnards	Demersal trawls, Demersal seines	English Channel	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters
Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2024	Thornback ray, blonde ray, undulate ray, skates and rays, small-eyed ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, starry ray	Demersal trawls	Southern North Sea and English Channel	Defra (England)	No					Limited to Administrations own waters

Annex B: Glossary

Aquaculture - As defined by the Fisheries Act 2020: the breeding, rearing, growing or cultivation of (a) any fish or other aquatic animal, (b) seaweed or any other aquatic plant, or (c) any other aquatic organism. Aquaculture can take place in both the inshore and offshore marine environment and can be broadly grouped according to water type (marine or freshwater), species type (finfish, shellfish or plants) and intensity (intensive, semi-intensive or extensive).

Aquaculture activities - As defined by the Fisheries Act 2020 means any of the following (whether or not carried out in the course of a business or employment): (a) aquaculture; (b) harvesting aquaculture organisms; (c) operating vessels for harvesting or processing aquaculture organisms; (d) storing or transporting aquaculture organisms; (e) loading and unloading aquaculture organisms; (f) processing aquaculture organisms.

Biodiversity - The variety of all life on earth, including the diversity within and between all plant and animal species and the diversity of ecosystems.

Blue Carbon - Carbon captured by the world's oceans and coastal ecosystems. Blue carbon habitats are the habitats where it is stored.

Bycatch - Defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act (2020) as (a) fish that are caught in the course of fishing for fish of a different description, or (b) animals other than fish that are caught in the course of fishing.

Climate Change - Referring to human-induced climate change driven by greenhouse gas emissions. It includes global warming, warming oceans, greater risks of flooding, droughts and heat waves.

Co-existence - Where multiple developments, activities or uses occur alongside or in close proximity to each other in the same area or at the same time.

Crown Dependencies (CDs) - Self-governing jurisdictions of the Crown; Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Displacement - The changes in fishing behaviour and patterns that could occur in response to new management measures.

Diversification - Diversification in fisheries facilitates adaptation to change and is one way the fishing industry can increase its sustainability, response to changing markets, and resilience to climate change. Diversification includes changes within the fishing sector, for example, new fishing techniques and gear that alter how or what species are targeted, or within the processing and fish value chain, for example, direct sales or marketing that adds value to fish products. Diversification also includes the industry undertaking multiple activities; for example, in addition to generating income from fishing, complementary activities such as tourism, for vessels where this is appropriate, can represent diversification into other sectors.

Ecosystem - A biological community which consists of all the organisms and the physical environment with which they interact.

Ecosystem-based approach - Defined in the Fisheries Act 2020 as an approach which (a) ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status (within the meaning of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010/1627)), and (b) does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes.

Ecosystem services - The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the UK National Ecosystem Approach categorises services as follows: regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services.

European Union (EU) - Union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - An exclusive economic zone is a sea zone provided for by the UNCLOS, extending up to 200 nautical miles from a coastal State's territorial sea baselines, over which that State has special rights regarding the exploitation and management of natural resources, including fisheries.

Fish - Marine and estuarine finfish and shellfish, including migratory species such as European eel and salmon.

Fisher - A person who catches fish for a living or for recreational activity.

Fisheries - The capture of wild marine organisms (fish and shellfish); commercial fishing can use a variety of mobile and static gear, vessels and locations.

Fisheries Management and Support Framework Memorandum of Understanding (Fisheries Framework MoU or FFMoU) - An agreement between the four administrations of the UK which sets out the principles by which the four fisheries policy authorities will collaborate on fisheries management. It includes governance structures and ways of working. It forms part of the UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework).

Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - A document, prepared and published under the Fisheries Act that sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels.

Fisheries Policy Authorities - As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020, fisheries policy authorities are (a) the Secretary of State, (b) the Scottish Ministers, (c) the Welsh Ministers, and (d) the Northern Ireland department.

Fishing Industry - The economic activity concerned with catching fish for food or sport.

Food webs - The natural interconnection of food chains and a graphical representation of what-eats-what in an ecological community.

Forage species - Small, planktivorous species found at intermediate trophic levels of marine food chains, which are preyed on by larger predators for food. Also known as prey fish or bait fish.

Good Environmental Status (GES) - A qualitative description of the state of the seas that the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 requires authorities to achieve or maintain by the year 2020. Achieving GES is about protecting the marine environment, preventing its deterioration and restoring it where practical, while allowing sustainable use of marine resources.

Innovation - A new method, idea or product.

Inshore - 0-12 nautical miles from the UK's territorial sea baselines.

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCAs) - IFCA Districts are responsible for the management of fishing activities in English coastal waters out to six nautical miles from territorial sea baselines. The 10 IFCAs have a shared 'vision' to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries.

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) - Coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, the marine ecosystem, and on living marine resources in the North Atlantic.

Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) - A document which sets out the policies of the fisheries policy authorities for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020.

Marine litter - Any solid material which has been deliberately discarded or unintentionally lost on beaches, on shores or at sea. The definition covers materials transported into the marine environment from land by rivers, draining or sewage systems or winds. It includes any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material (OSPAR).

Marine Management Organisation (MMO) - An executive non-departmental public body in the United Kingdom established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, with responsibility for planning and licensing of activities in English waters from 0-200nm, save fisheries activities within 0-6nm which are the responsibility of the IFCAs. The MMO also has some UK responsibilities.

Marine Protected Areas (MPA) - Areas of the sea protected by law for nature conservation purposes.

Marine Spatial Plans (MSP) - Area based marine plans produced in accordance with the Marine Policy Statement.

Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) - Defined in the Fisheries Act 2020 as the highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken on average from a marine stock under existing environmental conditions without significantly affecting the reproduction process.

Multi-Annual Plans (MAPs) - Plans under the EU Common Fisheries Policy (now to some extent part of UK law as retained EU law) for important fish stocks and fisheries which set out goals for fish stock management over a period of years and may also include other specific conservation rules.

National Fisheries Authorities - As defined by section 25(4) of the Fisheries Act 2020, these are (a) the Secretary of State, (b) the Marine Management Organisation, (c) the Scottish Ministers, (d) the Welsh Ministers, and (e) the Northern Ireland department. The term national fisheries authorities differs from fisheries policies authorities in including the MMO.

Natural capital - The elements of nature that produce value to people, for example, ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. A 'natural capital approach' is one that values the benefits we receive from the natural environment, such as food provision, clean air and water, flood protection, and opportunities for recreation, including appreciation of wildlife, that support health and well-being.

Non-Quota Stocks (NQS) - Species that are not managed through TACs (quota limits). They include some finfish, most commercial shellfish species, and various other species.

Northern Ireland Protocol - An agreement between the UK and the European Union (EU) that sets out the arrangements to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland introduced by the UK's departure from the EU.

Offshore - 12 up to 200 nautical miles from the UK's territorial sea baselines.

Precautionary approach to fisheries management - An approach in which the absence of sufficient scientific information is not used to justify postponing or failing to take management measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species, non-target species or their environment.

Processing - In relation to fish or any other aquatic organism, includes preserving or preparing the organism, or producing any substance or article from it, by any method for human or animal consumption.

Recreational sea fishing - An umbrella term for a variety of recreational activities including recreational sea angling (RSA) recreational netters and charter boats.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) - A multilateral international body or agreement set up to manage and conserve fish stocks in a particular region.

Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) - Integrated on-board systems that may include cameras, gear sensors, video storage, and Global Positioning System units, which capture comprehensive videos and are used to monitor of fishing activity with associated sensor and positional information.

Resilience - The ability of an ecosystem, species, habitat or industry to respond, recover or adapt to changes and/or disturbances within a reasonable timeframe without permanent loss or damage.

Seafood sector - Individuals or businesses undertaking any of the following activities: (a) catching fish; (b) operating vessels for catching or processing fish; (c) undertaking aquaculture activities (d) transporting fish or fish products; (e) loading and unloading fish or fish products; (f) processing fish.

Shellfish - As defined in section 52 of the Fisheries Act (2020) molluscs and crustaceans of any kind found in the sea and inland water.

Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) - A joint forum for discussion of fisheries matters between the UK and the EU under the TCA.

Sustainable Development - As defined by the Brundtland report (1987) sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Development Goal - 17 United Nations goals 'to transform our world' and promote prosperity whilst protecting the planet. Goal 14 is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Sustainable fishing - In the JFS, sustainable fishing means environmental, economic and social considerations are appropriately balanced when managing our fisheries to benefit present and future generations. It means ensuring that fish stocks can be fished, commercially and recreationally, both now and in the future. In doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will carefully consider both the short term and the long-term impacts of decisions on fish stocks and the fishing industry before acting; short term socio-economic decisions should not significantly compromise the long-term health of the marine environment. These decisions will need to recognise the cultural importance of fishing through maintaining and, where possible, strengthening coastal communities and livelihoods alongside the requirement for fish stocks to reach and maintain sustainable levels.

Territorial sea - The waters under the jurisdiction of a state, defined by UNCLOS as up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline or low-water line along the coast.

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) - An international agreement for cooperation for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Work under the Convention is managed by the OSPAR Commission, made up of representatives of the Governments of 15 Contracting Parties and the European Commission, representing the European Union. Work to implement the OSPAR Convention is taken forward through the adoption of decisions, which are legally binding on the Contracting Parties, recommendations and other agreements.

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) - The total allowable catch (TAC) is a catch limit set for a particular fishery or stock, generally for a year or a fishing season. TACs are usually expressed in tonnes of live weight equivalent but are sometimes set in terms of numbers of fish.

Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) - The Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the one part, and the European

Union and the European Atomic Energy Community of the other part. This agreement governs the relationship between the UK and the EU. It was signed in December 2020, applied from 1 January 2021 and was ratified (in a slightly amended form) in April 2021.

UK Marine Policy Statement (UKMPS) - The UK policy framework for preparing marine plans and taking decisions that affect the marine environment in the UK.

UK Overseas Territories - Also known as the British Overseas Territories, are 14 territories with a constitutional and historical link to the UK. Whilst they do not form part of the UK, they have the British Monarch as head of state.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - A United Nations term for the international legal instrument for 'the conservation of biological diversity'. Target 6 covers sustainable fisheries.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) - A multilateral international agreement that lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas, establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It was signed in 1982 and came into force in 1994.

Water quality - A measure of the condition of water and its suitability to sustain a range of uses for both biotic and human benefits.

ANNEX 2: JFS Consultation Response Form

Name:

Q1: Would you like your response to be confidential?

Yes No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason.

Q2: To what extent do you think the policies articulated in the draft JFS will achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives? Please explain your answer, with reference to specific content in the JFS where possible.

Q3: What are your views on the proposals for developing Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)?

Q4: Are there any other areas of fisheries policy you think should be included in the JFS?

Our consultation questions have been designed to be broad and hopefully have given you the chance to meaningfully feedback your views on the draft JFS. If you have further comments please comment here:

ANNEX 3: JFS Narrative Impact Assessment

Title: Joint Fisheries Statement Narrative Impact Assessment IA No: N/A RPC Reference No: N/A Lead department or agency: Joint impact assessment: Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Welsh Government, Scottish Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland).	Impact Assessment (IA)			
	Date: January 2022			
	Stage: N/A			
	Source of intervention: Domestic			
	Type of measure: N/A			
Contact for enquiries: Samantha King				
Summary: Intervention and Options				RPC Opinion: RPC Opinion Status

Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option (in 2020/2021 prices)			
Total Net Present Social Value	Business Net Present Value	Net cost to business per year	Business Impact Target Status
£m	£m	£m	Qualifying provision

What is the problem under consideration? Why is government action or intervention necessary?

The Fisheries Act 2020 (the Act) requires that a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) is produced and published by the UK fisheries policy authorities within 24 months of its having received Royal Assent. The Act sets out the fisheries objectives, which set the strategic direction for future fisheries management across the UK. Together, these objectives set out the core principles that should be followed to achieve successful and sustainable fisheries management. The JFS sets out our policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, these objectives. It will therefore play an important role in guiding future policy making and decision making both at a UK level and individually in each fisheries policy authority.

What are the policy objectives of the action or intervention and the intended effects?

The JFS looks to secure successful and sustainable fisheries management within the UK. In balancing the application of the fisheries objectives, the JFS will meet the requirements of the Act and support a vibrant, profitable and sustainable fishing industry, underpinned by a healthy marine environment. It aims to protect and (where necessary) recover our fish stocks, reduce the effects of fishing on the environment, and support a modern, resilient and environmentally responsible fishing industry that will seek to mitigate its contribution to climate change and adapt where possible. The fisheries policy authorities will prepare and publish a report, on a 3-year cycle, on the extent to which the policies in the JFS have achieved, or contributed to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. The JFS will be reviewed within 6 years of publication.

What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)

- Option 1: Do nothing (base case). Fisheries policy authorities pursue individual and independent approaches to fisheries management and fail to meet the requirement of the Act to produce a JFS.
- Option 2: To produce and publish a JFS, setting out the policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. (preferred option)

Will the policy be reviewed? It will be reviewed. If applicable, set review date: -/2028				
Is this measure likely to impact on international trade and investment?		No		
Are any of these organisations in scope?	Micro Yes	Small Yes	Medium Yes	Large Yes
What is the CO ₂ equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent)		Traded: N/A	Non-traded: N/A	

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

1. Signed by the responsible Minister: _____

2. Date: _____

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 2

Description:

Narrative Impact Assessment

Price Base Year N/A	PV Base Year 2020	Time Period Years	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: Optional	High: Optional	Best Estimate:

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified
High	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified
Best Estimate	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

The draft JFS has been developed by Defra and the devolved Administrations. It contains existing and new strategic policy, and commitments to develop future policy taking account of the fisheries objectives. It is anticipated, given the strategic nature of the draft JFS, that it will not have any impact on business at this time. Once the JFS is published, where further detailed measures are required to meet the fisheries objectives set out in the Act, full impact assessments of these measures will be produced by the relevant fisheries policy authority.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

If there is secondary legislation in the future, it is possible there could be familiarisation costs for business and time costs associated with additional requirements resulting from any new regulations. There may be additional costs to Government associated with monitoring and enforcement activities associated with any new regulations.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified
High	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified
Best Estimate	Unquantified	Unquantified	Unquantified

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

As with costs, there are no direct benefits associated with the high-level policies in the draft JFS. Several policies within the JFS are likely to generate benefits for business and the wider marine and aquatic environments at implementation stage, but these could only be estimated in full impact assessments at that time, alongside any secondary legislation made by the relevant fisheries policy authority.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

It is expected there would be benefits to business as several of the policies within the JFS will aim to maintain and restore fishing stocks to sustainable levels and improve the marine and aquatic environments. These should deliver benefits across the whole fisheries supply chain and wider society.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)	3.5
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Not applicable. This document does not set out a quantitative analysis of the impacts of the JFS.

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			Score for Business Impact Target (qualifying provisions only) £m:
Costs:	Benefits:	Net:	
			N/A

Section 1: Introduction

The Joint Fisheries Statement: Purpose and Implementation

The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) forms part of the wider UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework). Fisheries management in the UK is largely devolved, and the Framework sets out areas where a joint approach to fisheries management across the UK will be followed, as well as the UK-wide legislation, policies and principles of joint working to achieve it. The Framework consists of the Fisheries Act 2020 (the Act) and associated statutory instruments, retained EU law, the JFS, Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) and the Fisheries Management and Support Framework Memorandum of Understanding (the Fisheries Framework Memorandum of Understanding or FFMoU).

The Act sets out the fisheries objectives, which set the strategic direction for future fisheries management across the UK. The Act also provides that the fisheries policy authorities should prepare a JFS containing the policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, these objectives and containing a statement on the use authorities intend to make of FMPs in order to achieve or contribute to the achievement of the objectives. This is complemented by the other elements of the Framework in establishing a policy framework to achieve successful and sustainable fisheries management in the UK.

Given the predominantly devolved nature of fisheries management in the UK, the policies and commitments within the JFS will be developed and implemented by the relevant fisheries policy authority, except where this relates to reserved competence, in which case it will be the responsibility of the UK Government.

Approach to Impact Assessments for the JFS

Our approach to producing an Impact Assessment (IA) for the JFS has been guided by the relevant policies of each of the fisheries policy authorities (See Section 3 for details of each fisheries policy authority's approach).

The JFS contains a mix of existing and new strategic policy, in addition to commitments to develop future policy. As the JFS is strategic the policies in the JFS do not result in direct measurable impacts, at this stage.

Since fisheries management is largely devolved, implementation of JFS policies will be taken forward by the national fisheries authorities in line with the devolved settlement. This may involve authorities working with other national fisheries authorities as deemed appropriate. The development of the policies at this stage will determine whether there will be impact assessments.

Given this, assessment of impacts for individual policies will be taken forward by the national fisheries authorities, in line with each national fisheries authority's individual assessment processes, as the policies are further developed. This narrative IA describes

anticipated impacts of the policies within the draft JFS and describes at which stage in policy implementation impacts will be identified and assessed.

The document is structured as follows:

Section 2 sets out the anticipated impacts and IA plans.

Section 3 outlines the required assessment practices and processes of the national fisheries authorities; and

Section 4 describes the key governance and evaluation mechanisms for the review of the JFS.

Section 2: Policies with anticipated impacts for all Fisheries Policy Authorities

This section discusses policies and commitments in the JFS, summarises the main anticipated impacts and affected groups for all fisheries policy authorities, and, where applicable, sets out IA plans.

Policies and related impacts

Section **4.2.1 Fishing Opportunities** outlines how fishing opportunities are determined, apportioned and distributed, and how the fisheries objectives will be considered at each stage. This includes commitments to maintain transparency around the methods involved by ensuring they are covered in publicly available quota management rules. It is expected this will contribute to greater transparency in quota apportionment and distribution and enable greater stakeholder participation in the development of policy. Where existing policies are being continued, there will not be new assessment of impacts. However, if the relevant fisheries policy authority revise or develop new methods of distributing fishing quotas, the proposal will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 4.2.1 also contains a commitment to ensure sustainable exploitation of stocks within our waters, and cooperation with neighbouring coastal States to ensure sustainable management of shared fish stocks. The UK's approach to negotiations with our international partners will be guided by the fisheries objectives as we seek to fish sustainably, and international obligations such as the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in order to achieve the best outcome for the UK fleet. The impact of these policies will be continually monitored and assessed, and will be reflected in our bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Section **4.2.2 Non-quota stocks (NQS)** outlines plans to prioritise development of management approaches on NQS. The impact of providing species or geographic frameworks through these approaches is uncertain at present, but will be subject to

review. Where appropriate, the national fisheries authorities will cooperate on a UK IA process but, given the specificity of local stocks and the management measures likely to be required, the plans to develop longer-term management approaches may be developed by individual national fisheries authorities. All proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures, to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, and are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. National fisheries authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 4.2.3 **Wider International Engagement** commits the UK to actively participate in international fora to promote high standards in fisheries management with global partners and share best practice on effective regulation of fishing activities on the high seas, in line with the fisheries objectives. This could have the effect of promoting the sustainable use and protection of stocks and facilitating international cooperation to tackle climate change. We do not propose preparing any IAs in relation to this policy at this stage.

Section 4.2.4 **Fishing capacity** restates our commitment to appropriately balance maintaining economic viability and maintaining stock health, as part of achieving the sustainability objective. It is anticipated this will continue to have a positive effect in ensuring fishing activity remains at sustainable levels. The presumption against allocating public funding for new fishing vessels, where this increases fishing capacity beyond sustainable levels, is already established policy. Therefore, in the absence of new policy in this area, we do not propose preparing any IAs in relation to our continuation of this existing policy.

Section 4.2.5 **Approach to access to UK waters** further explains our commitment to the 'equal access objective'. Given this is a codification and continuation of current practice, and no new policy is proposed, we do not intend preparing any IAs.

In section 4.2.6 **Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing**, the draft JFS contains commitments for the fisheries policy authorities to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). Efforts to tackle IUU fishing are expected to combat its negative impacts on both the marine environment and biodiversity. In addition, continuing to prevent the importation of IUU caught products will maintain the positive benefit for the UK fishing industry, as it will prevent IUU fish entering domestic and global markets. As part of these commitments, a UK strategy on IUU fishing will also be produced, and the impacts of any new policies in the strategy will be assessed in the course of its development. All proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 4.2.7 **Reducing bycatch and minimising catches of sensitive species**, commits fisheries policy authorities to work with stakeholders to reduce unwanted catches and the wasteful discarding of fish. The fisheries policy authorities are already committed to reducing bycatch given the positive impact this reduction will have on the marine ecosystem and on stock health. At this stage, the Landing Obligation will continue to apply in each fisheries policy authority to protect the health of fish stocks and provide certainty

for industry. As a result of this policy continuity, there is no new direct impact on business. However, any future policy will undergo assessment as appropriate. All new proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 4.2.8 Displacement presents a continuing policy commitment to work with sea users to identify and address displacement issues from management measures and other spatial uses including offshore wind farms. The consequences of measures introduced in the absence of evidence, or actions that do not necessarily target the issue, can mean further disruption to fishing behaviour, which can have knock-on impacts on the marine environment, fishers and on other marine sectors. This policy seeks to avoid or mitigate negative impacts for all sea users affected by displacement while also ensuring environmental sustainability is not compromised. The impacts of the policy will be monitored through the engagement of sea users working on and addressing the issues of displacement. All new proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 4.2.9 Marine Spatial Planning outlines how the UK Marine Policy Statement (UKMPS), along with the marine plans, provide a decision-making framework. This allows activities in the marine area to be managed in a way that protects the marine environment, whilst supporting sustainable development. This will have a positive impact on the marine environment and marine ecosystems. The UKMPS and marine plans have been subject to existing assessment processes, and assessments will be updated as appropriate following review. A Sustainability Appraisal, and Habitats Regulations Assessment are prepared for each marine plan during the drafting process and are finalised at the same time as the marine plans. A formal review of the effect and effectiveness of each adopted marine plan is undertaken every three years from the date of its adoption, with a decision taken (based on the findings of that review) on whether to amend or replace that marine plan.

In section **4.2.10 Marine Protected Areas**, the fisheries policy authorities commit to continue developing the network of protected sites at sea to protect specific habitats and species of national or international importance. In these sites, fishing will be managed, and functions exercised, to enable Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to achieve their conservation objectives. Each fisheries policy authority is responsible for designating MPAs within their respective waters. An assessment of the socio-economic impact forms part of the designation process, which considers the impact site designation may have on all users. A proposal for designation would also be considered to ensure it is compliant with each fisheries policy authority's cross cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate. Following site designation, further consideration of IAs will be undertaken when introducing statutory management measures. These will be taken forward by the relevant national fisheries authority, rather than at the UK level.

Section **4.2.11 Marine litter** outlines the fisheries policy authorities' commitment to working with industry to reduce its environmental impact and support other initiatives to reduce marine litter. While work to reduce marine litter is already underway, further policies being considered to meet this commitment could have an economic impact on business. Such impacts could include operating, material and familiarisation costs. However, impacts will be dependent on the nature of the further policies developed. Nevertheless, implementation of policy to meet this commitment is predicted to have beneficial impacts on the environment- for instance, by improving the management of fishing gear at end-of-life. This could include the incentivisation of collection and recycling of gear at end-of-life and improved waste management practices. All new proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section **4.2.12 Coastal and freshwater** outlines the essential nature of healthy coastal habitats and rivers to a healthy marine environment and thriving fisheries. Successful implementation of the JFS will support the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) in delivering Good Environmental Status (GES) in UK seas by ensuring fish stocks are harvested within Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY); that fish stocks and fisheries activities are managed so that any negative impacts on marine ecosystems are minimised and, where possible, reversed (including damage to the seabed, harmful pressure on vulnerable species, and reduction of litter); and that the bycatch of non-target fish species is avoided or reduced. It will further support activities under the OSPAR convention to achieve GES in the North East Atlantic by minimising the adverse effect of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change and supporting adaptation to climate change within the fish and aquaculture sector. The state of UK commercial fish stocks and indicators for biodiversity health and marine litter will be monitored and assessed as part of the 6-yearly UKMS update cycle and OSPAR assessments. All new proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section **4.2.13 Climate change** contains a commitment to identify feasible technological, behavioural and managerial changes to mitigate and reduce emissions across the fisheries supply chain to move towards a net zero carbon emissions future. As the adverse effects of fishing and aquaculture activities on climate change are minimised, various sectors within the fishing supply chain may be affected. Moves towards decarbonising the fishing fleet and protecting carbon sequestration areas may impact those parts of the supply chain that are particularly carbon intensive or reliant on specific areas of UK waters. However, policy outcomes can provide environmental and social benefits, recognising that mitigation of carbon intensive processes within the seafood sector's supply chain will also include the reduction of seabed abrasion to improve carbon storage. All new policies will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will

also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section **4.2.14 Aquaculture** reiterates each fisheries policy authority's commitment to support balanced, industry-led, sustainable growth of each aquaculture sub-sector based on the best available science. This is a continuation of current practice and, as such, seeks to achieve the right balance between supporting social and economic activity and protecting the marine environment. Any new aquaculture policy proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate. Further, a site-specific aquaculture development will be subject to existing marine licencing and land planning systems, as appropriate, and depending on the nature of the development assessments will be completed in advance of authorisation of any proposed farms.

The fisheries policy authorities are already committed to ensuring recreational sea fishing is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable as set out in **4.2.15 Recreational sea fishing**. Given this is a continuation of current policy, no further assessment of impact is required.

Section **4.2.16 Production, marketing and consumption of Seafood** reaffirms the fisheries policy authorities' commitment to facilitating adaptable and sustainable seafood sector and coastal communities. Impacts of this continued commitment could arise from policy implementation measures such as robust traceability systems, access to markets and sustainable fishing activities, and these measures could potentially impact either positively or negatively on the sector or the public. Any further policies will be taken forward by the individual national fisheries authorities and will be assessed for impact in accordance with their processes and all new proposals will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation where required, in accordance with the individual fisheries policy authority's procedures to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. Fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

The draft JFS establishes Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) policy (**5. Fisheries Management Plans**) that the fisheries policy authorities will follow. The draft JFS sets a commitment to secure the long-term sustainability of our fish stocks through FMPs. Plans must set out sufficient evidence and detail how the precautionary approach has been applied for each fish stock.

Given the nature of the policy, FMPs will have a positive impact, enhancing current procedures and contributing towards the fisheries objectives in the Act by offering the opportunity to design bespoke, flexible and transparent approaches. This will be done at the most appropriate level for practical management and tailoring to species, locations and fishing activities. Challenging impacts can include finding the right balance in sustainable harvesting, taking into consideration social, economic and ecological interests and specific local or regional circumstances.

As part of their development, all FMP impacts will be assessed in line with individual fisheries policy authority IA requirements. They will be thoroughly tested, including by consultation, to ensure they achieve the intended policy outcome, are compliant with all cross-cutting policies and statutory duties, including impact assessment procedures. In particular fisheries policy authorities will also test any proposed policy change against the requirements of relevant regulations as appropriate.

Section 3: Assessment of Impacts by the National Fisheries Authorities

This section outlines the required assessment practices and processes of the national fisheries authorities. When articulating the commitments within the JFS, each national fisheries authority will assess new policy and its impact in line with the individual requirements outlined below.

Northern Ireland (NI)

The Northern Ireland Executive is committed to developing policies that will meet the specific needs of its citizens and make a positive difference to their lives.

Northern Ireland's departments must comply with a number of statutory obligations when developing those policies.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (NI Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age;
- marital status, or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants (i.e. people with caring responsibilities) and persons without.

Without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The NI Act also requires public authorities to prepare Equality Schemes stating how they propose to fulfil these duties. The core of all Schemes, in terms of the duty to have due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity and regard to the promotion of relations, is the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of policies. However, not all policies require an EQIA. A policy does not require an EQIA if it has been screened out at an early stage of policy development.

Proofing is also necessary in relation to Human Rights, and there are requirements introduced either by the Northern Ireland Executive, or as a result of UK Government or

international obligations, for environmental, rural, regulatory, sustainability and health impact assessments. For example, the Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy requires all departments to consider a Regulatory Impact Assessment as part of their policy development process.

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 places a duty on Northern Ireland departments to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans. This ensures that departments have due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas when carrying out certain activities. It provides a mechanism for ensuring greater transparency in relation to how departments consider rural needs when undertaking those activities.

In addition, the need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment would be considered, where appropriate, during policy development.

Scotland

The Scottish Government is committed to developing policy that delivers more equal and sustainable outcomes for people in Scotland. Given the devolved nature of fisheries policy, the Scottish Government is committed to reviewing the need for impact assessment at the devolved level in line with current practice. The Scottish Government has a process in place for determining whether specific impact assessments are required and will follow this process when the policies of the JFS are further articulated and delivered at the devolved level as outlined above. This may include an assessment of environmental impact, business and regulatory impact, impact on island communities and other impacts that would be required determined by the type of policy being delivered.

The Scottish Government has an established means of assessing impact:

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires those preparing Scottish plans and programmes to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) if they are likely to have significant environmental effects. Those plans and programmes that relate solely to the whole or any part of Scotland are required to consider whether the 2005 Act would apply and to undertake an SEA in accordance with the requirements set out in the Act if required.”

A Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) looks at the likely costs of any proposed primary or secondary legislation. They also cover voluntary regulation, codes of practice, guidance, or policy changes that may have an impact on the public, private or third sector. The BRIA outlined why the government is proposing to intervene; options the government is considering, and which one is preferred; how and to what extent new policies may impact on them, on business and on Scotland's competitiveness; and the estimated costs and benefits of proposed measures

An Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) is intended to test any new policy, strategy or service which is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities, including other island communities. This is a legal duty for policy development in Scotland under section 8 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

Like other Fisheries Policy Authorities Scottish Government is bound under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) to complete a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) for all projects processing personal data assessed as high risk. However, it is Scottish Government policy to complete a DPIA for all projects involving personal data and privacy as best practice.

Like other FPA's Scottish Government is required to consider the need for an Equality Impact Assessment when creating policy in Scotland. This is intended to identify and guard against potential risks of discrimination and help develop better policy.

The potential requirements for other impact assessments undertaken by Scottish Government, such as the Fairer Scotland Duty, assessment of children's rights and wellbeing, human rights and future proofing legislation will be assessed by the Scottish Government in line with current practice.

Wales

The Welsh Government is committed to developing policy that delivers more equal and sustainable outcomes for people in Wales. Almost all of fisheries policy is a devolved matter and Welsh Government believe an essential part of building a comprehensive and balanced case for a policy is appraising the impact it is likely to have, both positive and negative. Therefore rigorous impact assessments are carried out in the course of developing our policies, both existing policies and those we may develop and implement in the future. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides a framework for our approach to impact assessments within the seven Well-being Goals and five ways of working, ensuring a common sense approach to integrated policy making.

In all policy areas within the JFS where devolved approaches are to be implemented in future and further policy development required, the necessary impact assessments will be carried out in accordance with Welsh Government standard practice. From the earliest stage an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) will be developed to help us to undertake a rounded assessment of the impact of a proposed action, with a view to maximising economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being, not just now, but for the long term. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 also sets out national priorities which must be considered as part of the IIA process when setting new policy.

In addition, the need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment will also be considered during policy development.

If new policy results in the introduction of subordinate legislation we will ensure compliance with requirements of the Welsh Ministers' Regulatory Impact Assessment Code for Subordinate Legislation.

England

The UK Government is committed to evaluating the need for impact assessment and developing policy in line with best practice and assessment requirements. These assessment processes will be followed when developing the policies that stem from the JFS, and the assessments undertaken will depend on the individual policy being delivered.

When producing policy and determining the need for regulatory impact assessments, the [Better Regulation Framework guidance](#) and the better regulation principles of robust evidence, transparency and proportionality are taken into consideration. Where policies are considered to be statutory provisions, a regulatory impact assessment is undertaken and submitted to the RPC for independent scrutiny in advance of introducing any secondary legislation for all measures that are above the £5 million per annum threshold for net costs to business. Analysis to support these changes is produced in line with HMT Green Book methodology, and includes consideration of the impact on small and micro businesses.¹⁴ This is not required for measures below the £5 million equivalent annual net direct costs to business (EANDCB) threshold and for measures below this threshold Defra will, if appropriate, produce regulatory triage assessments (RTAs).

In addition, the need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment would be considered, where appropriate, during policy development. Other legislation and regulatory requirements specify certain circumstances in which further assessments must take place. For example, Section 126 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) (2009) places specific duties on the MMO relating to Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) and marine licence decision making, and where appropriate, an MCZ assessment process will take place during marine licence decision making procedures.

In addition, the [Environment Act 2021](#) outlines in law the environmental principles and requires the production of a “policy statement on environmental principles” which explains how the environmental principles should be interpreted and proportionately applied by Ministers of the Crown when making policy. This duty to have regard to the environmental principles is due to commence in 2023 within the first year of publication of the JFS. The five environmental principles are the integration, prevention, rectification, polluter pays and precautionary principles.

The public sector equality duty requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The general equality duty does not specify how public authorities should analyse the effect of their existing and new policies and practices on equality, but doing so is an important part of complying with the general equality duty and will be undertaken as appropriate.

Section 4: Governance and Evaluation

The Act requires the fisheries policy authorities to review the JFS whenever they consider it appropriate to do so, and in any event within 6 years of its publication or most recent review. Initially, the fisheries policy authorities will use existing data sources in order to monitor the health of wild fish stocks, and the comprehensive socio-economic data collected on the size and composition of the UK fleet as indicators. Fisheries policy

¹⁴ In accordance with RPC guidance on Small and Micro Business Assessments:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/small-and-micro-business-assessment-samba-guidance>

authorities will also draw upon the relevant UKMS indicators and monitoring programmes. If, in light of a review, the fisheries policy authorities conclude changes are required to the JFS, they must prepare and publish an amended JFS or a replacement JFS. A review of this narrative IA will take place at the same time and will be updated or replaced accordingly.

In addition to the review cycle, the Act places a requirement on all fisheries policy authorities, acting jointly, to prepare and publish a report, on a 3-year cycle, on the extent to which the policies set out in the JFS have been implemented, and have achieved or contributed to the achievement of the fisheries objectives.