

Defra seeks views on expanding use of monitoring technology on fishing boats

Today (Monday 19 October) the Government has opened a [call for evidence](#) to examine whether monitoring technology could be used more widely on fishing boats operating in English waters to help support the sector by preventing overfishing.

Now that the UK has left the EU, the Government is seeking to utilise the latest technology to better support the industry. These systems could help improve the management of our fisheries, prevent overfishing and ensure the UK has a thriving and environmentally sustainable fishing sector by improving the data that is available to the industry on fish stocks.

Remote Electronic Monitoring systems can consist of automatic cameras, GPS, sensors or other monitoring measures. Its uses can include gathering data on the amount of fish, their sizes and all the different species present and can help fishermen show they are fishing in line with their catch allowances, supporting the sector to become more sustainable.

Exploring this technology and its benefits for the fishing sector and our marine environment is one of many ways the Government is making use of new powers as an independent coastal state.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

As we take back control of our fisheries, we want to ensure a sustainable and thriving fishing industry.

Remote Electronic Monitoring technology could provide important information on the state of our fish stocks and help shape how we manage our fisheries in the future. We therefore want to hear from those who will be affected by its use and give them a say in how we manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state.

While the technology is already being used on a voluntary basis by some fishing vessels to show compliance with the landing obligation – which prohibits the discarding of fish – via the English Fully Documented Fisheries scheme, the call for evidence seeks views on expanding its use in English waters.

The [call for evidence](#) also explores whether it is better suited for certain fishing vessels, for example based on the size of the vessel or vessels that use different types of fishing gear, as well as whether there are other technologies which are more suitable.

Defra is also exploring other uses of this technology including capturing data on fish stocks. The ability to gather data more accurately will help the

government better understand the most used fishing equipment and industry preferences, the health of our fish stocks as well as the health of our wider marine environment.

The [call for evidence](#) covers vessels operating in English waters. The Government will continue to work with all parts of the UK to deliver a coherent policy which reflects devolution settlements. This will be followed up by a formal consultation in 2021.