

PRE-SCREENING NOTIFICATION

Scottish Government version

Responsible Authority: The Marine Directorate, Scottish Government

Title of the plan: Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) for scallop dredge and pelagic vessels – Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI)

What prompted the plan:
(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

The Scottish Government is committed to improving how we monitor the fishing activity of certain types of fishing vessels. In Spring/Summer 2022, we consulted on the requirement to introduce mandatory use of REM on board scallop dredge and large pelagic vessels (12m and over in length). REM for these vessels will consist of cameras, winch sensors and vessel positioning systems (to provide locational data on fishing activity).

The commitment to rollout REM to key parts of the fishing fleet was contained with the Scottish Government's Fisheries Management Strategy, which was published in December 2020.

Plan subject:
(e.g. transport)

Fisheries.

Brief summary of the plan:
(including the area or location to which the plan related)

The SSI will require scallop dredge and pelagic vessels to install and operate a valid REM system onboard, which meets the technical specifications contained within the SSI.

The requirement will apply to all relevant fishing vessels when they are operating in Scottish waters, and to all Scottish vessels when they are operating both in and outwith Scottish waters.

The requirement will be phased in. For scallop dredge vessels, the majority of Scottish vessels already have REM onboard through a voluntary scheme. REM technology is readily available and the mandatory requirement will take effect once the SSI is brought into force in 2024. For pelagic vessels there will be a lead in time of 2 years following the SSI coming into force.

REM is more sophisticated than traditional fisheries monitoring systems (e.g. Vessel Monitoring Systems – VMS - which transmit locational data at a limited frequency) and use imagery, sensors and vessel positioning systems to independently monitor operations at sea such as effort and/or catch.

Brief summary of the likely environmental consequences:

(including whether it has been determined that the plan is likely to have no or minimum effects, either directly or indirectly)

- The use of REM technology on such vessels is considered to have no direct environmental impact on Scotland's marine environment.
- Separate legislation and fishing licence conditions set the framework for environmental protection (e.g. by specifying spatial or gear restrictions).
- The data generated by REM systems will support wider policy development and decision making, provision of scientific advice and the work of enforcement officers.

Brief summary of how environmental principles have been considered:

(including whether any of the guiding principles, as set out in section 13 of the Continuity Act, are relevant to the plan)

- Data generated from using REM technology on scallop dredge and pelagic fishing vessels will provide greater insight into where fishing operations take place and improve the evidence base on which decisions are taken by the Scottish Government and other public authorities, thereby promoting sustainable development. This policy will not lead to any benefits to Scottish fishing businesses that will translate to improved efficiency or effectiveness of their fishing operations.
- Consideration has been given to the following, under S13 of the Continuity Act:
 - The plan does not directly deliver protections of the environment but it does indirectly support development of management mechanisms that do.
 - The plan does not affect taking the precautionary principle in relation to the environment.

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- Aims to improve our knowledge of the marine environment but will not cause environmental damage and therefore does not consider preventative action to mitigate it.
- The plan will not necessitate rectifying environmental damage at source and therefore the principle that 'polluter must pay' is not applicable.

Contact details:

[Redacted contact details]

Date of opinion:

14-NOV-2023

When completed send to: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or to SEA Gateway, Scottish Government, Area 2H (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ