

UK Dolphin and Porpoise Conservation Strategy

Action Plan

March 2021

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Developing Actions and Review

1. This document provides detail on the actions identified in the UK Dolphin and Porpoise Conservation Strategy (Table 3). The High-Level Strategy provides the rationale for the development of the actions, with the associated vulnerability and confidence scores provided in the Technical Report.
2. Each action is displayed in Action Sheets that are based on the approach adopted by OSPAR. These Action Sheets provide more detailed information on each action.
3. The High-Level Strategy and the technical report will be reviewed on a six yearly cycle. The detail around the actions have been pulled into this Action Plan as this will be a living document. In developing the actions and associated projects, there will need to be a more frequent update to this document than to the main strategy or the Technical Report.
4. The six yearly review will assess progress against the stated purpose of the strategy.

Action Sheets

- 1. Consolidate and improve knowledge on sources, pathways and impacts of pollutants, plastics and biotoxins on cetaceans to develop and implement better management.**

Delivery Lead	Government and SNCBs
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Regulators Industry representatives Academic experts NGOs UK marine mammal strandings schemes (SMASS, CSIP)
Problem description	<p>There is an increasing awareness of the potential impact of contaminants (e.g. PCBs), pollutants (including macro- and micro-plastics), biotoxins and harmful algal blooms on cetaceans.</p> <p>Elevated concentrations of contaminants are widespread in mammals in European seas, including UK waters, although there are differences between species and locations. For example, the concentrations of a range of synthetic halogenated organic pollutants in marine mammals appear to be at toxicologically significant levels in individuals from a range of species including killer whales and other dolphin species, to the extent that reproduction may be harmed.</p> <p>Primary concern is expressed over chlorinated biphenyl compounds, although a range of other groups of substances (e.g. DDT), as well as plastics (micro- and macro-) and naturally occurring stressors (e.g. biotoxins and harmful algal blooms) have, and in many cases continue, to raise concerns.</p>
Plan	Development of a working group with agreed Terms of Reference (ToR).
Timeline	Create working group and agree ToR within six months of the conservation strategy being published.
Links to other actions and added value	<p>The work from this action will directly feed in to the habitat-based, research-based and monitoring actions.</p> <p>Research conducted and guidance produced under this action could feed into/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as:</p> <p>MSFD</p>

	OSPAR IWC Stockholm Convention International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) ASCOBANS AMAP
Resources	Personnel resources required to set up working groups and development of the short, medium and long term plans.
Barriers to Progress	Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working groups and develop/implement short, medium and long-term plans. Some research gaps may be too costly to undertake, leading to continued uncertainty in assessments, or an inability to undertake certain aspects of the assessment. Requires input and support from regulators and industries to allow knowledge gaps to be filled. Progress may be dependent on work taking place in other national and/or international groups.
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant stakeholders as identified by the working group.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

2. Further development and implementation of the UK bycatch mitigation initiative.

Delivery Lead	Government
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Regulators Fishery Industry representatives Academic experts NGOs
Overarching problem descriptor	Bycatch in fisheries remains one of the most significant threats to cetaceans globally. Within the UK, bycatch continues to be a concern, in particular from a welfare perspective, yet there remains a high degree of uncertainty over actual levels of bycatch in UK fisheries and by other EU Member States vessels.

	<p>An initiative to address the issue collaboratively with stakeholders will be developed, with a focus on practical, targeted mitigation underpinned by data collection and the trialling of new techniques. This initiative will seek to develop and deliver a coherent and coordinated stakeholder led approach to address cetacean bycatch in UK waters through the implementation of practical and effective risk-based mitigation.</p>
<p>Plan</p>	<p>Clean Catch UK, previously the Bycatch Focus Group, has been established, with operation ToR, to fully develop the initiative. Identify and target priority/high-risk areas for bycatch. Work with industry, NGOs, consumers and commercial partners to explore potential incentives for fisheries to implement effective mitigation, using social and scientific research to underpin and encourage best practice. Work with experts to develop innovative mitigation measures and evaluate the effectiveness of these mitigation measures (includes existing work and identifying areas for further work). This will involve building on existing/ongoing work and working with different partners to identify areas for further research. Continue, and where possible improve, existing monitoring programmes to measure bycatch levels, which will also act as a tool for measuring success. The current monitoring programme can be used as a reporting tool for requirements under the (EU) 2019/1241 Technical Conservation Measures Regulation. There are opportunities to streamline this programme and to exploit synergies with other monitoring programmes to feed in and create a more complete picture at the relevant scale. Review coverage of scheme and whether there is a need to increase/start monitoring in certain areas which have not been focused on in the past. Review whether there is a need to re-shape and refocus monitoring, doing things differently in a way that better reflects the situation in the UK. Collaborate with the wider international community to share successes and lessons learnt to promote reduction in bycatch globally. Regular review of deliverables (annually or dependent on tasks identified).</p>

Timeline	Sub groups have been created to develop sections of the initiatives. The groups will feed into the six monthly Bycatch Focus Group meetings, where the group will oversee the full development of the Initiative.
Events	Regular Cetacean Bycatch Focus Group meetings (six monthly) linked to existing Project Steering Group meeting for UK monitoring and strandings programmes.
Links to other actions and added value	The working groups from this action will directly feed in to the research-based and monitoring actions. Research conducted under this action could feed in to/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSFD • OSPAR • ICES
Resources	Additional R&D funding has been secured by Defra to facilitate the production and delivery of the strategy and associated efforts to reduce bycatch. Further work will be undertaken to determine the extent to which additional resource is needed to deliver Estimated two working group meetings per year each meeting lasting approximately 2 days, and each meeting averaging 15 attendees.
Barriers to progress	Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working groups and develop/implement plans. Some research gaps may be too costly to undertake, leading to continued uncertainty in assessments, or an inability to undertake certain aspects of the assessment
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant stakeholders as identified by the working group.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

3. Improve understanding of entanglements and work towards developing strategies to reduce this threat.

Delivery Lead	Government
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Regulators Fishery Industry representatives

	Academic experts NGOs
Overarching problem descriptor	Entanglement of whales in fishing gear is a widespread and global phenomenon that is gaining increasing attention. In Scotland minke whales are relatively numerous and they and other baleen whales are known to become entangled in creel lines and other ropes. Little is known about the scale of the problem, but European member states are required to establish means of monitoring such mortalities.
Plan	<p>Development of working group with agreed ToR.</p> <p>Identify and target priority/high-risk areas for entanglements. Work with industry, NGOs, consumers and commercial partners to explore potential incentives for fisheries to implement effective mitigation, using social and scientific research to underpin and encourage best practice.</p> <p>Work with experts to develop innovative mitigation measures and evaluate the effectiveness of these mitigation measures (includes existing work and identifying areas for further work). This will involve building on existing/ongoing work and working with different partners to identify areas for further research. Continue, and where possible improve, existing monitoring programmes to measure entanglement levels, which will also act as a tool for measuring success.</p> <p>There are opportunities to streamline this programme and to exploit synergies with other monitoring programmes to feed in and create a more complete picture at the relevant scale. Review whether there is a need to re-shape and refocus monitoring, doing things differently in a way that better reflects the situation in the UK.</p> <p>Collaborate with the wider international community to share successes and lessons learnt to promote reduction in entanglement globally.</p> <p>Regular review of deliverables (annually or dependent on tasks identified).</p>
Timeline	Create action working group and ToR (within six months of the conservation strategy being published).
Events	Working Group (WG) meetings to develop ToR.
Links to other actions and added value	The working groups from this action will directly feed in to the research-based and monitoring actions.

	<p>Research conducted under this action could feed in to/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSFD • OSPAR • ICES
Resources	Human resources required to set up working groups and development of the short, medium and long term plans.
Barriers to progress	<p>Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working groups and develop/implement plans.</p> <p>Some research gaps may be too costly to undertake, leading to continued uncertainty in assessments, or an inability to undertake certain aspects of the assessment.</p>
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant stakeholders as identified by the working group.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

4. Consolidate and improve our understanding of noise impacts on cetaceans to better inform management and conservation.

- A. Develop an operational framework to manage the cumulative impact of acoustic disturbance in the context of environmental assessments.**
- B. Understand the pressures of ambient noise levels, evaluate the contribution of shipping noise to them and potential impact on cetacean populations.**
- C. Future trends in underwater noise: Consolidate and improve knowledge of increasing sources of underwater noise.**

Delivery Lead	Government and SNCBs
Participants for delivery	<p>Government and SNCBs</p> <p>Regulators</p> <p>Industry representatives</p> <p>Academic experts</p> <p>NGOs</p>
Overarching problem descriptor	Cetaceans use sound for communication, to search for prey, to avoid predators and hazards, and for short- and long-range navigation. Noise in the marine environment can potentially affect cetaceans in various ways, depending on the intensity

	<p>(sound pressure level), frequency and nature (e.g. impulsive, non-impulsive) of the sound source.</p> <p>Research to date has documented both the presence and absence of physiological effects and/or behavioural responses of cetaceans to various sources of underwater noise. Often highlighting variability in effects and/or responses that may be species specific, site specific and/or context specific (e.g. foraging, migrating). This research has stimulated discussions among scientists, stakeholders and policy makers on how to address potential impacts of underwater noise and how to develop meaningful mitigation measures within regulatory frameworks. This body of work, coupled with growing pressures relating to marine industries (e.g. renewable energy, oil and gas, aquaculture) have the potential to cause multiple acoustic stressors impacting on cetacean populations, and therefore requiring Cumulative Impact Assessment.</p> <p>This has raised several questions all of which have overarching implications for noise monitoring and management, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of empirical data on various aspects of the noise produced by different industries, including physical properties of noise close to the source and how sound changes with distance from source; • Different regulators for different activities, meaning not all the information about other activities is available when licensing decisions are made; • The effect of different noises on cetacean species, including whether auditory injury is sustained; • There is general lack of understanding of the response of cetacean species to different signal-types and how these responses are modified or mediated by context; • If impacts at an individual level translate to a population level effect, and how could these effects be quantified? • The need for greater confidence in the abundance and demographic data used to inform population-level consequences for disturbance.
<p>Problem description A)</p>	<p>In order to fully assess the effects of acoustic disturbance from a particular human activity on cetaceans, we need to be able to consider the cumulative effects of all other activities, plus the activity under consideration. Developing a method to assess the</p>

	<p>cumulative impacts of underwater noise for one industry alone is a challenge, but drawing together effects from different industries in a coherent way is currently sufficiently complicated that it is typically undertaken in a qualitative manner. Some frameworks currently exist to address these issues (e.g. iPCOD¹ and DEPONS²) and while they have utility, all have limitations. This action aims to address these issues.</p>
Problem description B)	<p>There is limited information on underwater ambient noise levels throughout UK waters, although some preliminary work has been undertaken (Merchant <i>et al.</i>, 2016). Work is needed to evaluate the additional contribution of shipping noise to those ambient levels and the potential impact on cetaceans. Understanding the noise levels, their variability, and the potential for interactions with cetaceans, are required before management actions can be developed. Noise from shipping is the largest contributor to low frequency underwater noise around the world. Sounds produced by propellers, gear boxes and hulls propagate across large areas, and can be detected in areas far from vessels or shipping lanes. There is concern that these activities increase overall ambient low frequency noise and have the potential to mask low frequency cetaceans.</p>
Problem description C)	<p>The need to consolidate and improve knowledge on increasing sources of underwater noise is required due to the increasing scale and complexity of marine developments (e.g., offshore wind farms, harbour redevelopment). For example, these developments have led to the increasing discovery of unexploded ordnance (UXO), which require disposal. In addition, there has also been an increase in the use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) for mitigation in offshore industries, as well as their application for reducing seal predation at aquaculture sites and salmon rivers. However, for ADDs there is incomplete information on their distribution, their current use (e.g. duty cycle) and the types (i.e. manufacturer and model) in use.</p> <p>Following the publication of the NMFS thresholds (2018), there is concern that the impact zones of some noise related activities (e.g. UXO) have increased (and in some cases decreased) and</p>

¹ [Interim Population Consequences of Disturbance Model \(iPCOD\)](#)

² [The DEPONS project – Disturbance Effects on the Harbour Porpoise Population in the North Sea](#)

	thus alternative mitigation may be required to minimise any potential impacts.
Plan	<p>Development of action working groups (and subgroups, if required) with agreed Terms of Reference (ToR).</p> <p>Make use of other established best practices, programmes and databases, such as the Marine Noise Registry (JNCC) and the port of Vancouver incentive scheme (to reduce vessel noise).</p> <p>Plans will include deliverables such as reviewing methodologies that already exist and pulling together ongoing projects that could inform the action and development of tools to inform management.</p> <p>Potential research targets could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better understanding of ambient noise levels and evaluate the contribution of shipping noise to them. • A better understanding of the response elicited by existing deterrent devices, how this varies between species and contexts, and how this is likely to change over time. • A better understanding of how much unlicensed activities contribute to cumulative underwater noise. • Identify the most appropriate suite of mitigation measures for UXO clearance. • Review existing guidance.
Timeline	<p>Create action working groups, ToR and associated subgroups (within six months of the conservation strategy being published).</p> <p>Initial stages will require data collection, processing and modelling, so results may not be immediate.</p>
Links to other actions and added value	<p>The working groups from this action will directly feed in to the research-based and monitoring actions.</p> <p>Research conducted under this action could feed in to/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as:</p> <p>MSFD</p> <p>The UK Noise Registry, managed by JNCC</p> <p>OSPAR ICG-noise</p> <p>Offshore Renewable Joint Industry Project (ORJIP)</p> <p>ORELG</p> <p>ICES</p> <p>Technical Group on Underwater Noise and other forms of Energy (TG-Noise).</p> <p>Relevant on-going research programmes include:</p>

	<p>Marine Scotland and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) are partners in the JOMOPANS project, which will undertake research relevant to this action within the North Sea, working with partners from France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.</p> <p>Marine Scotland and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) are partners in the COMPASS project, which will undertake research relevant to this action within the west of Scotland as part of the INTERREG VA area, working with other partners in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.</p> <p>Marine Scotland's East Coast Marine Mammal Acoustic Study (ECOMMAS), which comprises of acoustic recorders and/or click detectors at 30 locations on the east coast of Scotland. This project is on-going, and has been running since 2013. The JONAS project addresses threats to biodiversity from underwater noise pollution on sensitive species by streamlining noise monitoring and risk management on a transnational basis. Marine Scotland is undertaking a review to establish the extent of ADD use and develop guidance.</p>
Resources	Human resources required to set up working groups and development of the short, medium and long term plans.
Barriers to Progress	<p>Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working groups and develop/implement short, medium and long term plans.</p> <p>Some research gaps may be too costly to undertake, leading to continued uncertainty in assessments, or an inability to undertake certain aspects of the assessment.</p> <p>Requires input and support from regulators and industries to allow knowledge gaps to be filled.</p> <p>Progress may be dependent on work taking place in other national and/or international groups.</p> <p>Potential loss of acoustic monitoring equipment at sea could reduce the datasets available for making decisions.</p>
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant regional stakeholders as identified by the working groups.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national and international groups.

5. Establish approaches to managing wildlife tourism.

Delivery Lead	SNCBs
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Industry representatives Academic experts NGOs Wildlife liaison officers (police)
Problem description	<p>Marine wildlife tourism is becoming increasingly important for the UK economy.</p> <p>Wildlife watching vessels, as well as recreational activities have been shown to negatively affect certain cetacean species. As such, there is merit in reviewing the need for management measures in the UK, e.g. licensing, regulations, national accreditation schemes, and wildlife watching guidance. Where required, such measures should aim to ensure that wildlife tourism and recreational activities do not have negative effects on the long-term survival of populations and habitats, and have minimal impact on the behaviour of animals. There is also a need to review compliance, enforcement and mechanisms for reporting potential wildlife crime.</p> <p>The purpose of the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code (SMWWC) is to raise awareness and offer practical guidance to anyone watching wildlife, whether they are a member of the public or a commercial operator. The Code is not a law or regulation, however the development came from a statutory requirement under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Elsewhere in the UK there are local/regional codes of conduct. These vary in the information they provide and some do not clearly document what constitutes disturbance, potential offences, or the mechanisms for reporting wildlife crime.</p>
Plan	<p>This plan applies to all cetacean species in the conservation strategy but will also have a broader remit covering other species often targeted by wildlife watching operations, e.g. basking sharks.</p> <p>The development of the action will require: Formation of a working group and agreement of ToR.</p>
Timeline	Create steering group and ToR (within three months of conservation strategy being published).
Events	Working Group (WG) meetings to develop ToR.

Links to other actions and added value	The working groups from this action will directly feed in to the research-based and monitoring actions. This is relevant to work currently being undertaken by CMS and the IWC to develop best practice guidelines for marine wildlife watching. It is also relevant to ASCOBANS commitments.
Resources	Personnel for the review and development of management and/or overarching guidelines. This will include stakeholder engagement, advertising any new guidance, organising working group meetings and workshops.
Barriers to Progress	Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working group and engagement meetings. Some research gaps may be too costly to undertake, leading to continued uncertainty in progressing management. Requires input and support from government and industries.
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant regional stakeholders as identified by the working groups.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national and international groups.
Product(s)	To be determined by a review of management options.

6. Improve knowledge of the physical condition of supporting habitats and prey availability to inform management and conservation.

Delivery Lead	SNCBs
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Regulators Academic experts NGOs
Overarching problem descriptor	Physical changes to supporting habitats may have a direct impact on important factors to cetaceans, such as availability and energy density of prey species. For some prey species that deposit their eggs on the seabed, such as sandeel and herring, the physical condition of the habitat is a relevant concern that relates directly to maintaining sufficient prey resources to adequately support the cetacean populations. Consequently, activities with the potential to cause significant degradation or abrasion of these seabed habitats (e.g. hydraulic dredging, aggregate extraction, dumping) may result in the local depletion of prey species.
Plan	Development of action working group with agreed ToR.

Timeline	Create action working groups and ToR within six months of the conservation strategy being published.
Events	Working group meetings and workshops with relevant lead parties and stakeholders (both regional and national) to discuss issues, key research gaps and address data needs.
Links to other actions and added value	The working groups from this action will directly feed in to the pollutant and contaminant-based, noise-based and research-based and monitoring actions. Research conducted under this action could feed in to/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as: MSFD IWC OSPAR ORJIP ICES.
Resources	Human resources required to set up working groups and development of the short, medium and long term plans.
Barriers to Progress	Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working groups and develop/implement short, medium and long term plans. Requires input and support from regulators and industries to allow knowledge gaps to be filled. Progress may be dependent on work taking place in other national and/or international groups.
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant stakeholders as identified by the working group.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

7. Develop a framework to prioritise research requirements

Delivery lead	SNCBs
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Academic experts NGOs UK CSIP and SMASS Industry (where relevant)

Overarching problem description	<p>For many cetacean species occurring in UK waters, basic information to understand their population dynamics, lifestyle requirements or impacts of human activities is lacking. This means that it is difficult to produce trends or confidently assess their conservation status. The implications include risks to the conservation of the species and limited information on which management decisions are based.</p> <p>Although monitoring may help to address gaps in knowledge of abundance, distribution and seasonality, there will still be a lack of information about fecundity, mortality rates (e.g. from vessel strikes), and prey and habitat preferences. Additional tailored research is therefore required to help fill some of these gaps.</p>
Plan:	This plan applies to all cetacean species in the conservation strategy: Formation of an action working group which should include representatives from all other action working groups and the development of a ToR.
Timeline	Development of action working group and ToR (within three months of the conservation strategy being published).
Links to other actions and added value	<p>Dependent on requirements from all the action groups research conducted under this action could feed in to/inform relevant working groups and frameworks, such as:</p> <p>MSFD OSPAR IWC ORJIP ASCOBANS ICES UK Marine Plans.</p>
Resources	Human resources required to set up working group.
Barriers to Progress	<p>Lack of resource to action research identified.</p> <p>Requires input from other Action Plans to ensure research meets their requirements.</p> <p>Progress may be dependent on work taking place in other national and/or international groups.</p>
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant stakeholders as identified by the working group.
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

8. Develop and implement communications with stakeholders to support conservation actions.

Delivery lead	Government
Participants for delivery	Government and SNCBs Regulators Industry representatives Academic experts NGOs UK marine mammal strandings schemes (SMASS, CSIP)
Problem description	Various research and management options will be explored as part of this conservation strategy. Ongoing research and management is also taking place across the UK. As such, a well-managed communications plan is required to ensure better two-way communication and knowledge exchange on: Cetacean population status and threats to help promote action by others. Measures that have been implemented and lessons learned by relevant management authorities and the general public.
Plan	Communication applies to UK waters and covers all species covered by the conservation strategy. Focus on developing materials and showcasing results to a wider audience. This material can also be relevant to UK administrations when communicating with partner countries (e.g. during OSPAR meetings).
Timeline	Create action working group and ToR (within three months of conservation strategy being published).
Events	No specific events planned, but could be developed as part of the annual communications plan.
Links to other actions and added value	All other actions.
Resources	Human resources in attending working group meetings.
Barriers to Progress	Lack of resources: Resources are required to set up the working group and set up and maintain the website and social media accounts. Action working groups need to inform the lead organisation on actions taken that can be disseminated to a wider audience.
Stakeholders to engage	As per delivery partners and relevant regional stakeholders as identified by the working groups.

Other Competent Authorities	None
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9. Develop and implement an effective monitoring plan to provide a more robust understanding of the conservation status of UK cetaceans

Delivery Lead	Government and SNCBs
Participants for delivery	<p>Governments and SNCBs</p> <p>Existing UK monitoring programme leads (e.g. bycatch and strandings/post mortem monitoring)</p> <p>Academic experts</p> <p>Industry representatives</p> <p>NGOs</p>
Problem description	<p>The conservation status of cetaceans in UK waters is assessed through reporting under the Habitats Directive based on outputs from surveillance programmes that Member States are required to implement. Furthermore, the status of cetacean populations is a component of a suite of indicators used internationally by OSPAR and nationally by Member States to report on Good Environmental Status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. However, for many species of UK cetacean, we are lacking information to confidently understand their status. The implications of this include risks to the conservation of the species and limited information on which management decisions can be based.</p> <p>The UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS) is being undertaken in partnership with the UK's Healthy and Biologically Diverse Seas Evidence Group (HBDSEG). The advice aims to address the UK's significant policy and statutory obligations.</p> <p>The UK Marine Biodiversity Monitoring R&D Programme (led by JNCC) has been tasked with developing recommendations for an integrated monitoring³ scheme for all marine biodiversity across all</p>

³ Monitoring: observe and check the progress or quality of something (e.g. population abundance) over a period of time to ensure conservation/monitoring [objectives](#) are being met.

	<p>UK waters. JNCC are now leading the tasks to develop the integrated programme.</p> <p>This action would take the outputs/recommendations of the JNCC's Integrated Monitoring Programme and work within the ambitions of UKMASS and HBDSEG to develop plans for implementation. Such plans may be UK wide or regional to reflect the requirements of the Devolved Administrations. This action will also identify and develop plans for any gaps in cetacean monitoring to ensure more complete understanding of conservation status of all UK cetaceans and to support management.</p>
Plan	<p>This action concerns the implementation of an effective UK cetacean monitoring programme to provide a more robust understanding of the conservation status of UK cetaceans. This directly links to the JNCC-led integrated UK marine biodiversity monitoring program This action will consider the outputs from this programme and work with the programme to develop an implementation plan.</p> <p>The success of the plan will be measured by the successful implementation of an operational cetacean monitoring programme.</p>
Timeline	Governments to agree funding for the programme.
Events	Working group meetings.
Links to other actions and added value	<p>The development of a monitoring programme for cetaceans is being led on by JNCC as part of the UKMASS initiative in partnership with HBDSEG.</p> <p>This action will coordinate and manage the implementation of the monitoring programme for cetaceans. Successful implementation will ensure data collection is fit for purpose and analysis appropriate to deliver on the UK's national (e.g. the Marine Strategy) and international commitments (e.g. as Party to OSPAR).</p> <p>The need for additional monitoring may be identified by other actions that are addressing specific pressures. Depending on its nature and fit with the broader remit of the cetacean monitoring programme it may be appropriate for this action to incorporate this.</p>

Resources	The cetacean monitoring programme has already been identified and is pending Government support for implementation. Existing monitoring programmes are already resourced and supported by Steering Groups. This WG will need to liaise with them to ensure agreed monitoring needs are supported.
Barriers to Progress	Under-resourced Progress may be limited if agreement on HBDSEG cetacean monitoring programme not met.
Stakeholders to engage	NGOs Academics Industry EU countries
Other Competent Authorities	To be identified as part of the link up with other national groups.

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