



Joint Action on Sensitive Species Bycatch

Clean Catch Programme Governance Board Terms of Reference

Background

Clean Catch is a collaborative programme key to the UK Government’s ambitions to help minimise and – where possible - eliminate bycatch of sensitive marine species, as set out under the ecosystem objective of the Fisheries Act and elaborated in the UK Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI). Originally established in 2019, Clean Catch has now entered a second three year “expansion” phase, stewarded by a new consortium, which runs until the end of October 2026. The overarching objectives of this phase are to expand its scope and trials for monitoring and mitigation of bycatch and enhance its role in knowledge exchange within and beyond the UK.

Clean Catch’s mission is to champion collaborative working to help monitor and minimise the bycatch of sensitive marine species in UK fisheries and exchange knowledge globally. Further detail on the objectives of this Clean Catch expansion phase can be found in Appendix 1.

For this phase of Clean Catch, a new streamlined governance framework has been established to enhance transparency, ensure equitability and make the most effective use of the diversity of expertise from across Clean Catch’s key actors¹ (such as fishers, scientists, environmental NGOs, and policy-makers).

1. Purpose of the Group

The Clean Catch Programme Governance Board (hereafter: PGB / Clean Catch PGB) is established to provide **overall oversight, guidance and direction for the Clean Catch Programme expansion phase (2024-26) and make decisions on escalated issues.**

The PGB will only be stood up for formal meetings when deemed necessary by Defra, for example to discuss escalated issues (see next section for more information on this). Written updates to share progress and information will be issued by the PGB as and when appropriate.

The board comprises government (Defra) and representatives from the Clean Catch programme delivery team. The group will be chaired by Defra as the project sponsor, project authority and policy-maker.

¹ “Key actor” is Clean Catch’s preferred term for people and organisations more conventionally called “stakeholders”. More information about the rationale for this approach can be found at <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2024/05/07/should-we-stop-using-the-word-stakeholder-in-research/>.



In addition to the board members, two to three observer attendees may be invited from expert groups such as: fishing industry representatives, environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs), scientists, and others with expertise in bycatch research, or representatives from other groups within the Clean Catch governance framework such as the Clean Catch National Advisory Board or Local Focus Groups. Invitees will be invited based on those most relevant to specific agenda items and to ensure co-ordination between groups within the overarching Clean Catch governance framework.

1.1 Scope

The Clean Catch programme brings together activities and objectives that the Arribada Consortium and Cefas have been contracted to deliver for Defra.

Delivery of the Clean Catch programme is managed based on the concept of ‘management by exception’. The term “Manage by Exception” reflects the idea that the Programme Governance Board only needs to intervene when exceptions occur. The Clean Catch programme delivery team has delegated authority and is responsible for managing and delivering all project activities to achieve the programme objectives and for handling day to day issues.

The Clean Catch PGB manages by exception, making decisions on escalated issues or where approval of key programme decisions are required and provides guidance and direction as appropriate.

For this reason, and to rationalise meetings, the Clean Catch PGB will be convened on an ad-hoc basis – and only be ‘stood up’ for a formal meeting as and when required, for example to discuss recommendations or escalated issues.

Other groups forming part of the governance framework for the Clean Catch programme expansion phase (2024-26) are the Clean Catch National Advisory Board, two Local Focus Groups, and temporary ad-hoc expert working groups. Further information can be found in Appendix 1.



2. Membership

2.1 Composition

The PGB consists of Defra, the project sponsor and authority, and representatives from the consortium organisations who together form the Clean Catch programme delivery team.

Organisation	Role/Area	Member (s)
Defra	Clean Catch Programme sponsor/authority – approvals of deliverables and budget. English government: bycatch policy & initiatives Acts as link to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra Arms Length Bodies, such as Natural England and JNCC Devolved Administrations 	Brigid Finlayson (Chair of the PGB & NAB) Jonny Peters (Backup chair) Emma Kelman – observer
Arribada Initiative	Clean Catch Programme Consortium Lead Lead for Work Package 4: Research and Development. Co-Lead on fisher liaison in trial locations.	Alasdair Davies Ben Tutt-Leppard
MMOC	Lead for Work Package 1: Programme management and governance. Day to day project management.	Milly Oakley (project manager)
Mindfully Wired Communications (MWC)	Lead for Work Package 2: Communications and Key Actor Engagement, including dissemination, brand, and creative stakeholder engagement. Lead for event delivery.	Katrina Ryan Chantal Lyons
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)	Lead for Work Package 3: Science and Knowledge Transfer.	Stephen Long Rosie Williams
Zoological Society of London (ZSL)	Lead for Work Package 5: Equitable Co-design of project activities. Co-lead for key actor engagement.	Rebecca Austin Aadil Siddiqi
Cefas	Lead for Work Package 6: Mitigation and monitoring trials Project management of monitoring and mitigation trials. Co-lead/key contributor for science. Fisher outreach and liaison and links with key actor focus and engagement groups.	Eva Maher (project manager) Joanna Murray

In addition to the board members, Defra may invite two to three observer attendees from expert groups such as: fishing industry representatives, environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs), scientists, and others with expertise in bycatch research, or representatives from other groups within the Clean Catch Governance Framework such as the Clean Catch National Advisory Board, Local Focus Groups or Expert Working Groups, to **ensure strong communications,**



transparency and coordination between the groups within the overarching Clean Catch governance framework.

Defra may also invite additional Defra staff and representatives of Arms Length Bodies, such as Natural England and JNCC, to attend as observers or presenters.

2.2 Appointment

Membership is defined by the organisations who form the consortium team delivering Clean Catch programme activities.

2.3 Chairperson

Defra will chair the PGB as the Clean Catch project authority, and will be responsible for:

- Leading and facilitating PGB meetings.
- Ensuring effective communication and decision-making.
- Representing the Clean Catch programme in external engagements.

3. Responsibilities of the Clean Catch Programme Governance Board

The Board will oversee all aspects of the Clean Catch programme, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The PGB's responsibilities encompass:

- Reviewing and approving the programme's vision, objectives, and key deliverables.
- Ensuring alignment with Defra organisational strategy and priorities, including bycatch programme and policy.
- Monitoring progress and performance.
- Approving key decisions, changes, and deviations from the plan.
- Making decisions on escalated issues.
- Overseeing risk management and mitigation strategies.
- Ensuring effective relevant engagement and communication.
- Overseeing financial management, including budget approval and financial performance.
- Ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and organisational requirements.

4. Meetings

4.1 Frequency

The PGB will meet on an ad-hoc basis and only be stood up when deemed necessary by Defra, to a maximum of twice a year – meetings may be either online or in person.



Written updates or reports on programme progress will be shared as and when appropriate to foster continued engagement with other Clean Catch governance groups and the wider key actor community.

4.2 Decision-making

Decisions will be made via consensus if possible. In the absence of consensus, Defra will act as the final decision maker, clearly communicating the rationale for any such decision.

4.3 Agenda and format

The agenda for the meetings will be set by Clean Catch programme delivery team with input from Defra.

Agenda items will be defined as either:

- Items for Information: To be reviewed and discussed by the PGB. Examples include progress updates.
- Items for Decision: To be discussed by the PGB and a decision reached. Examples include escalated issues from the programme delivery team, recommendations from the Clean Catch National Advisory Board.

For each meeting, the Clean Catch programme delivery team will collate a package of documents as appropriate.

5. Reporting

The Clean Catch project managers (and other consortium members as appropriate) will provide updates and reports on the programme status, deliverables and any issues required the Board's attention as and when appropriate.

Progress updates, findings and recommendations of the PGB may be shared with the Clean Catch NAB, other governance groups and external key actors as appropriate through:

- Meeting minutes and summary reports
- Special reports on specific issues as requested

6. Support and resources

The Clean Catch programme delivery team will be **responsible for the administration of the group for Defra including:**

- Meeting venues and arrangements
- Access to relevant data and facilitation
- Secretariat support for documentation and communication



7. Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness and relevance of the PGB will be reviewed periodically.



Appendix 1: Objectives of the Clean Catch Programme Expansion Phase

The **objectives** of this Clean Catch expansion phase are to:

- Enhance inclusion and representation of key people and groups through an equitable and effective governance framework.
- Expand the programme scope to other species and fisheries in England.
- Conduct a comprehensive bycatch hotspots review, in terms of key areas and fisheries for bycatch risk and for “bright spots” where monitoring and mitigation efforts have been most successful.
- Explore and seek to overcome barriers to broader fisher engagement.
- Continue to deliver the ongoing cetacean bycatch mitigation trial in the southwest of England and establish a second trial elsewhere in England, encompassing at least one other species group.
- Additionally support the continued research and development of Passive Acoustic Reflectors.
- Explore whether monitoring of underwater sound can be an effective and reliable method for continuous monitoring of cetaceans in areas of higher bycatch risk.
- Explore whether Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) can be used as a tool to increase the monitoring coverage of sensitive species bycatch.
- Develop interdisciplinary approaches – including the use of social science to capture fishers’ insights – to monitor, analyse, and assess results of case study monitoring and mitigation trials.
- Share our outputs widely and in accessible formats, including through best practice guides on bycatch monitoring and mitigation developed for and with the fishing industry.
- Collaborate with adjacent initiatives within Defra’s bycatch programme of work and those of devolved administrations, and foster national and international knowledge exchange.
- Underpin all our work through strategic engagement and communications.



Appendix 2: Clean Catch Governance Framework Overview

- **Programme Governance Board (PGB)** formed of members representing the Clean Catch consortium programme delivery team and Defra. The PGB is responsible for **programme direction** and meets as needed to **make decisions on recommendations** issued by Clean Catch's other governance groups or **escalated issues**. **Defra** is project authority and **decision-maker**.
- **National Advisory Board (NAB)** formed of members representing Defra, the fishing industry, scientists, environmental NGOs and others with relevant expertise. Together they provide **expert advice, recommendations, and guidance** on Clean Catch's activities and act as a forum for **vital knowledge exchange and promoting collaboration on bycatch**.
- **Local focus groups (LFGs)** formed of members representing Cefas, fishers, fishing industry, scientists and local environmental NGOs. The LFGs represent the grassroots, implementation-oriented end of Clean Catch. Together they provide **local expert advice and guidance** on Clean Catch's activities, especially the bycatch mitigation and monitoring trials. They also act as a forum for **vital knowledge exchange**.
- There will be two LFGs, one in each of the two key locations where the Clean Catch programme's bycatch monitoring and mitigation trials are taking place: the Cornwall LFG and a new one to be established once the location of the new trail has been agreed.
- **Targeted (temporary) expert working groups** created on an ad-hoc temporary basis to work on specific topics providing **targeted expert input and advice** as needed to support the delivery of Clean Catch's activities. Membership will be dictated by remit.