Offshore Wind Evidence + Change Programme

Delivery Options for Strategic Marine Net Gain

Second call for evidence summary of responses:
potential mechanisms and priorities for strategic MNG delivery

THE CROWN ESTATE

ABP mer

Executive Summary

The Task and Finish (T&F) Group, funded by the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme, completed its first report in October 2021, setting out a number of strategic targets for marine and intertidal net gain. These targets were widely consulted on, and well supported by a range of marine stakeholders. Building on the outcomes from the first phase of work, the T&F Group is working to develop potential delivery options for strategic Marine Net Gain (MNG), with the aim of identifying and agreeing recommendations for more local delivery of strategic net gain targets.

This report summarises the results of a second call for evidence, which aimed to gain a broader view from a range of stakeholders on potential delivery options for strategic marine and intertidal net gain. This follows on from the first call for evidence conducted by the T&F Group in February 2023, which sought information to undertake an analysis of existing recovery and restoration projects and proposals (including pressure removal/reduction projects) at a national and local level. The review and the first call for evidence identified 709 recovery and restoration projects. In total, restoration projects targeting 25 types of habitat and species feature were captured within the call for evidence.

The outputs presented within this report provide a summary of stakeholder views on more local delivery of strategic net gain targets for the improvement and recovery/restoration of marine and intertidal environment, aiming to agree a suitable basis for determining potential demands for net gain projects regionally.

This second call for evidence generated responses from a wide range of sectors including academia, Government agencies and departments, local authorities, NGOs/ charities, consultancies and industry. Analysis of responses from stakeholders has resulted in the identification of a number of key priorities for potential MNG restoration/ recovery options. It has also identified several key limitations to current restoration initiatives, established potential ecological or nature recovery priorities within the marine environment to inform MNG prioritisation, and has considered potential approaches to best facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG.

Contents

Figures

Document Control

Version	Author	Approved	Date	Description of change
1.0	Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group (Chair)	02/11/2023	Approved for issue by Task and Finish Group.

1. Introduction

There is increasing recognition of the need for greater action to restore our marine environment in the face of a continued decline in marine biodiversity. Net gain has been identified as a potentially important mechanism that can contribute to halting and reversing marine biodiversity loss. From January 2024, just over two years following royal assent of the Environment Act, it will be mandatory for all in scope developments in the terrestrial and intertidal environment to deliver a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10%. Although there is no formal net gain policy as yet for the marine environment, Government has committed to developing such a policy, and has held a first consultation on the principles of marine net gain (MNG).

The Task and Finish (T&F) Group, funded by the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme, completed its first report in October 2021, setting out strategic targets for marine and intertidal net gain. These targets were widely consulted on, and well supported by a range of marine stakeholders. In addition, the T&F Group set out their assumptions and recommendations for further consideration in the development of a policy for MNG (The Crown Estate, 2021[1]).

Building on the outcomes from the first phase of work, the T&F Group is now working to develop potential delivery options to inform delivery of strategic MNG. The aim of this project is to identify and provide recommendations on possible options for delivery of strategic net gain targets, including more local mechanisms, which can be used by offshore wind and other marine industry sectors to help prepare for any future MNG requirements. ABPmer has been commissioned to support the work of the T&F Group.

This report summarises the results of a second call for evidence, which aimed to gain a broader view from a range of stakeholders on potential delivery options for strategic marine and intertidal net gain. This follows on from the first call for evidence conducted by the T&F Group in February 2023, which sought information to undertake an analysis of existing recovery and restoration projects and proposals (including pressure removal/reduction projects) at a national and local level.

2. Call for evidence

The second call for evidence was launched on 16 August 2023 and ran for three weeks. It was hosted on SurveyMonkey and publicised through CMS news, and via LinkedIn and T&F Group member networks.

Respondents were invited to complete a questionnaire aiming to gain a view on more local delivery of strategic net gain targets for the improvement and recovery/restoration of marine and intertidal environments. A summary of the questions contained within the questionnaire are below, with the full questionnaire provided in Appendix A:

1. The findings from the first call for evidence identified four key limitations to current restoration initiatives. How would you rank the four limitations in terms of their significance in delivering ecological needs or priorities?
2. Are there any other limitations to current restoration initiatives you would add to this list, and where would you rank them?

[1] The Crown Estate. 2021. Strategic Net Gain Task and Finish Group, Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme, Strategic Net Gain Targets for Coastal and Marine Environments. Online. Available here: https://www.marinedataexchange.co.uk/details/3513/2021-strategic-net-gain-task-and-finish-group-offshore-wind-evidence-and-change-programme-strategic-net-gain-targets-for-coastal-and-marine-environments/summary

3. What further work do you feel could be required to address these limitations as part of the development of MNG?
4. As part of a strategic approach to MNG, it may be helpful to take account of ecological or nature recovery priorities in the marine environment. In your view, what are the key national restoration or nature recovery needs in the marine environment?
5. During the first call for evidence, stakeholders identified a preference for applying MNG at a marine plan region level. How might the ecological priorities in each marine plan region (or other regional level) be identified?
6. During the first project the Strategic Net Gain Task and Finish Group (T&F Group) identified a number of strategic MNG targets. Which measures do you think industry might be able to contribute to or implement to support delivery of MNG targets, given appropriate policy?
7. The T&F Group has identified several key information requirements which might be needed to inform strategic MNG delivery. Is there anything else you consider would be critical to support successful delivery of strategic MNG?
8. A flexible approach may be required to facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG, do you agree or disagree that MNG should:
   - Seek specifically to address a project's residual impacts on the impacted habitat/species features (i.e., like-for-like)
   - Allow some trading between habitats and/or features
   - Allow some trading between species
   - Allow trading across all ecological elements.
9. Some interventions may look to use novel approaches to achieve restoration outcomes. However, it is recognised that regulation often requires some level of certainty of anticipated project results. How might a strategic approach be developed to facilitate innovation in restoration and enhancement projects?
10. Would a contributions-based approach or central/regional fund be best to facilitate delivery of strategic MNG targets?
11. How do you think a central fund-based approach would be best used to support strategic MNG delivery?
12. Would your organisation/s like to be involved in providing information for MNG planning? If yes, in what capacity would your organisation/s like to be involved?

The final question aimed to identify what sector the respondent works in, to facilitate the comparison of perceived priority actions and targets across different sectors. Respondents could select one option from the following drop-down list of sectors:

- Academia
- Aquaculture
- Cables
- Commercial fishing
- Consultancy
- Environmental NGO/charity
- Government agency
- Government department/ministry
- Local authority
- Marine minerals
- NGO
- Offshore renewables
- Oil and gas
- Ports and harbours
- Power generation
- Recreation
- Shipping
- Water utility
- Other (please specify)

3. Results

The survey generated a total of 54 responses across a wide range of industries/ sectors, a breakdown of which is shown in Figure 1.

Four responses came from 'Other' sectors, these represented the defence sector, a dredging and offshore renewables company, and nature and coastal partnerships.

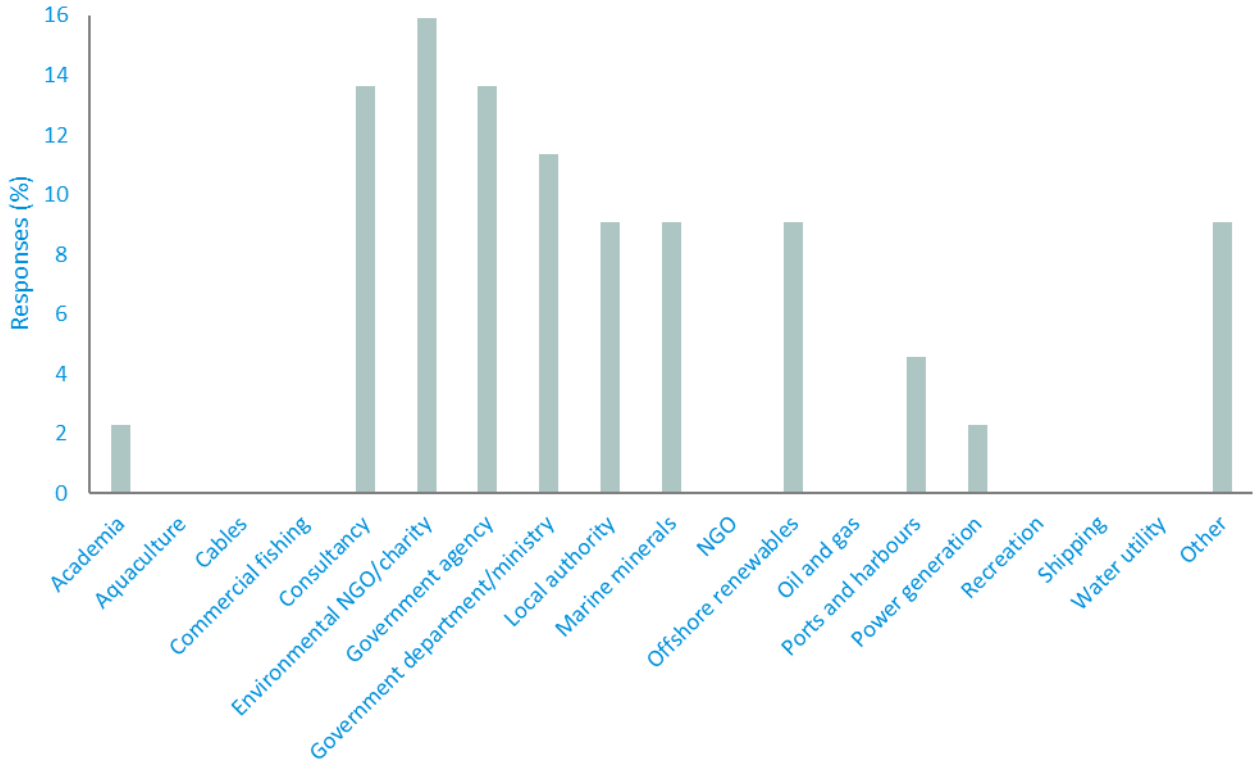

Figure 1. Percentage of responses from each sector

3.1 Key limitations to current restoration initiatives

The findings from the first call for evidence identified four key limitations to current restoration initiatives:

- Complexity of requirements within the marine licensing system;
- Limited availability of funding for restoration/recovery projects (particularly long-term funding);
- Limited baseline data against which to measure success of project interventions; and
- Competing demands for space (particularly coastal space).

In the second call for evidence, respondents were asked to rank these limitations, with respect to their significance in delivering ecological priorities. Figure 2 provides a summary of responses.

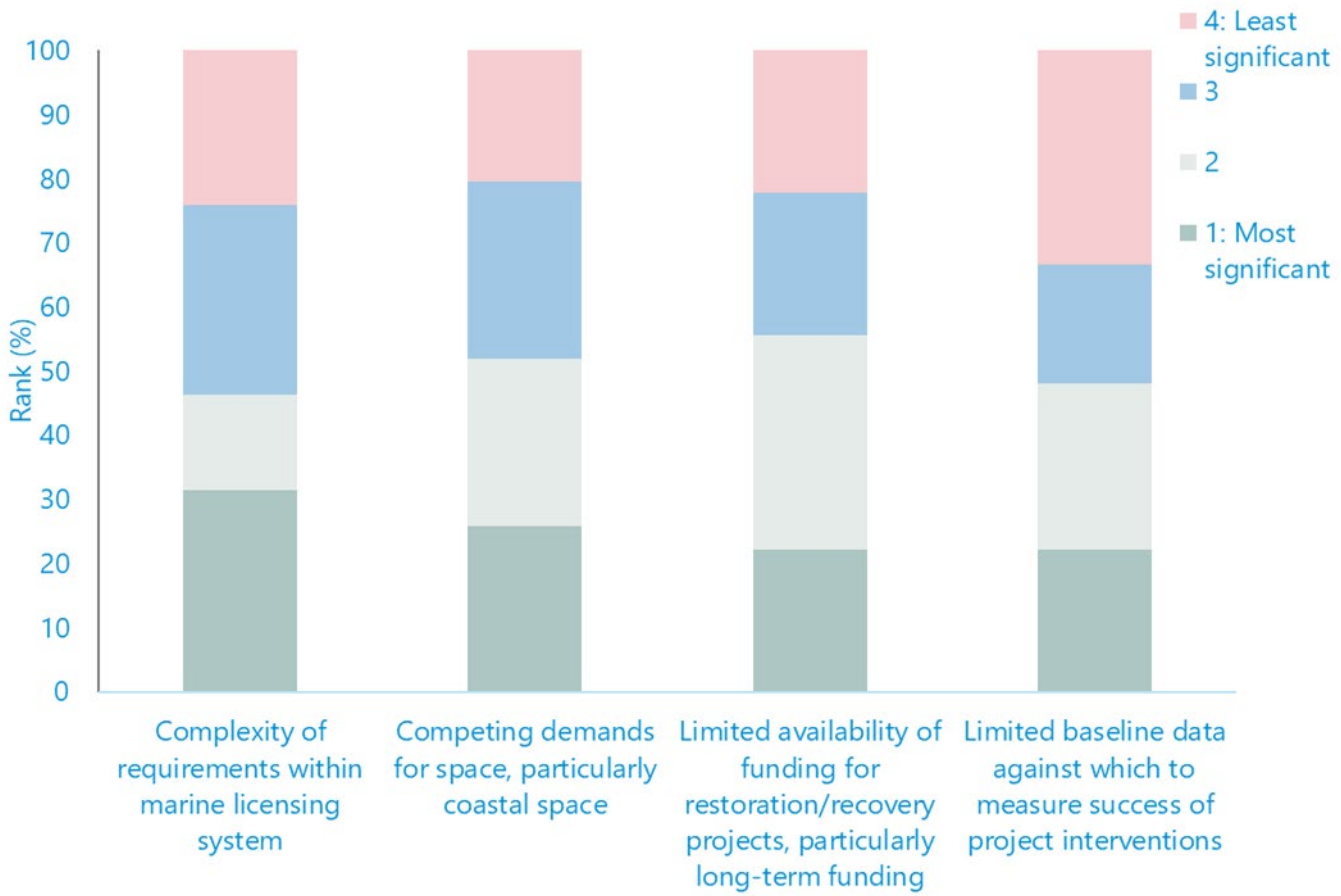

Figure 2. Rank of the four key limitations identified in terms of their significance in delivering ecological priorities

Complexity of requirements within the marine licensing system was most commonly ranked as the most significant limitation to current restoration initiatives, closely followed by competing demands for space particularly at the coast. Limited baseline data against which to measure success of project interventions was generally considered the least significant issue. However, the results do not show a statistically significant outcome and so it should be noted that all appear to be recognised as limiting factors.

Respondents also identified several other factors they considered might be potentially limiting to future net gain initiatives. The most common of these was a lack of strategic coordination between Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the intertidal and MNG, and the need for a prioritised list of 'shovel-ready' projects, both 31% of responses respectively. Twenty-nine percent of respondents also identified the lack of MNG strategy, guidance or qualification process as a key limitation, and indicated the need for the implementation of a clear legal framework and political prioritisation to support MNG.

Other commonly occurring responses included; barriers to/the lack of research especially with respect to novel approaches and assessing the effectiveness of restoration actions (24%), resource constraints within Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) and government to provide expertise, guidance and support engagement (21%), lack of and/or difficulties with stakeholder buy-in and establishment of partnerships to support BNG/MNG delivery (12%), and application of pressure removal actions within the marine environment including, pre-existing pressures preventing recovery, a lack of understanding of key pressures, linking removal of pressures to recovery and a lack of policy drivers for pressure removal (12%).

To address these limitations, 50% of respondents highlighted the need for further research and monitoring, in particular to define current environmental conditions, but also to:

- Develop an agreed historic baseline;
- Review the availability of existing data;
- Assess the success of restoration techniques;
- Research innovative restoration techniques;
- Identify pressures and pressure reduction mechanisms;
- Better assess species population requirements in terms of both space and resource; and
- Evaluate restoration benefits.

It was also felt that a more simplified/ streamlined licensing process or increased flexibility of consenting for restoration initiatives would support implementation. In addition, the development of a statutory MNG system, including the development of government guidance, definition of 'gain' for MNG, details on restoration priorities and linkages between BNG and MNG, to support the earlier limitations identified by respondents, were suggested.

Spatial planning to support more strategic application and equitable allocation of restoration space was also highlighted as a way to address some limitations.

Funding to enable longer-term monitoring or to support existing projects (e.g., Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRe)) and other mechanisms including coastal partnerships, was suggested to support and co-ordinate initiatives and also funding to provide greater staff resource to government departments and SNCBs to facilitate the implementation of MNG and production of the guidance indicated above.

3.2 Ecological or nature recovery priorities in the marine environment

Existing initiatives which respondents cited as being useful mechanisms to define targets and help to provide a prioritisation for nature recovery in the UK included Good Environmental Status (GES) reporting targets, using UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) indicators to demonstrate linkages to failing status indicators, and reviewing and refreshing regional marine plans in order to account for the current status of each UK marine region and to identify ecological sensitivities which might be addressed by a regional level approach to environmental enhancement.

Recovery/enhancement of Marine Protected Area (MPA) interest features to favourable conservation status was also identified by multiple respondents. Correct management of existing MPAs was suggested as a high priority, ensuring that existing MPAs are in favourable condition and are appropriately managed and monitored, in addition to the designation of more MPAs/ Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs).

Additional research actions to identify the most sensitive existing habitats, (habitats at the greatest risk or those with the most severe degradation) were also suggested as actions which could help develop methods of prioritising certain nature recovery initiatives. Respondents also noted that habitats which are most at risk from climate change, in particular coastal and intertidal habitats, should be a focus and that MNG should account for the broader objectives of mitigating the effects of climate change.

Priorities identified by respondents included:

- Recovery of declining seabird populations, in particular species at greatest risk from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and pressures associated with offshore energy;
- Restoration and recovery of transitional coastal habitats;
- Active restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh;
- Improving other coastal habitats such as kelp, rocky shores and sediments;
- Protection, restoration and recovery of biogenic reefs (oysters, serpulid, *Modiolus*), particularly where they form on sedimentary habitats. Native oyster in particular was noted by multiple respondents;

- Resilience in marine mammal populations;
- Remove pressure on irreplaceable subtidal marine habitats, e.g., sandbanks, Sea Pen habitats;
- Recovery of inshore fish populations, essential fish habitats and forage fish species;
- Restoration and recovery of migratory fish (shad, smelt, sturgeon and salmon (particularly at risk of climate change);
- Removal of invasive species;
- Reduce and eliminate marine pollution - eliminate outflow of sewage and other pollution; and
- Improvement of water quality.

During the first call for evidence, stakeholders identified a preference for applying MNG at a marine plan region level. As a result, during the current survey respondents were asked how ecological priorities might be identified for each marine plan region.

Survey respondents felt that urgent resource should be allocated to identifying regional priorities/ ecological needs for MNG and that a regional approach should be delivered from the outset to ensure proportionate gains in all regions.

Respondents identified a wide range of mechanisms that could be used to inform regional priorities. Stakeholder engagement (including the public, academics, NGOs and relevant public bodies) was highlighted as a key mechanism, including through existing forums such as coastal partnerships or through the marine element of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). To achieve a regional approach there was general consensus that local partners and delivery groups, not just government bodies, should be included within the engagement process to establish potential sites and priorities. It was also suggested that Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) should be involved within the process, to help integrate fishing into assessments to consider wider incidental environmental impacts, including displacement and cumulative effects.

The use of existing data and assessments (such as from the UKMS, Water Framework Directive (WFD) and MPA condition assessments) to inform priorities was also frequently cited, as well as building on existing programmes to identify restoration/recovery opportunities and prioritisation processes (e.g., ReMeMaRe and Marine Restoration Potential (MaRePo)). It was also felt that as part of the review process the cost and technically feasibility, related to any suggested longlist of opportunities, should be considered to further refine and prioritise regional opportunities, and that guidance on suitable consenting processes and methodologies should be defined for those prioritised options.

Marine planning was also identified as a potentially useful mechanism through which regional priorities could be identified and safeguarded through marine plan policies, with multiple respondents indicating the need for clear and coherent zonation of the seabed for all users. Some respondents suggested that natural capital approaches could help to prioritise interventions to maximise welfare benefits. In addition, it was suggested that climate-related pressures should also be considered to ensure long-term suitability of prioritised options.

One respondent suggested that the T&F Group could be well placed to begin the initial identification/ prioritisation work, due to the wide-ranging stakeholder membership which includes industry, government, SNCBs and eNGOs. Another suggested that Regional Stakeholder Groups (RSGs), as developed to gather the evidence underpinning Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) designations, should be re-engaged. They felt that RSGs had been particularly effective at representing all key stakeholder interests, were responsible for making the MCZ recommendations, working through the associated issues, and communicating with the local groups upon which the recommendations were developed.

3.3 Strategic MNG delivery

During the first project the Strategic Net Gain T&F Group identified a number of strategic MNG targets, including measures to:

- Restore and/ or create intertidal/ near coastal habitats, including characterising species (e.g., mudflat/ sandflat, saltmarsh/ reedbed, seagrass, native oyster, kelp);
- Restore offshore habitats (e.g., native oyster reef, Modiolus, serpulid reef, subtidal sands, muds and gravels);
- Support and restore fish populations;
- Support populations of birds;
- Support populations of marine mammals; and
- Reduce pressures.

Respondents were asked to identify which measures they felt industry might be able to contribute to, or implement, to support delivery of MNG targets, given appropriate policy.

Measures to restore intertidal or near coastal habitats were considered most likely for industry to contribute to or implement to support delivery of MNG targets, closely followed by measures to restore offshore habitats. Support of marine mammals and bird populations were considered least likely (Figure 3).

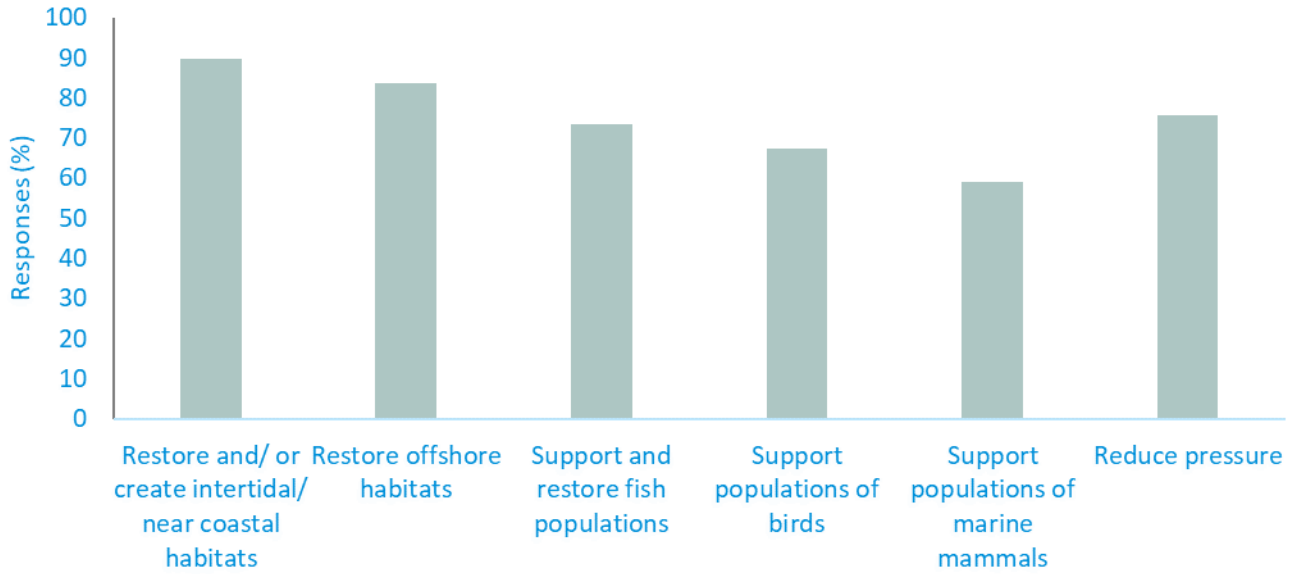

Figure 3. Measures respondents felt industry might be able to contribute to, or implement, to support delivery of MNG targets

In general, respondents agreed that nearshore habitat restoration is the easiest and most obvious contribution for industry to implement as part of a MNG system, due to existing knowledge of known restoration techniques. However, most agreed that it is critical to not exclude other options to support wider marine recovery. To achieve this, it was felt that a specific MNG system would need to be developed, as replicating the existing terrestrial/ intertidal BNG system would not sufficiently deliver resilience in our seas. Primarily, respondents felt that embedding species recovery within the system instead of focusing solely on habitat restoration would be key to deliver meaningful benefits.

To support the delivery of nearshore habitat creation/ restoration respondents suggested that restoration and biodiversity enhancement efforts at project sites could be implemented by industry. In addition, industry could also support existing initiatives such as ReMeMaRe or support academic institutes and citizen science groups to develop new areas of habitat e.g., placing cultch or planting seagrass. It was also suggested that linking oyster reef or kelp restoration with for example, nutrient neutrality policy or MNG policy in a regulatory manner could unlock large-scale funding from industry.

However, one respondent commented that intertidal interventions should not be a feature of MNG as they are already captured under BNG and as such would detract from marine recovery.

Respondents who work for offshore industries acknowledged that active creation/ restoration of habitats may be more limited, especially for those habitats which are characterised by low species biodiversity and density, such as sandbanks. However, some suggested initiatives included experimenting with the re-establishment of offshore oyster reefs and contributing to research for the implementation of horse mussel restoration. Pilot projects such as suspended habitats including seaweed and aquaculture habitats, artificial reefs and infrastructure design which encourages native species colonisation were also suggested.

The installation of offshore infrastructure such as scour protection around turbines, armouring for cables was also considered to provide an alternative solution for offshore restoration e.g., through the creation of artificial reef. However, wider discussions on artificial reef as an MNG option have been mixed due to the implications when removing structures at the end of a project lifecycle, and it is acknowledged that OSPAR requires removal of manmade structures. Despite this it was suggested that research should be completed to clearly show whether the leaving of in situ lower structures can provide benefits, or even leave new habitats undisturbed.

Active methods to support fish populations largely focused on the active creation/ restoration of spawning grounds and nursery habitat (seagrass, biogenic reef) or inclusion of measures as part of the development infrastructure e.g., artificial reef, cod 'hotels'. It was also suggested that industry could work with local groups and business to support grass-root projects, such as lobster hatcheries.

Additional options included supporting and funding research initiatives such as bycatch reduction, sustainable fisheries methods and diversification of the fisheries sector.

Similar research considerations were also proposed for marine mammal interventions; for example, improving the understanding of fisheries bycatch rates and causes, and in funding more ecologically suitable monitoring protocols and gear types (smart trawl etc.). In addition, research to better understand how and when marine mammals use different marine areas within their individual ranges and research into reducing underwater noise. In addition, restoration or creation of habitats that offer protection for marine mammals, including supporting fish population restoration as a prey species were suggested.

Possible options proposed for seabird interventions included directly incorporating measures for birds (and also fish, e.g., cod pipes, nesting platforms) as part of development infrastructure. Predator control/eradication campaigns, the creation of new breeding or foraging habitat, enhancing the availability of seabird prey i.e., supporting fish populations and also reducing pressures from invasive non-native species at seabird colonies, were also suggested. Suggested research options included improving knowledge on seabird bycatch and seabird use of artificial nesting sites.

Many of the pressure reduction options suggested by respondents were linked to reducing fishing pressure and promoting fishery exclusion zones, but also included suggestions such as paying fishermen a fee to patrol MPAs or buying fishing quota for the purpose of not extracting it. However, as was highlighted in the first T&F Group report (The Crown Estate, 2021[2]), and by a number of respondents, it will not be within industries' power to implement initiatives which require influence over other sectors or look to reduce ongoing pressures caused by other industries. Therefore, pressure reduction will not be in the power of industry alone to deliver but will require strong Government leadership and coordination across sectors. To address this a number of respondents suggested that appropriate marine spatial planning of restoration (and its subsequent protection/management) would be needed.

[2] The Crown Estate. 2021. Strategic Net Gain Task and Finish Group, Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme, Strategic Net Gain Targets for Coastal and Marine Environments. Online. Available here: https://www.marinedataexchange.co.uk/details/3513/2021-strategic-net-gain-task-and-finish-group-offshore-wind-evidence-and-change-programme-strategic-net-gain-targets-for-coastal-and-marine-environments/summary

In relation to marine aggregate extraction in particular, a number of suggestions were presented including, limiting the dredge footprint through use of active dredge zones, promoting natural restoration by relinquishing non-productive and/ or worked-out seabed areas after aggregate extraction, or offering pressure reduction projects when relinquishing aggregate leases if mechanisms were available to limit fishing pressure.

It was also noted that in relation to offshore wind development, windfarm arrays reduce pressure from mobile fisheries with noted change in activity for mobile gear. It was suggested that the offshore wind industry could provide access/collaborate on opportunities to better understand (and potentially quantify) these changes over time.

A significant proportion of respondents (38%) suggested that a strategic fund would be the best way for industry to be able to facilitate MNG interventions and contribute towards strategic marine restoration. It was suggested that such a fund would be coordinated by government and could then support things like countryside stewardship practices or establish and support a marine equivalent, fund local organisations delivering existing net gain projects, contribute to government or NGO-identified and led projects, or be used to purchase areas of marine reserves.

If such a method was developed, then financial contributions to the fund would need to be proportionate to the residual impact of a development or sectoral activity but could be used to fund all types of measures. It was also suggested that a portion of the contributed funds should be used for survey, research and proof-of-concept projects to expand restoration and recovery capabilities.

The T&F Group has previously identified several key information requirements to support strategic delivery of MNG interventions:

- Identification of suitable areas for MNG delivery at a regional scale;
- Identification of specific projects (location, site area and target habitat feature within the marine plan region);
- Identification of habitat or species needs within the marine plan region;
- Creation of a prioritised list of projects to which industry can contribute (at a regional or local scale); and
- Creation of a 'shovel ready' list of projects (within a region) to which industry can contribute (this may mean projects which are fully planned and consented)

Where survey respondents commented, they supported these priorities. Respondents also identified a range of wider information needs which they considered would be critical to support successful delivery of strategic MNG. Responses related to planning and delivering MNG interventions, as well as broader aspects of MNG.

The identification of the role of government and government bodies in supporting MNG was identified as particularly important, as was clarification on the statutory basis for MNG and how this will generate funds to deliver MNG. Alongside clarification on the statutory basis for MNG, the development of a metric or tool to calculate MNG was indicated to allow transparent assessment of MNG delivery. However, respondents indicated that such a tool needs to be user-friendly but also adaptable to provide implementation options suited to different scenarios.

It was noted that it would be helpful to have clear guidance around MNG, including on interventions (what will and will not count as MNG measures, trading rules, and implications for MNG at the end of life for marine infrastructure/ decommissioning), how collaboration amongst developers might be facilitated, what the key barriers to delivery might be and how these might be overcome, monitoring requirements, and the issue of additionality in the context of the UK MPA network. The identification of potential delivery partners to facilitate collaboration for MNG delivery was also raised.

It was also highlighted that guidance and consideration of a strategic approach beyond individual marine plan areas and across administrations, and potentially between neighbouring countries, will be needed. This is particularly relevant for offshore industries where developments may extend across these boundaries. It was

suggested by one respondent that MNG guidance may need to align with OSPAR requirements/drivers so that there are common, cross-border objectives.

Additional research needs were again highlighted as an evidence gap required to support MNG, especially with regards to offshore delivery options. Research into novel techniques e.g., green gravel kelp restoration and the production of more restoration handbooks, including one for offshore developments, was suggested.

To facilitate the strategic delivery of MNG a flexible approach may be required with regards to trading between habitats and species; respondents were asked to assess to what level trading between habitats or species should be considered (Figure 4).

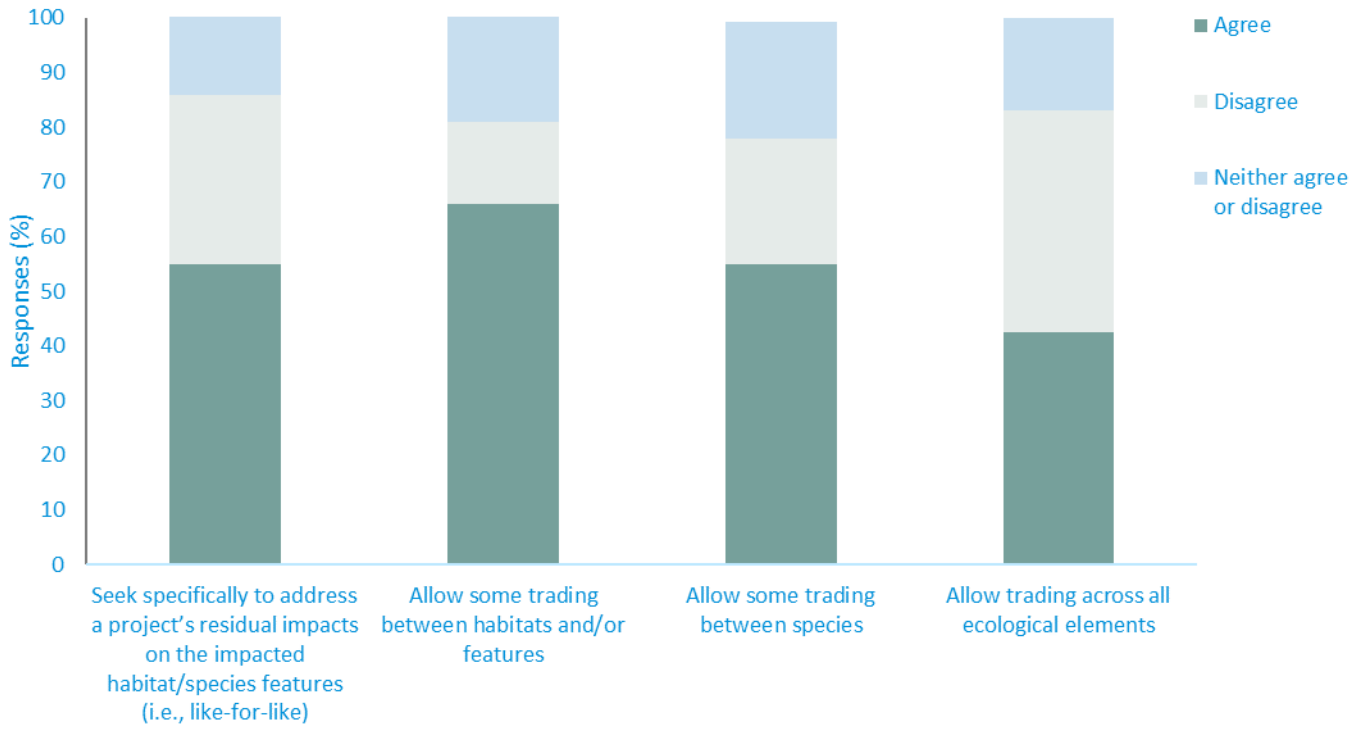

Figure 4. Respondents views on the level trading that should be considered between habitats or species in relation to MNG

Most respondents felt that MNG should allow some trading between habitats and/or features and between species, however the majority also agreed that projects should specifically look to address the residual impacts on the impacted habitat/ species where such options are possible. However, one respondent did caution the approach and suggested that trading between species and habitats should be informed by an in-depth knowledge of both and where improvements should be focused. A hierarchical process to select the appropriate delivery approach was suggested.

One respondent raised that residual project impacts should have already been addressed through compensation and as such net gain should not be subject to the same restrictions. This would therefore provide greater flexibility around potential MNG options and would allow for developers to use innovative approaches and not be constrained by the marine licencing process, or by a lack of evidence that the proposed measure would work.

There was disagreement between respondents as to whether trading across all ecological elements should be allowed, with approximately 40% agreeing, 42% disagreeing and 18% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. One respondent elaborated further suggesting that MNG should only be applied across ecosystems within the same environment, i.e., impacts from marine developments should only be delivered in marine ecosystems, and intertidal/coastal developments should only be delivered in coastal ecosystems.

It was noted, by more than one respondent, that there are likely to be some ecological elements that are simply too different/ unique to be traded and that guidance and principles will be required as policy develops to clearly

define such instances. In addition, in order to determine the appropriateness of such measures a review of regional policy should be completed during which stakeholder engagement/ consultation should be undertaken to ensure appropriate and deliverable measures and metrics are developed.

Finally, two additional approaches were suggested by respondents including the use of pressure reduction measures as an option to facilitate MNG and the allocation of protected areas.

The T&F Group acknowledge that some interventions may look to use novel approaches to achieve restoration outcomes. However, it is recognised that regulation often requires some level of certainty of anticipated project results. Respondents were therefore asked to consider how an approach might be developed to facilitate innovation in restoration and enhancement projects, if such interventions were to be incorporated within a system of MNG.

Respondents identified several key mechanisms through which delivery risks associated with novel restoration/recovery interventions might be managed. Many respondents suggested that research and innovation should be a specific component of any system of MNG. This might be funded by developer contributions within a strategic approach to MNG, with a set proportion of MNG monies directed towards novel restoration/recovery interventions, i.e., projects which are not 'shovel ready' but more 'proof of concept', with the remaining proportion being used to support more established approaches. One respondent suggested that 40% of financial contributions should be proportioned for innovation and research, whilst another suggested a limit of 25% so that there is certainty for some MNG being delivered.

Some respondents suggested that risk could be factored into MNG calculations to allow some capacity for a project being unsuccessful. However, if innovative approaches are successful (proven over sufficient temporal and spatial scale), a process could be established for some form of MNG banking/future offset. In contrast, others suggested that initially there should be an acceptance of risk, with no large penalties, which might act as a deterrent for practitioners. This would enable learning and encourage innovative techniques which might not otherwise be considered. It was suggested that specific marine locations/ areas could be set aside to provide opportunities to develop thinking and new approaches.

Adaptive management (or survey, deploy, monitor) was also recognised as a very important mechanism for ensuring that learning could take place notwithstanding uncertainty. It was further suggested that such novel interventions might be trialled at small scale and then built up, and that risky projects should not be progressed within MPAs. One respondent suggested that there should only be limited application of MNG within MPAs and in particular no bioengineering projects. Only pressure reduction measures should be undertaken within MPAs (offshore) and only providing assessments are undertaken and confirm that measures taken forward will have no unintended consequences e.g., fisheries displacement.

It was felt that a more explicit framework might need to be established in relation to innovative approaches, in order to log and monitor specific outcomes, including potentially specific monitoring and reporting requirements, primarily so that learnings from such initiatives, both positive and negative, are evidenced and shared between practitioners. Thus, though there will be a requirement for a range of pilots and trials, these will need to be strictly regulated and safeguards put in place to ensure lessons learnt are being recorded, best practices shared, and that these feed into any statutory MNG system.

3.4 Central fund-based approach to facilitate MNG

Respondents were asked their opinion on whether a contributions-based approach or a central/ regional fund would be better to facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG targets. 50% of respondents agreed that a contributions-based approach would be best, whereas only 2% disagreed with the approach. However, 48% were unsure (Figure 5). A breakdown of responses by sector is shown in Figure 6.

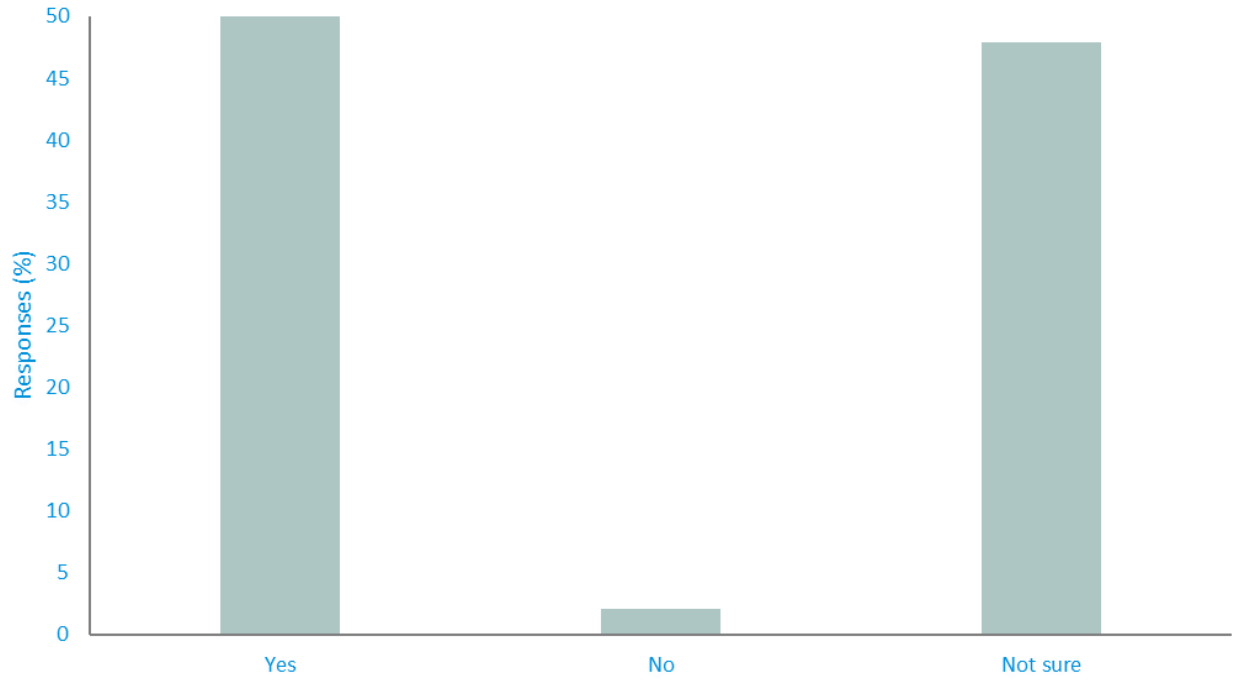

Figure 5. Stakeholder views on whether a contributions-based approach would be better to facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG targets

Only one respondent, from the offshore renewables sector, disagreed with the idea that a contributions-based approach would be best to facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG. They suggested that although a contributions-style approach would be a faster and simpler way to implement MNG, there could be some consequences including the lack of a link between the development and the level of impact due to a one-size fits all approach. They also felt the approach, if used as an interim solution, could risk delaying the development of a metric. Additionally, they felt it could lead to efforts being concentrated in certain areas with relatively simple restoration/enhancement requirements, leaving more challenging areas/habitats to continue to decline.

The respondents who agreed with a contributions-based approach were from a wide range of sectors including academia, consultancies, eNGOs/charities, government agencies/ departments, local authorities, coastal partnerships and industry, including marine minerals, offshore renewables, oil and gas, ports and harbours, power generation and defence.

Those who agreed thought such an approach would allow MNG to be coordinated and delivered at a regional level with a national overview. Several noted that due to the high connectivity and complexity of the marine environment, delivery of small, unlinked projects on a local scale would not provide large-scale ecological improvements. As such, a central fund approach would allow application of a strategic approach, ensure national/ regional prioritisation of projects but also enable successes and failures to be appropriately monitored to allow progression towards more innovative approaches. It would also provide greater consistency in regard to decision-making on MNG, would encourage collaboration and coordination through partnership delivery, and would allow the fastest ecological benefits for the marine environment by facilitating better, more targeted and effective interventions to take place at a larger scale.

Many agreed (21%) that the best outcome would be a regional fund, reflecting national priorities, with prioritisation of projects undertaken at the regional level. Where possible it was also suggested that the source of funding should be identifiable so that developers can link contributions to tangible benefits/ restoration projects.

Several did note however that any contribution-style approach should be proportionate to development impacts and therefore linked in some way to the size of the development and/ or its environmental impact.

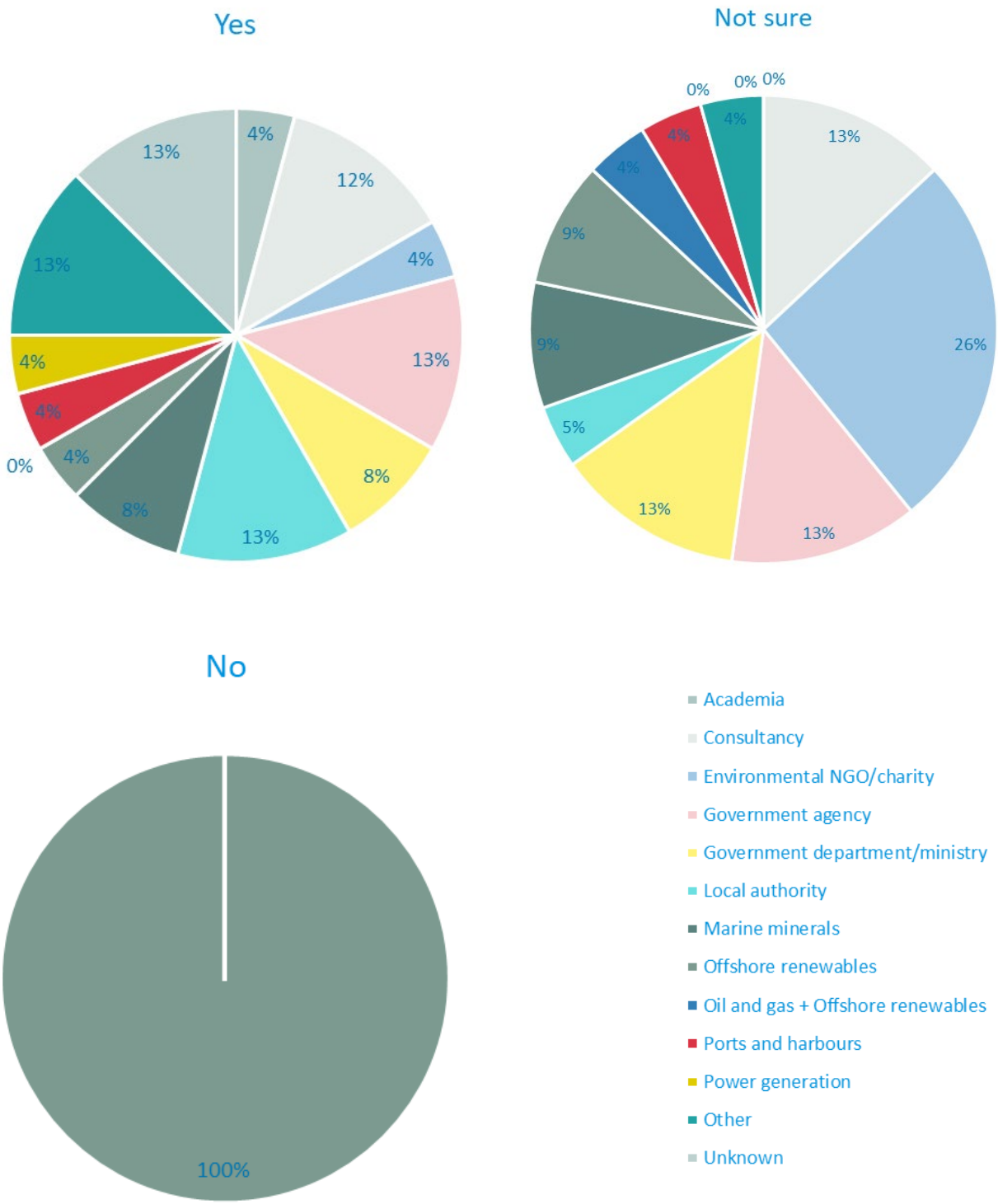

Figure 6. Breakdown of responses by sector on the suitability of a contributions-based approach to facilitate strategic MNG delivery

Environmental NGOs/ charities were the largest proportion of respondents unsure if such an approach should be developed. Other sectors that were also unsure included consultancies, government agencies/ departments, local authorities and some industries, including marine minerals, offshore renewables, oil and gas, and ports and harbours.

Many suggested that their uncertainty was with the lack of definition around such an approach and the potential mechanisms for management and application of such a fund. Several noted that a contribution-based approach should not be ruled out, but that clarity would be needed to decide if it was the most suitable approach for MNG. Additionally, any fund would need to be managed in a suitable way to not use a disproportionate amount of the fund for administrative activities or policy paper development.

To assess a fund's suitability, it was suggested that firstly a clear definition of strategic versus site-based intervention would be needed, alongside some clear indications of how the centralised funding system would work in practice. Additionally, an MNG system will need to deliver measurable gains associated with development impacts, therefore even under a contribution-based approach, monitoring and traceability will be critical. Further, a contributions-based approach will require strong Government leadership and guidance on application, which is currently lacking.

Another possible difficulty highlighted with a contributions-based approach was the potential problem of linking up a MNG system with its terrestrial and intertidal BNG counterpart, which will need to be addressed particularly where there may be overlaps.

Several respondents also noted that developers would need assurance that contributions were being directed effectively, efficiently and being transparently managed and accounted for. One also noted that businesses will be required to report on their own biodiversity ambitions and targets to adhere with European legalisation and/or their own sustainability reporting requirements. They questioned whether such a fund-based approach would be able to support these requirements and/ or enable them to demonstrate that their contributions are helping them to directly achieve their own ambitions and objectives.

Should a contributions-based approach be taken forward or considered in more detail, respondents were asked how they felt the fund would be best used to support strategic MNG delivery, based on a number of key themes: habitat/species interventions, funding of a coordinating body, research, innovation, monitoring and non-statutory management (Figure 7).

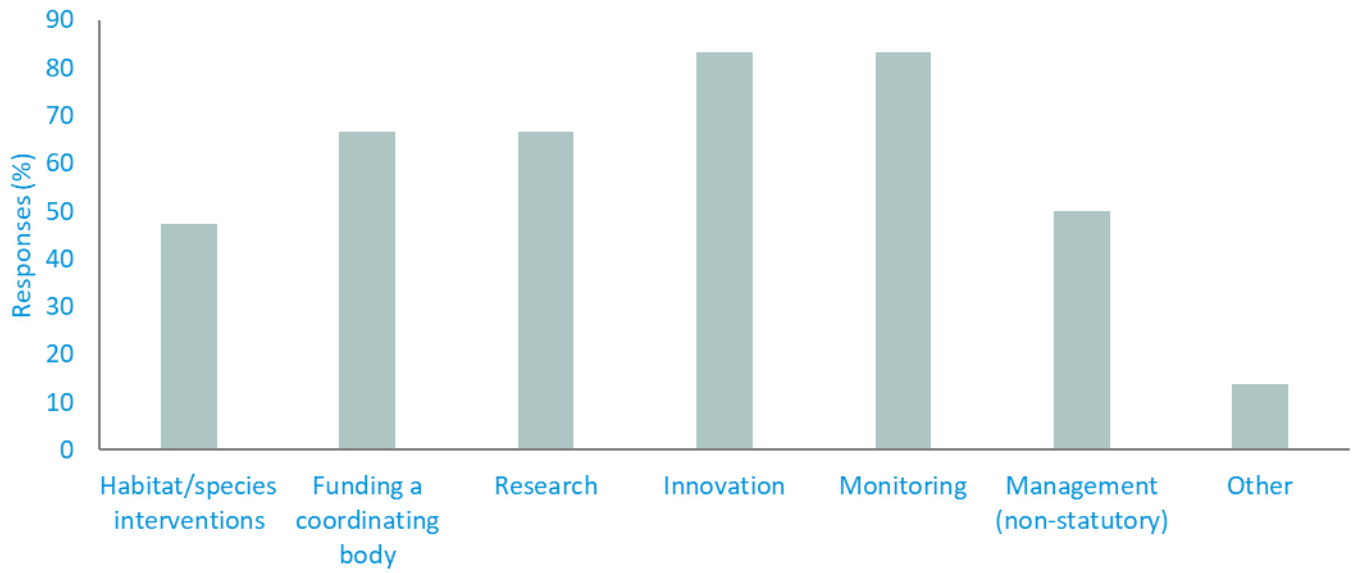

Figure 7. Stakeholder views on how a central/ regional fund would be best used to support strategic MNG delivery

Innovation and monitoring were suggested by respondents as the two key areas for how a fund could be used to best support strategic MNG. In particular, respondents suggested that contributions should help drive the development of a metric and facilitate collaboration on projects between industries operating in the marine environment. In addition, respondents noted the need for research to develop innovative approaches to marine restoration over time, and to identify the most suitable locations for MNG outcomes, following which there will need to be monitoring and enforcement to ensure that MNG is delivering the anticipated outcomes. Innovation around funding pressure reduction was also suggested as an immediate priority, in the absence of existing methods for active seabed habitat restoration.

It was noted that the allocation of funding may need to evolve over time and that at this current stage, research, innovation, monitoring and testing are key to establish more tried and tested restoration methods. However, in future, there may be a move away from research and innovation to a greater proportion of practical intervention

when methods (and what success looks like) are better understood. Funding for monitoring of implemented practical interventions over a sufficient time period will also be key, so that success can be better defined.

However, others expressed a preference for funds to go directly to restoration activities and to support 'on the ground' actions not management, research or monitoring, which they felt should be the responsibility of other organisations. It was noted that such actions should include not just habitats/species interventions, but also consider wider actions such as improving the condition of the physical environment (e.g., contaminant removal).

Although several respondents suggested funding should be used to fund a coordinating body others disagreed, saying a number of coordinating bodies already existed and that instead streamlining the current process (i.e., removing the need for consultation with multiple bodies such as Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)) was more important. Another suggested that the MMO should be the coordinating body due to the linkage with marine licencing.

Despite divergent stakeholder views on the funding of a coordinating body, there was general agreement that, whatever the process, there should be a single, coordinating body to approve, consent, monitor and enforce MNG, to ensure consistency in the approach, to provide the best outcomes for marine recovery and to minimise wasted administrative funds. In addition, the remit of the body should be to manage and implement strategic MNG, to define and prioritise restoration actions and to ensure 'ready-to-go' enhancement projects (already fully consented) were in place that industry could then aid to deliver.

It was highlighted in several responses that MNG can work alongside existing statutory regimes and responsibilities but should not be a vehicle to deliver regulatory outcomes or interventions. An MNG contributions-based approach should therefore not be used to fund actions and activities that should be funded by Government for the regulation and management of the marine environment e.g., enforcement of existing protected sites.

Despite specific suggestions by respondents for each of the listed themes, the overarching consensus from respondents was that all of the suggested approaches: habitat/species interventions, funding of a coordinating body, research, innovation, monitoring and non-statutory management, were necessary to promote marine nature recovery and for a MNG system to succeed.

3.5 Stakeholder involvement in MNG planning

As a final question, respondents were asked if they would like to be involved in providing information for MNG planning, and if so in what capacity.

Virtually all respondents expressed an interest in their organisations being involved in providing information for MNG planning, including government bodies (conservation bodies, environmental bodies, LPAs, port and harbour authorities), industry, eNGOs and coastal fora.

Respondents identified a wide range of elements they would wish to be involved in, ranging from policy development, policy implementation, identification and prioritisation of restoration/recovery priorities through to project delivery.

In general, industry representatives including from offshore renewables, power generation, oil and gas and marine minerals predominantly just wanted to be engaged throughout the process to incorporate their view into how MNG is defined and to ensure it is developed in a deliverable and proportionate way. They were happy to provide feedback on existing projects, advice on how project development conditions can support marine recovery, feedback on the use of metrics, monitoring approaches, innovation and design thinking, and marine spatial planning.

Respondents from local authorities, eNGOs/charities and coastal partnerships were largely happy to support through data sharing, where possible, providing case studies to demonstrate how intertidal habitat creation can deliver biodiversity and species recovery, providing information on coastal (intertidal and near-shore) MNG delivery and enabling the development of any pilot projects or beyond. Some were also happy to hold an advisory role within relevant forums or share experience of past restoration projects.

The majority of respondents from Government agencies/ departments expressed how they were already involved in the development of net gain and would continue to work on policy development, implementation and guidance to support MNG. One response from the devolved administrations suggested that although net gain policy was not yet applicable, learning from an English perspective could be key to inform development of their own policy at which point they would expect to be a key contributor (as a statutory adviser) to MNG planning and indeed for cross-border issues under the English process.

4. Conclusions

The call for evidence generated responses from a wide range of industries/ sectors. Virtually all respondents expressed an interest in their organisation's being involved in providing information for MNG planning, and identified a wide range of elements they would wish to be involved in, ranging from policy development, policy implementation, identification and prioritisation of restoration/recovery priorities through to project delivery.

The four key limitations previously identified continue to be acknowledged as significant barriers to progressing restoration initiatives. In addition, a number of other key limitations were identified including a lack of a statutory system of MNG, lack of research/scientific understanding on intervention success criteria, lack of resources/expertise generally and within public bodies, lack of shovel-ready projects to invest in and a lack of co-ordination between intertidal BNG and MNG.

A range of research priorities were suggested by respondents including:

- Developing an agreed historic baseline;
- Reviewing the availability of existing data;
- Assessing the success of restoration techniques (including novel techniques);
- Researching innovative restoration techniques;
- Identifying pressures and pressure reduction mechanisms;
- Better assessment of species population requirements in terms of both space and resource; and
- Evaluation of restoration benefits.

With regards to the research priority identified to develop an agreed historic baseline, it is noted that, rightly or wrongly, a baseline of 2020 is currently being used by forums such as Nature Positive and the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN). Many organisations will also be disclosing their interactions with nature under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), so consideration of these frameworks may also be helpful to inform MNG.

In addition, it is acknowledged that there is a need to identify pressures and pressure reduction mechanisms to inform MNG but that work undertaken is this area for compensation requirements might be a useful resource to draw upon.

Existing initiatives which respondents cited as being useful mechanisms to define, and provide prioritisation for, nature recovery targets included GES reporting targets, using UKMS indicators, and reviewing and refreshing regional marine plans.

Key priorities identified by respondents included recovery/enhancement of MPA interest features to favourable conservation status, in addition to the designation of more MPAs/ HPMAs. Specific feature priorities identified included:

- Recovery of declining seabird populations, in particular species at greatest risk from HPAI and pressures associated with offshore energy;
- Restoration and recovery of transitional coastal habitats;
- Active restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh;
- Improving other coastal habitats such as kelp, rocky shores and sediments;
- Protection, restoration and recovery of biogenic reefs (oysters, serpulid, modiolus), particularly where they form on sedimentary habitats;
- Resilience in marine mammal populations;
- Remove pressure on irreplaceable subtidal marine habitats, e.g., sandbanks, Sea Pen habitats;
- Recovery of inshore fish populations, essential fish habitats and forage fish species;
- Restoration and recovery of migratory fish (shad, smelt, sturgeon and salmon (particularly at risk of climate change);
- Removal of invasive species;
- Reduce and eliminate marine pollution - eliminate outflow of sewage and other pollution; and
- Improvement of water quality.

Additional research actions to identify the most sensitive existing habitats, those habitats at the greatest risk or those with the most severe degradation were also suggested as a method to prioritise potential nature recovery initiatives. Natural England's marine irreplaceable habitats work, including mapping, may be a useful resource to address this suggested action.

Stakeholder engagement (including the public, academics, NGOs and relevant public bodies) was also highlighted as a key mechanism, including through existing fora such as coastal partnerships or the marine element of LNRS. The use of existing data and assessments (such as from the UKMS, WFD and MPA condition assessments) to inform priorities was also frequently cited, as well as building on existing processes to identify restoration/recovery opportunities and prioritisation processes (e.g., ReMeMaRe and MaRePo). Some respondents suggested that natural capital approaches could help to prioritise interventions to maximise welfare benefits.

While it was recognised that nearshore restoration is likely to be easier, respondents felt it was important to ensure that the MNG system enabled industry to contribute to offshore priorities where required. Respondents also considered that it was important that any system of MNG enabled industry to contribute to species priorities to facilitate marine biodiversity recovery.

Mixed views were expressed concerning whether modifications to offshore infrastructure to enhance marine biodiversity should count towards MNG. The installation of offshore infrastructure was considered to provide an alternative solution for offshore restoration e.g., through the creation of artificial reef, but wider discussions are ongoing on the implications when removing structures at the end of a project lifecycle. Despite this it was suggested that research should be completed to clearly show whether the leaving of in situ lower structures can provide benefits, or even leave new habitats undisturbed. Recommendations from the Influence of man-made structures in the ecosystem (INSITE) report (INSITE, 2023[3]) highlighted that it could be beneficial to consider options such as partial removal or leaving structures intact, as these structures can support biodiversity and

[3] INSITE (2023) Environmental Restoration & Net Gain: Understanding the influence of man-made structures in the marine environment. [Online]. Available here: https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/static.insitenorthsea.org/20230829_INSITE-North-Sea_Policy-2_Environmental-Restoration-and-Net-Gain.pdf

restore ecosystems in a manner similar to natural complex ecosystems. However, the report doesn't address the alternative picture on the need for pressure reduction and valuing sediment habitats.

Respondents acknowledged that pressure reduction interventions could only be taken forward as part of a strategic approach led by government and through appropriate marine spatial planning for restoration actions (and their subsequent protection/ management). A significant proportion of respondents (38%) suggested that this might best be progressed through developer contributions to a marine recovery fund.

Respondents identified a range of information needs including the need to have clear guidance around MNG interventions (e.g., what will and will not count as MNG measures), how collaboration amongst developers might be facilitated, and on monitoring requirements. Additional research needs were again highlighted as an evidence gap required to support MNG, especially with regards to offshore delivery options.

To facilitate the strategic delivery of MNG a flexible approach may be required with regards to trading between habitats and species; most respondents felt that MNG should allow some trading between habitats and/or features and between species, however the majority also agreed that projects should specifically look to address the residual impacts on the impacted habitat/ species where such options are possible. However, one respondent did caution the approach and suggested that trading between species and habitats should be informed by an in-depth knowledge of both and where improvements should be focused. A hierarchical process to select the appropriate delivery approach was suggested. In addition, in order to determine the appropriateness of such measures a review of regional policy should be completed during which stakeholder engagement/ consultation should be undertaken to ensure appropriate and deliverable measures and metrics are developed.

It is recognised that regulation often requires some level of certainty of anticipated project results however, to facilitate MNG some interventions may look to use novel approaches to achieve restoration outcomes. Many respondents suggested that research and innovation should be a specific component of any system of MNG. This might be funded by developer contributions within a strategic approach to MNG, with a set proportion of MNG monies directed towards novel restoration/recovery interventions. Adaptive management (or survey, deploy, monitor) was also recognised as a very important mechanism for ensuring that learning could take place notwithstanding uncertainty. It was further suggested that such novel interventions might be trialled at small scale and then built up and that risky projects should not be progressed within MPAs.

Half of respondents supported a contributions-based approach, and the remainder were unsure with only one respondent opposed. Respondents saw particular benefits of a contributions-based approach as including the opportunity to contribute to pressure reduction measures, to invest in innovation, monitoring and research and in funding a co-ordinating body. Those who agreed thought such an approach would allow MNG to be coordinated and delivered at a regional level with a national overview, and that such an approach would also provide greater consistency in regard to decision-making on MNG.

Of those unsure on a contributions-based approach, many suggested that their uncertainty was with the lack of definition around such an approach and the potential mechanisms for management and application of such a fund. To assess a fund's suitability, it was suggested that firstly clear government guidance and a definition of strategic versus site-based intervention would be needed, alongside some clear indications of how the centralised funding system would work in practice. It was also noted that one of the challenges of a contributions-based approach is the ability for developers to report on their own Net Positive Impact (NPI) targets and disclose information as part of sustainability reporting.

Should a contributions-based approach be taken forward or considered in more detail, respondents were asked how they felt the fund would be best used to support strategic MNG delivery. Despite specific suggestions by respondents for each of the listed themes, the overarching consensus from respondents was that all of the suggested approaches: habitat/species interventions, funding of a coordinating body, research, innovation, monitoring and non-statutory management, were necessary in order to promote marine nature recovery and for a MNG system to succeed.

Despite divergent stakeholder views on the funding of a coordinating body, there was general agreement that, whatever the process, there should be a single, coordinating body to approve, consent, monitor and enforce MNG, to ensure consistency in the approach, to provide the best outcomes for marine recovery and to minimise wasted administrative funds. In addition, the remit of the body should be to manage and implement strategic MNG, to define and prioritise restoration actions and to ensure 'ready-to –go' enhancement projects (already fully consented) were in place that industry could then aid to deliver.

Ultimately, in order to develop an effective system of MNG, it will be important that a collaborative approach is taken involving all interested stakeholders to ensure the system is both practical and delivers a net gain from marine development. Whatever form MNG implementation takes, it will be beneficial for all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the processes for prioritising restoration/recovery projects, particularly at a regional/local level. The approach will need to enable developers to contribute broadly to marine recovery priorities across all relevant ecosystem elements including both habitats and species and to facilitate developer contributions to pressure reduction measures to achieve this.

5. Abbreviations/Acronyms

ABPmer	ABP Marine Environmental Research Ltd
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CMS	Communications and Management of Sustainability
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
eNGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
GES	Good Environmental Status
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HPMAs	Highly Protected Marine Areas
IFCA	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
INSITE	Influence of man-made structures in the ecosystem
LinkedIn	Business Social Networking Web Site
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MaRePo	Marine Restoration Potential
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MNG	Marine Net Gain
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPI	Net Positive Impact

OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
ReMeMaRe	Restore Meadows, Marshes and Reefs
RSG	Regional Stakeholder Groups
SBTN	Science Based Targets Network
SNCBs	Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies
T&F	Task and Finish
TNFD	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures
UK	United Kingdom
UKMS	UK Marine Strategy
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Appendices

Appendix A. Call for evidence: Strategic Marine Net Gain targets potential mechanisms and priorities for delivery

Background

In 2021, the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme Task and Finish Group identified a number of widely agreed strategic targets for marine and coastal net gain (a full description of the work and outcomes is available in the final project report). In this second phase, we are looking at potential options for how these strategic targets could be delivered by industry, to support industry commitments to deliver net gain for development projects and wider corporate policies on nature recovery.

In early 2023, a first call for evidence provided considerable insight into the impressive amount of work already in progress or planned for nature restoration, alongside identifying some of the principal barriers to delivery of these initiatives.

How you can help

To assist with our work to assess possible mechanisms for delivery of strategic targets, we invite you to respond to this further call for evidence, which asks more detail on delivery of strategic net gain.

Your input will be invaluable in helping us prepare recommendations for the delivery of net gain though strategic targets and ensure that net gain delivers real and significant contributions to nature recovery in the marine environment.

The survey should take around 15 minutes, depending how much detail you choose to provide.

'Marine Net Gain'

Throughout this call for evidence, reference is made to Marine Net Gain (MNG), which is used as an all-encompassing term to include restoration and recovery actions in relation to development that might be taken in the offshore marine environment, coastal and intertidal areas.

Questions

1. The findings from the first call for evidence identified four key limitations to current restoration initiatives. How would you rank the four limitations in terms of their significance in delivering ecological needs or priorities?

    a) Complexity of requirements within marine licensing system
    b) Limited availability of funding for restoration/recovery projects, particularly long-term funding
    c) Limited baseline data against which to measure success of project interventions
    d) Competing demands for space, particularly coastal space

2. Are there any other limitations to current restoration initiatives you would add to this list, and where would you rank them?

3. What further work do you feel could be required to address these limitations as part of the development of MNG?

4. As part of a strategic approach to MNG, it may be helpful to take account of ecological or nature recovery priorities in the marine environment. In your view, what are the key national restoration or nature recovery needs in the marine environment?

5. During the first call for evidence, stakeholders identified a preference for applying MNG at a marine plan region level. How might the ecological priorities in each marine plan region (or other regional level) be identified?

6. During the first project the Strategic Net Gain Task and Finish Group (T&F Group) identified a number of strategic MNG targets. Which of the following measures do you think industry might be able to contribute to or implement to support delivery of MNG targets, given appropriate policy??

   Please tick all that apply:

   I. Actions to restore and/ or create intertidal/ near coastal habitats, including characterising species (e.g., mudflat/ sandflat, saltmarsh/ reedbed, seagrass, native oyster, kelp);
   II. Actions to restore offshore habitats (e.g., native oyster reef, Modiolus, serpulid reef, subtidal sands, muds and gravels);
   III. Actions to support and restore fish;
   IV. Action to support populations of birds;
   V. Actions to support populations of marine mammals; and
   VI. Pressure reduction actions.

   Please provide an indication of how industry could contribute to each measure.

7. The T&F Group has identified several key information requirements which might be needed to inform strategic MNG delivery:

   - Identification of suitable areas for MNG delivery at a regional scale.
   - Identification of specific projects (location, site area and target habitat feature within the marine plan region.
   - Identification of habitat or species needs within the marine plan region.
   - Creation of a prioritised list of projects to which industry can contribute (at a regional or local scale).
   - Creation of a 'shovel ready' list of projects (within a region) to which industry can contribute (this may mean projects which are fully planned and consented).

   Is there anything else you consider would be critical to support successful delivery of strategic MNG?

8. A flexible approach may be required to facilitate the delivery of strategic MNG, which could include any/all of the following approaches.

   Do you agree or disagree that MNG should... (please place a cross on the box which applies)

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Seek specifically to address a project's residual impacts on the impacted habitat/species features (i.e., like-for-like)			
Allow some trading between habitats and/or features			
Allow some trading between species			
Allow trading across all ecological elements			
Other please specify:			

   What do you feel are the positives or negatives of the above approaches, or any other potential approaches?

9. Some interventions may look to use novel approaches to achieve restoration outcomes. However, it is recognised that regulation often requires some level of certainty of anticipated project results. How might a strategic approach be developed to facilitate innovation in restoration and enhancement projects?

10. Would a contributions-based approach or central/regional fund be best to facilitate delivery of strategic MNG targets?

    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

    Please explain your answer

11. If yes, how do you think a central fund-based approach would be best used to support strategic MNG delivery?

    Please tick all that apply.

    - Habitat/species interventions only
    - Funding a coordinating body
    - Research
    - Innovation e.g., habitat and species or in relation to pressure reduction
    - Monitoring
    - Management (non-statutory)
    - Other please specify:

12. Would your organisation/s like to be involved in providing information for MNG planning?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in what capacity would your organisation/s like to be involved?

Please select the sector you work in:

- Academia
- Aquaculture
- Cables
- Commercial fishing
- Consultancy
- Environmental NGO/charity
- Government agency
- Government department/ministry
- Local authority
- Marine minerals
- NGO
- Offshore renewables
- Oil and gas
- Ports and harbours
- Power generation
- Recreation
- Shipping
- Water utility
- Other (please specify)