Sentinel-3 products for detecting EUtROphication and Harmful Algal Blooms in the French-English Channel (S-3 EUROHAB).

TASK 3. Activity 3.2: Deliverable 3.2.1. Report on perceptions and requirements for the S-3 EUROHAB web alert system.

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Summary:

This report explores stakeholder perceptions of the impacts of HABs, their opinions on the current HAB monitoring system and their needs with respect to the web alert system (WAS). It is built on qualitative data collected during a one-day workshop with 28 stakeholders and 16 semi-structured interviews. Participants included representatives of the shellfish industry, of HAB monitoring and enforcement agencies, scientific agencies and interested NGOs.

Using a thematic approach, field notes were coded to identify key themes emerging from the data. Results show that HABs impact the aquaculture and wild capture sectors differently. Shellfish producers (aquaculture) cannot adapt to HABs as their activity is static. Site closures represent a loss of income (especially when products need to be recalled), potential reputational damage and loss of customers, make staff management decisions harder and can thus impact producer well-being. The impact of HABs on the wild capture sector varies by vessel size: large vessels can relocate their activity, or potentially change their fishing gears, whereas smaller, less mobile vessels can go out of business.

The current monitoring system was generally thought to be effective at preventing biotoxin contaminated shellfish entering the market. Who bears the cost of monitoring varies by sector: shellfish beds are monitored by Local Authorities (Cefas being in charge of sample analysis), while testing of wild caught bivalve molluscs falls to the seller (e.g. the fisherman, processor or caterer). For both sectors, HABs lead to higher costs due to increased sampling.

Feedback on the WAS indicates that it cannot substitute the current monitoring system, but it could be used to increase biotoxin monitoring in currently unmonitored areas. It could also be used to strengthen safety procedures for wild harvested shellfish. Stakeholders were, however, concerned about the accuracy of such a system, pointing out the risks associated with false alarms.