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Centre for Environment
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Development of a marine-based economy is crucial to the UK's prosperity. Shipping, the development and use of ports and harbours, offshore energy and marine leisure are all important economic activities but also pose the risk of accidents that may release oil or chemicals into sensitive marine environments. Unfortunately, UK waters have been contaminated as a result of vessels running aground; the Sea Empress, Braer and MSC Napoli are some recent high profile examples. An important aspect of responsible and sustainable use of our marine environment is the assessment of risks, and a capability to respond to and monitor the impacts effectively should any incidents occur.

Cefas has been at the forefront of providing UK government with the expert scientific advice and services that have formed the foundation of national preparedness and resilience for nearly 50 years. This includes the provision of prompt advice that informs important decisions such as: imposing or removing fisheries closures, giving authorisations

to use oil spill dispersants or advising on the management of hazardous chemical cargoes to minimise risk to the environment.

In addition, Cefas has developed specialist testing procedures that ensure that approved oil spill treatment products are both effective performance and minimise environmental harm. These procedures form an integral part of the internationally recognised UK dispersant approval scheme.

More recently Cefas has led in the development of guidelines and operational processes to co-ordinate effective post spill monitoring. Under the auspices of the cross-government and industry "Premiam" initiative, environmental monitoring is now considered a key response strategy and approaches developed under the programme are now referred to in the UK's National Contingency Plan.

For more information please visit:
www.cefas.co.uk/premiam



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