



Natura 2000 & European Marine Site

# **Annual Management Plan**

## **2014 - 2015**

### **Living Document**

### **v3**

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## Background

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site (WNNC EMS) management scheme has been running since 2002 with the aim to safeguard marine wildlife and habitats designated under EU and UK law, while encouraging sustainable use of the European marine site. The management objectives are broken down into time scaled actions which were drawn up in consultation with relevant authorities and stakeholders. Relevant authorities and others will report on progress against these management actions on an annual basis.

The Annual Management Plan is composed of four parts;

- Part One: Monitoring
- Part Two: Appropriate Assessments
- Part Three: Relevant Authority Management
- Part Four: Action Plan

## Part One: Monitoring

The Habitats Directive requires that a condition monitoring programme is undertaken to monitor the condition of the interest features of the WNNC EMS, and ensure the conservation objectives for each feature are being met. This also provides feedback on the effectiveness of the management measures against the conservation objectives. Relevant Authorities and other organisations may also supply Natural England with information to inform the condition monitoring programme. In addition, partnership agreements are in place to share all survey and monitoring information to inform the EMS condition monitoring programme. The monitoring programmes taking place enable condition assessment of site features and will contribute to the report to the EU Commission undertaken every six years.

A key strength of this EMS management scheme is that it derives information on activities and potential risks to site features from a range of sources including the Advisory Group network, Incident Recording Process and risk assessments. In addition survey evidence gathered through condition assessments and compliance monitoring carried out by competent authorities in fulfilment of their monitoring obligations. The combined information gathered on activities and potential pressures on site features through the EMS management scheme can then be used to highlight key management requirements which are reviewed annually through the Action Plan (Part Four).

New monitoring programmes were introduced in 2009, following the unfavourable condition status of interest features in 2008. Table 1 outlines current monitoring programmes.

**Table 1. Monitoring Programmes Undertaken In Order to Assess Management Requirements of The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site**

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2012	2013
Shoreline Monitoring Programme			
Environment Agency - Anglian Coastal Monitoring	Bathymetric	Multibeam survey undertaken near Gibraltar Point.	Monitoring programme. All surveys undertaken and reported annually see <a href="#">Anglian Coastal Monitoring report</a> for info /full extents.
	Beach topographic surveys	Limited to small stretches of Hunstanton frontage.	
	Hydrodynamic monitoring	Wave buoy network has three buoys in vicinity of EMS site: Chapel Point, Wash, and Blakeney Point.	
	Laser scan survey	Undertaken at Hunstanton cliffs, and The Wash	
	LiDAR surveys	Surveys undertaken over North Hunstanton area and Blakeney Point.	
	Aerial photography	Vertical aerial photography available for whole EMS site. Some areas also have oblique aerial photography.	
Wash Intertidal Survey			
Natural England	Intertidal invertebrate	Intertidal survey of the Wash and North Norfolk coast SAC undertaken in September/October 2012. Transect covering The Wash and North Norfolk Coast, with phase 1 biotope and phase 2 survey carried out. Report available <a href="#">here</a> .	
	W&NNC Large Shallow Inlets and Bay Baseline Monitoring Survey		Continuation during FY 13/14
North Norfolk Coastal Lagoons			
Natural England	Data collation, extent and distribution assessment (in house monitoring of extent and location, salinity, pH)	Water quality monitoring of Snettisham lagoons completed.	North Norfolk lagoon project commenced in 2013 - ongoing
SPA Features - Wash Bird Survey			
Natural England Wetland Bird Survey	WeBS bird counts	NE use WeBs counts, data found <a href="#">here</a> .	
	Investigation into the decline of SPA birds.		Potential Wash User SSSI Project
Seal ( <i>Phoca vitulina</i> ) Survey			
Natural England Sea Mammal Research Unit	Annual moult survey	Completed	SMRU reports found <a href="#">here</a> . NE breeding <i>P. vitulina</i> survey will continue in FY 14/15.
	Annual breeding counts		
	Seal scat survey		
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) Survey			
Environment Agency	Confirming presence of species at sites previously recorded	Fifth Otter Survey of England and Wales (2009-10) is available <a href="#">here</a>	Not applicable

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2012	2013
Shellfish Surveys (features: intertidal mud and sand flats / sub features: cockle and mussel beds)			
Eastern IFCA	Spring cockle	Completed EIFCA Research Reports available <a href="#">here</a> .	
	Autumn cockle	NE consulted on opening of Cockle fishery. Cockle fishery management complied with shellfish policies. Due to atypical mortality of cockles occurring in The Wash a contingency plan to fish for cockles when mortality rate reaches agreed level was put in place.	
	Summer sub-littoral mussel	No sub-littoral mussel surveys conducted by EIFCA in W&NNC EMS in 2012.	
	Review of Wash Fishery Order lay consents (review of impacts of mussel cultivation on the European Marine Site);	EIFCA concluded that mussel cultivation under the Wash Fishery Order did not adversely affect site integrity; NE provided comments (in January 2013) and recommended incorporating additional data on phytoplankton.	EIFCA processing outstanding applications for Wash Lays under WFO (1992). Consultation with NE to ensure that new lays will not have an effect on conservation objectives of the Wash.
	Late autumn mussel	Annual monitoring of mussel stock by EIFCA. Appropriate assessment received for a hand worked mussel fishery. Tonnage very low. Conservation objective has only just been met. Hand worked fishery won't result in a fall below the conservation objective target level even if fully taken. Potential for disturbance to SPA bird species and seals taken into account. Agree with conclusion of no likely significant effect. Recruitment not as good this year as previously so opportunity of recovery in mussel abundance lower than last year.	
	Study on impact of hand worked cockle industry	NE observed an issue with damage to sediment and piling up of cockles through prop wash practice not complying with the code of best practice. This was not considered to be damaging at site scale, but should these practices be seen to be reoccurring, it may be necessary to close the fishery. One more incidence of damaging activity was noted during the contingency fishery and the fishery was closed.	
	Study on impact of dredge cockle fishery	EIFCA looking into attempt to regenerate the Gat mussel bed. Has suffered decline over the years. Industry concerned that prevention of fishing on this bed has negatively impacted on recruitment. Looking into options for potential restoration techniques and will provide advice.	
	Natural England	Le Strange Cockle Survey	Not applicable

Responsibility	Type of survey	Results	
		2012	2013
North Norfolk Subtidal Surveys (feature: subtidal features of North Norfolk Coast)			
Natural England Environment Agency	Condition monitoring of feature	Completed	Data collected. Final report due end of April 2013.
Sabellaria Reef and Boulder and Cobble Reef Surveys			
Eastern IFCA Natural England	Condition monitoring of <i>S. spinulosa</i> in The Wash	Information received by NE on 2012 <i>Sabellaria</i> mapping from EIFCA and incorporated into <i>Sabellaria</i> core area map. Checking comparability with previous core reef maps and will forward to EIFCA with GIS shapefiles.	Change in approach to fisheries management by Defra. <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reef categorised as high risk to towed gear types. Byelaw brought in (May 2014) to prevent damage to <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> in WNNC SAC.  NE commissioned the Large Shallow Inlet and Bay baseline monitoring survey. This work will identify the location of Annex 1 'hard subtidal substrate' features within the survey areas with particular reference to <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> and cobble reef. 25% side scan sonar coverage of the site. To be continued 2013/2014.
Saltmarsh Surveys			
Natural England Environment Agency	Condition monitoring of feature	Salt marsh grazing surveys completed by NE along with geomatics work by EA (salt marsh zonation and intertidal elevation change at Blakeney Point)Completed	NE undertaking The W&NNC Saltmarsh Surveys: Transitional & Low to Upper Marsh Communities during FY 13/14
North Norfolk Coast Seagrass Survey			
Natural England	Condition monitoring of feature	Not applicable	Survey completed to assess the condition of seagrass beds along the North Norfolk Coast.
Water quality			
Environment Agency (Water Framework Directive – Good Ecological Status by 2015)	Monitoring of rivers discharging into the WNNC EMS	Rivers discharging into EMS are classed as moderate, main issue dissolved inorganic nitrate (DIN). Further investigations	Rivers discharging into EMS are classed as moderate, main issue dissolved inorganic nitrate (DIN). Further investigations
	Monitoring of emissions to air and water to assess compliance	Licensees who negatively affected the W&NNC EMS contacted	Licensees who negatively affected the W&NNC EMS contacted
	Monitoring of bathing water quality	Ongoing monitoring and investigations to assess water quality status. WFD data obtained (e.g. phytoplankton for The Wash)	Ongoing monitoring and investigations to assess water quality status. WFD data obtained (e.g. phytoplankton for The Wash)
Incident Recording Process			
Site managers Advisory Groups WNNC EMS Project Manager	Monitoring of the 15 incidents that may cause disturbance to Annex species & EMS habitat features	Data analysed by EMS Project Manager up to June 2012.	IRP data set analysis and serious incident follow up.
Military Aircraft Disturbance to Annex I bird species			
MoD TASCO Holbeach DTE Air Command DASC Advisory Group	Informal bird impact monitoring with volunteers to assess effect of military activities	Survey not undertaken in 2012 due to insufficient funds.	Survey not undertaken in 2013 due to insufficient funds.

## Part Two: Appropriate Assessments

The management scheme is concerned with on-going and current activities taking place within or adjacent to the European Marine Site (EMS). New activities which require consent or permission from a competent authority before they can proceed or continue are dealt with under Regulations 3(3), 3(4) and 47 to 85 of the UK Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). The Regulations state that where these plans or projects have the potential to significantly affect the interest features of the site, full consideration must be given to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The Regulations outline the competent authorities' (whether or not they are also relevant authorities) statutory function to carry out an Appropriate Assessment for any new plan or project that might significantly affect the interest features of the site. Furthermore, since the adoption of the East Marine Plan in April 2014, the WNNC EMS management scheme must have 'due regard to it' while individual RAs will have to act in accordance with it. The East Marine Plan can be found [here](#).

New plans, projects or activities listed in Table 2 are classified as plans and projects under the Habitats Regulations. This is not an exhaustive list, but should be used as guidance.

**Table 2.** Guidance of New Plans, Projects and Activities Which Require an Appropriate Assessment

New Plan, Project or Activity	Relevant Authority	Potential Impact	Additional Legislation/ Management
Aircraft	MoD	Loss of SPA features	Sustainability Appraisals / Habitats Regulations Assessments whenever a new activity is planned
Coastal protection and flood defence works	EA	Physical loss and damage	Common Rights of Way Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), SMP
Land drainage	Landowners Internal Drainage Boards NE EA DEFRA	Saltmarsh function and habitat composition	Land Drainage Act 1991; Water Resources Act 1991
Eel, smelt and sea trout Fisheries	EA / EIFCA	Physical damage and biological disturbance	Net or trap fishing authorisation under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975
Fisheries regulated under The Wash Fishery Order	EIFCA	Physical damage and biological disturbance	Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967; The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2011
Commercial fishing activities	EIFCA MMO	Physical damage / loss and disturbance	Various EU and national fisheries measures and EIFCA byelaws
Mariculture and aquaculture	CEFAS, EIFCA, NE, MMO, Crown Estates, Wash lay holders, Le Strange Estate, North Norfolk lay holders	Change of substrate if area of cultivation increases, biological disturbance by non-native species	The Alien and Locally Absent Species in Aquaculture (England and Wales) Regulations 2011
Marine planning including coastal land use & development	MMO Local Authorities	Various	<a href="#">East Marine Plan</a> <a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework</a> and <a href="#">National Planning Practice Guidance</a>
Nature conservation management-Predator of SPA features control methods	NE Wildlife organisations	Loss of SPA features if not appropriate	Ensure site managers take a coordinated approach
Sample collection including aerial photo surveys	NE EIFCA	Disturbance of SPA features	

## Part Three: Relevant Authority Management

The European Marine Site (EMS) Management scheme is one component of the work undertaken by Relevant Authorities (RAs). RAs have a range of statutory responsibilities for the EMS and beyond. Management plans and / or policies (Table 3) outside of the EMS should be complementary to the EMS Management Scheme. RAs are required to report annually on their progress, and advise the management scheme of any changes within the management actions.

**Table 3.** Management Plans and / or Policies of Relevant Authorities Outside of the European Marine Site Management Scheme

Responsibility	Management Plan	Management Objective	Management Status 2013/14 <span style="color:red">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color:yellow">■</span> A= problem <span style="color:green">■</span> G = on track	Timescale	Action Required in 2014/15
<b>1. Agriculture – Saltmarsh Management</b>					
Natural England Defra RSPB Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Common Rights Holders MoD	Higher Level Stewardship Agreements	Ensure grazing regimes are at effective levels to enhance wildlife communities in EMS	■G	Ongoing	Yes
<b>2. Aircraft</b>					
Defence Infrastructure Organisation Holbeach Conservation Group Natural England	Holbeach Integrated Rural Management Plan	Ensure possible disturbance to site features are minimised	■G	5 year revision (next due 2017)	Yes
<b>3. Coastal Protection and Flood Defence</b>					
Environment Agency Local Authorities	Shoreline Management Plans. Wash East and West Strategies	Ensure that sea and river defence works do not significantly impact on site features	■G	SMP is a 'live' document covering short (0-25 year), medium (12-75) and long (up to 100 years in future) timescales. Regular reviews are undertaken, and there is the opportunity to introduce new policies as required if existing ones are not sufficient.	Maintain awareness of SMP and policies. Contribute to Wash East and West strategies if required.  Consultation during 2013.
<b>4. Sediment Deposition / Movement at Sea</b>					
MMO Harbour Authorities Marine Management Organisation Cefas	Defra Protocol: Maintenance Dredging and the Habitats Regulations 1994	Ensure disposal of sediment from dredging activities does not destroy site features	■G	Ongoing	Continue with management objective across the EMS
Environment Agency MMO Project Manager Cefas	<a href="http://www.sns2.org">www.sns2.org</a>	Monitor and catalogue sediment movement	■A (New action in 2013-14).	Ongoing	PM to investigate possibilities



Responsibility	Management Plan	Management Objective	Management Status 2013/14 <span style="color:red">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color:yellow">■</span> A= problem <span style="color:green">■</span> G = on track	Timescale	Action Required in 2014/15
5. Pollution and Waste					
MMO Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Natural England	Defra: Anti-fouling Treatment Regulations	Endure Defra regulations are complied with, assessment of pollution risk prior to salvage operations	■G	Ongoing	Continue with management objective across the EMS
MCA Coastal Authorities Lincolnshire Oil Pollution Forum Port and Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Defra MCA JNCC Eastern IFCA Natural England	Coastal Oil Spill Contingency Plans NE emergency oil spill line	Ensure oil spills can be effectively dealt with on shoreline and at sea	■G	Ongoing	Review of emergency plans and processes.
MCA Harbour Authorities Environment Agency Natural England	Pollution Response Plans (Docks, Ports and Marinas)	Ensure that equipment and personnel are ready to respond to an incident	■G	Ongoing	Ensure response exercises are undertaken in order to meet management objective.
6. Water Quality					
Environment Agency Local RAs Local partners	Water Framework Directive (2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle)	Ensure water bodies meet good ecological status by 2015	■G	Ongoing until 2021	Further monitoring and investigations planned for transitional and coastal waterbodies. Implementation of programme of measures commencing.
Environment Agency Anglian Water Services	Asset management Plan 5	Prioritised programme of improvements to storm sewerage and emergency overflows	■G	AMP will run until 2021	Planning for AMP 6 underway, submission deadline for measures/improvement works for consideration by AWS was July 2013.

## Part Four: Action Plan

The Action Plan underpins the management plan of The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site. Actions requiring management as an outcome of monitoring (Part One) or Relevant Authority management programmes (Part Three) alongside activities which fall outside of these are included in the Action Plan (Table 4). The Action Plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure management is progressive and the conservation status of the EMS is on track.

**Table 4.** Management Actions for The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site for 2014/15

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2013/14 <span style="color: red;">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> A = problem <span style="color: green;">■</span> G = on track	Management for 2014/15	Status Oct 2014 <span style="color: red;">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> A = problem <span style="color: green;">■</span> G = on track
<b>1. Coastal Protection and Flood Defence Works</b>					
<p>Feed into medium term strategies (e.g. Wash East Strategy) as appropriate.</p> <p>Maintain awareness of planned and ongoing coast protection works, including methods used.</p> <p>Feed into communications regarding emergency works as appropriate.</p>	Planning	<p>Project manager Environment Agency MMO Natural England Local Authorities</p>	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	<p>Awareness and input into Wash East Strategy.</p> <p>Maintain awareness of Environment Agency methods used for routine and emergency works on coastal protection/flood defence. Review existing methodology for information.</p> <p>Share contact details with Environment Agency operations field team leaders for information.</p>	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
<b>2. Common Rights / Longshore Economy / Traditional Activities</b>					
Observe Common Rights whilst taking into account other legislation.	Planning	<p>Common Rights Holders Project Manager</p>	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Common Rights Holders continue with self-regulation whilst taking into account other legislation with Relevant Authorities.	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
Wildfowling organisations produce management plans to assist Natural England with consenting procedure (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)	Planning	<p>Natural England Common Rights Holders Wildfowling organisations Project Manager</p>	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Ensure that groups are receiving adequate assistance to achieve action point.	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
Ensure longshore activities do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	Monitoring	<p>Project Manager Eastern IFCA Local Authorities Common Rights Holders Fishermen's Associations Advisory Groups Site Managers</p>	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	<p>Continuation of IRP system of monitoring in order to identify level of activity and assess 'hot spots'</p> <p>Promote Good Practice Guides</p> <p>Refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate</p>	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> A

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2013/14 <span style="color:red">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color:yellow">■</span> A = problem <span style="color:green">■</span> G = on track	Management for 2014/15	Status Oct 2014 <span style="color:red">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color:yellow">■</span> A = problem <span style="color:green">■</span> G = on track
<b>3. Land Drainage</b>					
Ensure chemical weed control or chemical clean-up operations do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	On ground	Internal Drainage Boards Natural England Environment Agency Defra Land Owners	■G	Chemical control is becoming restricted with chemicals being withdrawn from use.  Continue to review and update (if necessary) the chemical pollution clean-up control measures in accordance with Defra, EA and NE guideline	■G
Minimise the risk of non-native invasive species impacting on coastal waters	On ground	Natural England Site Managers Land Owners Advisory Groups Project manager	■G (New action in 2013/14).	Use IRP to monitor presence and spread of non-native invasive species  SEFINS Project  Promote the 'check-clean-dry' campaign	■G
<b>4. Recreation</b>					
Ensure commercial and non-commercial wildlife tours do not negatively impact on site interest species (e.g. seals)	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Advisory Groups Tour Operators	■G	Continue to encourage self-regulation and promotion of Good Practice Code by operators  Continue to record through IRP  Refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate	■G
Ensure kites (including surfers, boarders and buggy users) and wind surfers do not cause detrimental harm on site interest features	On ground	Project Manager Kites Working Group Common Rights Holders Site Managers Advisory Groups Harbour Authorities Natural England Land Owners	■G	Continue to work alongside and develop best practice and principles with North Norfolk Kites Group – meet annually  Target water sports shops and clubs with a good practice guide  Continue to record through IRP & refer matter to RA for further action if appropriate	■G
Ensure motorised and non-motorised watercraft do not cause or inflict harm on site interest features	On ground	Project Manager Harbour Authorities Local Authorities Site Managers Advisory Groups	■G	Promote Good Practice guide by working alongside clubs and harbour authorities  Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency; investigate moorings creep	■G
Ensure moorings and access to moorings do not cause detrimental harm on the site interest features	Planning	Project Manager Norfolk Coastal Partnership Harbour Authorities Natural England Common Rights Holders Advisory Groups	■A	Project Manager to investigate joint review of recreational moorings with Norfolk Coastal Partnership  (FMB to agree action for moorings creep following review)	■A
Reduce disturbance on site interest features by dog walkers and their pets	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Common Rights Holders Site Managers Land Owners Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory Groups	■G	Reinvigorate the disturbance work in partnership with NCP, Site Managers and Little Tern Working Group  Promote awareness of impact to owners through distribution of Code of Conduct. Link message across EMS sites  Examine funding possibilities to undertake educational 'Dog Stops' and study	■G

Action	Type of Action	Responsibility	Status 2013/14 <span style="color: red;">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> A = problem <span style="color: green;">■</span> G = on track	Management for 2014/15	Status Oct 2014 <span style="color: red;">■</span> R = Stalled <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> A = problem <span style="color: green;">■</span> G = on track
<b>4. Recreation (continued)</b>					
Ensure use of motorised vehicles, bikes, cycles and hovercraft does not cause detrimental impact on site features	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Common Rights Holders Conservation Organisations Landowners Site Managers Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory groups	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency  Promote awareness of impact to owners through distribution of Good Practice Guide  Fences and access is restricted as necessary by RAs	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
Ensure that bird / wildlife watching does not cause a detrimental impact on site features	On ground	Natural England Common Rights Holders Conservation Organisations Landowners Project Manager Norfolk Coast Partnership Advisory group	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency  Promote awareness of impact to wildlife enthusiasts through promotion of Good Practice Guide  Promote the Bird Watchers Code, Royal Photographic Society Nature photographers Code of Conduct	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
Other leisure activities including beach barbeques, litter, crab digging / fishing etc.	On ground	Project Manager Natural England Local Authorities Harbour Authorities Common Rights Holders Land owners Site Managers Norfolk Coastal Partnership Advisory Groups	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency  Liaise with site managers  Promote awareness of impact to wildlife enthusiasts through promotion of Good Practice Guide  Promote existing codes of conduct	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
<b>5. Education / Research</b>					
Ensure bird ringing does not cause detrimental impact on site features	Planning	Natural England Common Rights Holders Project manager Conservation Organisations Landowners Advisory Groups	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Promote British Trust for Ornithology practice  Ensure that ringing activities are conducted by licenced individuals	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
Ensure that educational visits and outreach activities do not cause detrimental impact on sites features	Planning	Natural England Site Managers Land Owners Advisory Groups Project Manager	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	Promote existing best practice through Good Practice Guide and procedure to visiting groups  Use IRP to monitor activity patterns and / or increase in frequency  Liaise with site managers	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G
<b>6. Water Abstraction</b>					
Ensure that water abstraction is managed to prevent adverse impacts on site interest features and encourages water efficiency	Planning	Environment Agency Natural England Internal Drainage Board Water Companies Agricultural Sector Local Authorities	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G	All consents comply with the Habitats Directive  Water availability is governed via Catchment Abstraction management Strategy (CAMS)	<span style="color: green;">■</span> G