



NatureScot News Release

17 November 2022

Green fund distributes £3m to enhance Scotland's coasts and seas

A ground-breaking initiative, which has distributed almost £3 million to transform the health of Scotland's coasts and seas, opens its first privately-funded grant round today (17 November).

The Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF) is Scotland's only major green finance initiative, with funding from both the public and private sector, focussed on restoring the marine and coastal environment.

This winter, the world's focus is on improving nature and the climate, with both the COP27 on climate change taking place now, and new global biodiversity targets being agreed at the UN Biodiversity Conference in Canada (COP15) in December. Alongside the 2023 publication of the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, this is a pivotal moment for Scotland to take ambitious action against the nature and climate emergencies.

Public sector funding has supported the programme initially: to date, SMEEF has distributed almost £3 million of public sector money to help transform the health of Scotland's coasts and seas. Now, with fundraising from the private sector going well, the next round of grants will be almost purely supported by businesses. Already, £225,000 has been committed by private donors and another £100,000 is awaiting approval by the SMEEF's Ethical Contribution Board.

Since SMEEF launched in May, funding has already been granted to a number of exciting projects, including removing invasive species on the islands of the Forth, establishing an innovative floating garden in the Clyde, and restoring seagrass in Loch Craignish and Orkney.

Today, the fund is once again open for grant applications, this time for project development work such as baseline surveys and feasibility studies. Projects can apply for grants of up to up to £25,000, with the provision for one exceptional award of up to £100,000, for a wide range of activities, including gathering core evidence to support successful restoration of marine species and habitats, as well as projects which assess the effectiveness of programmes. This will provide the basis for continuing, scientifically-based conservation and restoration programmes

NatureScot and its partners are asking marine businesses and the sector at large to continue to contribute to the initiative, helping to restore the ecosystems which provide so much to business and communities across Scotland.

SMEEF was established by NatureScot, the Scottish Government and Crown Estate Scotland, with seed funding from the offshore wind energy sector to support **projects that will help ensure that our coasts and seas are healthy, productive and rich in nature.**

Environment Minister Mairi McAllan said: "This initiative is a prime example of the continued cooperation that is needed to tackle the two major challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss in Scotland. Private investment in natural capital is critical to enabling the pace and the scale of action required to fulfil Scotland's world-leading ambitions on addressing climate change and biodiversity loss."

"I am encouraged to see that businesses recognise that the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund offers a responsible and reliable route for investment in Scotland's marine natural capital, and I look forward to further support that will enable SMEEF to deliver truly transformative change."

"Scotland's seas and coasts are home to a diverse range of species, and are crucial natural assets for our communities and for our way of life as a nation. It is critical that we work together to do everything we can to protect and enhance them."

Francesca Osowska, NatureScot's Chief Executive, said: "COP27 is drawing attention again to how governments, business and industry must all work together. To achieve net zero in Scotland by 2045, solutions based in nature will be key to our success. This project is a great example of how many individuals and groups coming together to protect our seas and coasts can make a huge difference."

Ronan O'Hara, Chief Executive of Crown Estate Scotland, said: "This is a hugely important milestone for the SMEEF programme. It shows that collaborative working across the public and private sectors can enable business to help restore and enhance Scotland's marine environment. Over the months and years to come, I expect we'll see more businesses take an increasingly proactive role in protecting nature - SMEEF sets a great early example."

SMEEF is managed by NatureScot, working closely with Marine Scotland and Crown Estate Scotland. Prospective contributors are assessed by an Ethical Contributions Board and the awards will be evaluated by a Grants Panel. Both the Board and the Panel have independent chairs and include input from Scottish Environment LINK.

For more information, to make a donation or a grant enquiry visit www.smeef.scot

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Notes to editor

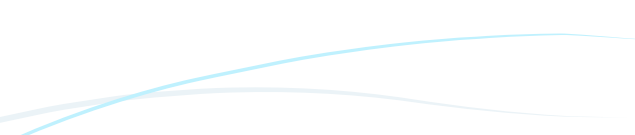
SMEEF will contribute to a just transition to net zero through grant-aided projects that enhance the marine ecosystem services we all rely upon, including:

- Recovery, restoration and enhancement of marine and coastal habitat and species
- Marine and coastal nature-based solutions
- Invasive species management
- Research which sheds new light on relevant issues and/or makes projects more effective

Examples of the work SMEEF could support include restoring seagrass beds, creating new saltmarsh habitat, controlling non-native predators to protect breeding seabirds, and researching new approaches to restoration of the marine environment.

Details of funding terms and conditions can be found on the website www.smeef.scot

Nature-based solutions, such as those funded by SMEEF, including restoration and enhancement work, have the potential to quickly increase the range of employment opportunities in some of the most remote



and fragile communities in Scotland. In fact, between 2015 and 2019, the green jobs sector grew at five times the rate of all other jobs and accounts for one-third of all jobs growth in Scotland.

An Ethical Contributions Board (ECB) comprising representatives from NatureScot, Crown Estate Scotland, the Scottish Government, and independent members, who specialise in relevant areas including audit, risk, legal, financial governance and partnership management will review all donations in line with the contributions acceptance policy which is available on the website www.smeeef.scot.

SMEEF would like to acknowledge the financial support of the following organisations:
Crown Estate Scotland

- Marine Scotland a directorate of the Scottish Government
- Scottish Power Renewables (UK) Limited
- Muir Mhor Offshore Wind Farm Limited, a partnership of Fred.Olsen Seawind and Vattenfall Wind Power
- Orsted Power (UK) Limited
- Stromar Offshore Wind Farm Limited, a partnership of Orsted UK, Blue Float Energy and Falck Renewables
- Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited
- BroadShore Wind, a partnership of BlueFloat Energy and Falck Renewables
- Bellrock Wind, a partnership of BlueFloat Energy and Falck Renewables

The Scottish Government's £65 million Nature Restoration Fund, which has provided the opening funds for SMEEF grants, is open to projects that help Scotland's species, woodlands, rivers and seas back on the road to recovery, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of local communities, with at least £12.5 million available in 2022-23. For more information on the fund, see the **NatureScot website**.

Details of projects already funded by SMEEF can be found on the website under <https://smeeef.scot/#map>.

