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Convener
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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18 June 2019

Dear Gillian,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May 2019 covering a broad range of marine issues. I enclose responses to the questions in the annex to this letter and the Director of Marine Scotland would be more than happy to meet the Committee to expand on these issues if that would be helpful.

Yours,

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM



Responses to Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee questions

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

As the Committee is aware, the necessary changes to legislation have been made to ensure that the Regulations which transpose the Directive into UK law will remain operable after exit from the EU. The Directive provides a strong framework for management, monitoring, and assessment of our marine environment and the Scottish Government is fully committed to retaining this process, and evolving it as required in future.

The Directive requires co-operation at a regional scale, and in our case this is the North-east Atlantic. This co-operation is achieved through the OSPAR convention which the UK is a signatory, and a very active participant. As the work of OSPAR keeps pace with the EU, it follows that our national work will also keep pace as a consequence.

National Performance Framework

Following the evidence session in the Spring of 2018, Marine Scotland published two new marine National Performance Framework indicators on Monday 15th April 2019. The two indicators, which measure the sustainability of commercial fish stocks and cleanliness of marine environment, were calculated for the period 2015 to 2017. Both show improvement.

The **sustainability of commercial fish stocks indicator** reports the percentage of key fish stocks for which the fishing mortality (i.e. rate of fish captured: landings plus discards) is in line with sustainability thresholds. From 2015 to 2017 the indicator increased from 46% to 54%. A rise in the value indicates increased long term sustainability of commercial stocks.

The **clean seas** indicator reports the percentage of contaminant assessments showing concentrations that are acceptably low. 82.5% of these assessments defined by contaminant and region show concentration levels that are unlikely to harm marine organisms. This has improved from 80% in 2015 and 2016. An increase in the value of the indicator suggests improvements in the cleanliness of the marine environment. Note – that this indicator does not consider marine litter or plastics.

The revised National Performance Framework includes a new combined marine and terrestrial biodiversity indicator which is still under development. The Scottish Government commissioned RSPB to carry out a research project to produce recommendations for a combined marine and terrestrial biodiversity indicator based on existing data collections. The research is exploring relevant national and international information (including the Marine Strategy Framework when it is applicable) available to produce an indicator that aligns as well as possible with Scottish, UK, EU and international biodiversity strategies. The results of the research project will be reported in autumn 2019 to take account of the State of Nature Report which is due to be published in September 2019.

The above three marine indicators cover a subset of components in the UK Marine Strategy Assessment which contains a much more detailed suite of indicators. For full coverage of the marine environment stakeholders should refer to the UK assessment.

The Committee will be aware that in advance of any amendment or replacement of the National Marine Plan, a new assessment of the condition of the Scottish marine area, is required under section 5 (4)(b) and (c) of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010'. For the first National Marine Plan, this was contained in Scotland's Marine Atlas. Scotland has since established an Open Data Network for Maps (NMPi), Data and Information, a web portal that provides access to descriptions and information about the Scottish marine environment and links to datasets and map resources. A new assessment is in preparation and expected to be completed in 2020.

MPAs

The public consultation launched on 07 June 2019 and will end on 30 August 2019. The four proposals will extend the range of features protected in the Scottish MPA network by including basking shark, Risso's dolphin, and minke whale. Prior to launching the consultation, Marine Scotland held a stakeholder workshop in March 2019 and have been discussing the proposals directly with stakeholders in bilateral meetings. The Sustainability Appraisal does consider the implications of fisheries displacement based upon a series of management scenarios.

Marine Scotland and SNH are holding local stakeholder events during the consultation. Following the end of the consultation, allowing for time to analyse the consultation responses, the Scottish Government will make a final decision on designation of these sites in early 2020.

The second review of socioeconomic impacts of MPAs began in autumn of 2018, with the reconvening of the steering group that oversaw the first review published in March 2017. This steering group comprises representatives from the fishing industry (West Coast Inshore Fisheries Group), environmental NGOs (Fauna and Flora International), seafood processing industry (Angelbond Ltd.) and local authorities (Western Isles Council and Argyll and Bute Council). The steering group has met several times to develop and agree the aims, objectives and approach for the second review.

The aim is to provide Scottish ministers with evidence of the observed positive and negative socioeconomic impacts of MPA management measures, across sites in Scotland, three years post implementation.

The objectives are to:

- To develop the methodology used in the first MPA socioeconomic monitoring report with second phase analysis;
- To gather, update and analyse new evidence on the positive and negative socioeconomic impacts of MPA management measures three years post-implementation; and,
- Provide Scottish Ministers with the evidence by the end of 2019.

The review will use fishing vessel level data held by Marine Scotland to assess changes in fishing activities following the introduction of MPA management measures and to estimate economic impacts on fishing vessels and the industry. Community-level data will be collected from a selection of case study areas using interview and focus group discussions with key informants to understand changes in social and economic impacts in coastal communities linked to the MPAs. The steering group has already agreed criteria for selecting communities for case studies.

The review seeks to answer a number of questions using evidence. This includes looking at whether there has been displacement of fishing activities following the introduction of MPA management measures, the nature of displacement and fishing segments affected, and the areas where activity has been displaced to. From this evidence the review will seek to understand if there are likely to be further issues arising from the observed patterns of fishing activity displacement.

The questions to be answered by the review are:

1. What has been the level of compliance monitoring?
2. What is the level of compliance with MPA management measures?
3. How have fishing activities been affected by the introduction of management measures in MPAs? Have measures been taken to mitigate these impacts? If this involves displacing activities, where have these activities been displaced to?
4. What are the relative impacts of different marine developments (MPA, Aquaculture, Renewable etc.) on fishing activity? Do these interact?
5. What are the main factors affecting the seafood processing industry? How do these impacts manifest themselves? And are these linked to MPAs?
6. How do MPA regulations impact on aquaculture business decisions?
7. Are there any community initiatives or activities occurring in or around MPAs in the area? If yes, what/who is involved and what is the level of development?
8. What is the community perception of MPAs, and their impacts on marine industries?

National Deep Sea Marine Reserve

Marine Scotland are making the final preparations for the public consultation, and it will launch in the near future. The proposed site covers over 100,000 km² of Scotland's seas and encompasses a diverse marine landscape and a wide range of vulnerable habitats and species. If designated, it will make a considerable contribution to the Scottish MPA network in terms of area covered, and increasing the representation of habitats and species.

The aim, following the consultation, is to designate the National Deep Sea Marine reserve before the end of 2019. However as the site will be designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 the final decision will also be subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State. These final sign-off processes have caused delays in the past.

Seabird Conservation Strategy

Marine Scotland is progressing with the development of the Scottish Seabird Conservation Strategy. A working group consisting of Marine Scotland, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB Scotland and British Trust for Ornithology Scotland. The working group has agreed the aims and objectives of the strategy, and has developed a work plan. Details of this will be published on the Scottish Government website in due course, along with periodic updates on progress and dates for events will also be provided.

Marine Scotland is aiming to have a stakeholder workshop in Autumn 2019, followed by a public consultation during the winter.

Priority Marine Features

A scoping consultation on improving protection given to Priority Marine Features outside the MPA network took place in 2018. A total of 57 responses were received and a summary report of the findings is due to be published in due course.

A Sustainability Appraisal is being undertaken, and a stakeholder workshop regarding this is expected to be held at the end of the summer. This should lead to a public consultation on potential fisheries measures during Autumn 2019. It is anticipated that this will lead to measures being implemented in late 2020.

Monitoring and Compliance

As part of our work to modernise the Inshore fishing we are investing £1.5 million in enhanced monitoring and tracking of Scotland's commercial inshore fleet. We will shortly issue an invitation to tender to take this forward. Scotland is leading the way in enabling its scallop sector to demonstrate responsible commercial fishing and we are prioritising the Scottish scallop commercial fleet, which comprises around 90 vessels, in our deployment of the Modernisation programme. In addition to this, Marine Scotland Compliance has enforcement capability through its 18 coastal offices and three Marine Protection Vessels (MPVs). We also undertake regular rigid hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) patrols, have two surveillance aircraft and make use of unmanned aerial vehicles ("drones") which adds considerably to our surveillance capacity.

The maximum penalties are considerable and offer a sufficient deterrent. Under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 contravening a marine conservation order has a maximum penalty of £50,000 on summary conviction, and unlimited on conviction on indictment. The court must consider any financial benefit gained from the offence when setting fines. Most fishery offences attract the same level of fines and courts can order the forfeiture of fish in respect of which the offence was committed providing a direct link to the level of damage. Furthermore, fixed penalty notices can also be offered as an alternative to court proceedings up to a maximum value of £10,000. Although an FPN is not an admission of guilt, they do seek to address any gain that was made in committing the alleged offence. Fishing gear can also be seized.

Enhancement of the Marine Environment

Under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in exercising any function that affects the Scottish marine area (Territorial waters) the Scottish Ministers, and public authorities, must act in the way best calculated to further the achievement of sustainable development, including the protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the health of that area, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of that function.

The designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is a key contribution to the protection and enhancement of the Scottish marine area. Within MPAs, Public authorities must act in a way best calculated to further the conservation objectives. Scottish Ministers are also progressing fisheries management measures for MPAs, and also for Priority Marine Features. Considerable care is taken in the development of these measures to help ensure that in overall terms there is a net benefit or enhancement overall of the Scottish marine area.

Marine Tourism

Economic value of marine and coastal tourism

The marine tourism industry-led ambition, set out in “Awakening the Giant: A Strategic Framework for Scotland’s Marine Tourism Sector” is to increase the overall economic value of the marine tourism sector from £360m to over £450m by 2020.

In 2017, Marine Scotland developed the methodology for estimating marine tourism and recreation, as distinct from all tourism. The 10 October 2018 edition of the Scottish Government “Scotland’s marine economic statistics”¹ confirmed that in 2016 marine tourism generated £554 million GVA: accounting for 0.4 % of the overall Scottish economy, and 14 % of the marine economy.

In the same period, in terms of employment, marine tourism provided employment for 27,900 workers, contributing 1.1 % to total Scottish employment and was the biggest marine economy employer accounting for 37 % of the marine economy employment. (At that point in 2016 Scottish tourism as a whole was estimated as producing £3.9 billion GVA).

In addition, while the marine tourism methodology was originally developed in 2017, data for the 2018 edition could now be estimated retrospectively. These showed that that, between 2008 and 2016 marine tourism GVA (adjusted to 2016 prices) increased by 22% and employment increased by 15%.

Table: Marine tourism - GVA, turnover, employment and GVA per head, 2008 to 2016 (2016 prices).

Year	GVA £M	Turnover £M	Employment Headcount 000's	GVA Per Head £
2008	453	892	24.30	18,647
2009	357	746	24.40	14,616
2010	410	830	22.90	17,923
2011	427	871	24.40	17,493
2012	473	937	24.20	19,530
2013	543	996	29.30	18,519
2014	569	1,013	26.70	21,295
2015	489	913	29.70	16,464
2016	554	1,031	27.90	19,864

Scottish Government “Scotland’s marine economic statistics”, 10 October 2018²

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-marine-economic-statistics/>

² *ibid*

Year of Coasts and Waters 2020

Themed Years in general, delivered by VisitScotland, have provided a focus and a vehicle to give Scottish tourism a competitive edge, bringing together a wide range of partners across the years to work collectively to promote Scotland and all its assets.

The current and potential value of marine and coastal tourism was therefore a key factor in 2020 being designated as a Themed Year, one in which Scotland's Coasts and Waters will be showcased and celebrated with a programme of activity designed to support the nation's tourism and events sectors.

The Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 will sustain and build upon the momentum of the preceding Themed Years. 2020 will spotlight, celebrate and promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland's unrivalled Coasts and Waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors and be based around four themes:

1. Our Natural Environment & Wildlife
2. Our Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage
3. Activities & Adventure
4. Food & Drink

An exciting events programme is a key element of any Themed Years programme. An Event Programme Open Fund of £600k has been made available from VisitScotland across two funding rounds, with match-funding grants of between £10k and £50k.

The Event Programme Open Fund has been designed to create new, high profile opportunities to celebrate our coasts and waters whilst adding value to the existing calendar of events. The 6 successful Round 1 Events were announced on 10 April 2019 and are shown in the table below. The bulk of the applications are expected to be covered under Round 2, with successful applicants being announced towards the end of 2019.

DATE	EVENT	ORGANISER	LOCAL AUTHORITY	AWARD
March 2020	Ferry Tales	National Theatre of Scotland	Argyll & Bute Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	£40k
April – October 2020	DolphinFest	RSPB Scotland	Aberdeen City Council	£20k
June 2020	The Fife Regatta 2020	Fife Regatta Ltd	North Ayrshire Council Argyll & Bute Council	£11k
June 2020	EIFF: Scotland's Shores	Edinburgh International Film Festival	City of Edinburgh Council	£30k
September 2020	Clydebuilt Festival	Clyde Maritime Trust	Glasgow City East Dunbartonshire	£35k
October 2020	Dark River (at Scotland's Boat Show Inverkip)	Holt Leisure Parks Ltd.	Inverclyde Council	£31,750

In addition to those events which will be directly funded by the YCW2020 Events Open Programme, we aim to promote the broadest programme of public-facing events. The YCW2020 'Partner Programme' is a non-funded opportunity that events relevant to the theme of the year can join and benefit from by inclusion in VisitScotland promotional activity in celebration of the year.

In addition, as Themed Years seek to create a platform that we can all use to promote Scotland in partnership, a free industry toolkit has been developed by VisitScotland to enable tourism businesses and other partners to engage in the year offering tips, advice and a range of free to use assets including the logo for the year, promotional wording and imagery.

As well as this specific YCW2020 work, SG and our agencies, will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to highlight opportunities for economic development that are aligned with YCW2020 and the ambition for sustainable economic growth shared between the industry and the Scottish Government.

This reflects that the broad scope of the Year of Coasts and Waters Themed Year provides the opportunity for communities and associations to use YCW2020 to develop wider synergies in order to achieve their own ambitions via social, rural, environmental and economic policies and projects, right across Scotland.

South of Scotland and Ayrshire

Our Programme for Government commits us to developing tourism in the south of Scotland and Ayrshire – opening up a new destination to international and domestic visitors. We have already provided £500,000 to VisitScotland for a *See South Scotland* campaign. The campaign, covering, both the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, will encourage more visitors to explore this lesser known part of the country, including areas that support marine tourism, including the Berwickshire Coast, the beaches of the Solway Firth, St. Abbs Head National Nature Reserve and the Mull of Galloway. It also builds on the success of the North Coast 500 by promoting a new driving route – the South West Coastal 300.

The Coig

In Ayrshire, we have provided £300k in 2018-19 and a further £400k is planned for 2019-20 to develop The Coig - a new tourism route development project that covers the Firth of Clyde areas of Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute. Coig is Gaelic for 5, and there are 5 routes. Three cover the Clyde islands of Cumbrae, Bute and Arran and 2 mainland routes cover Ayrshire and the Muirshiel area (The Sheil).

The Coig is an industry led project supported by North Ayrshire Council. It will be digitally led through the development of a website and mobile app utilising social media platforms. It will enable the tourism industry and related businesses to promote themselves through this new tourism product development by attracting more visitors and visitor spend into the area by giving tourists multiple reasons to visit and return. The Coig aims to become a "must do" / "bucket-list" experience for visitors to Scotland.

Islands Passport

A further Programme for Government commitment supports the development of an Islands Passport. The concept of the Islands Passport is to combine the successful elements of similar marketing initiatives in Scotland and beyond to encourage more people to visit more of Scotland's Islands and in so doing support sustainable economic development. The passport will encourage not only foreign and UK visitors but also Scots to visit more of the wonderful islands that surround the Scottish mainland. Amongst the aims of the scheme are to: encourage sustainable tourism and economic benefits; provide value through increased visitor spend and tourism in less well known or less accessible islands and provide an opportunity to focus on slow tourism and accessing the islands by public transport and active travel helping to sustain often fragile lifeline services.

Marine Litter

The 2018-19 Programme for Government commitment to work with the fishing sector and coastal communities to develop proposals to tackle the issue of fishing litter and lost gear was introduced as we view this sector as part of the marine litter solution. The Scottish Government has supported behaviour change to improve waste management through schemes such as KIMO's Fishing for Litter initiative since 2005, but more needs to be done to reduce littering at sea with both trip waste and fishing gear.

Unfortunately there are disincentives for returning end of life fishing gear to port for disposal, including time, space and cost as there are currently no UK alternatives to landfill at a high charge. To discuss this shared problem, I hosted the British Irish Council (BIC) Marine Litter Symposium in February and made a joint commitment to work together to develop recycling solutions for end of life fishing gear. Together, with the other BIC administrations, we are considering different options and will report on progress later in the year.

Marine Scotland is also supporting the OSPAR project "Design and Recycling of Fishing Gear". This aims to share the knowledge of contracting parties to identify best practices and develop recommendations which will help with the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme on gear containing plastics, which is included in the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive adopted in May. This project is engaging with the fishing sector across the OSPAR region and is expected to report in Spring 2020.

The intentional dumping of waste at sea is unacceptable, which is why the Future of Fisheries Management paper has a discussion point on establishing this type of littering as an offence. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) prohibits the dumping of plastics at sea by any vessel, and the provision of rubbish management plans for larger vessels. Shipping is a reserved matter and the responsibility for transposing MARPOL lies with the UK Government. Marine Scotland is currently considering what future measures could act as a sufficient deterrent to end the disposal of trip waste and end of life fishing gear at sea, and will take into account feedback received during the discussion phase for the Future of Fisheries Management discussion paper.

Our approach to ensure the amount of litter entering the marine environment is minimised to bring ecological, economic and social benefits is set out in “A Marine Litter Strategy for Scotland”, (2014). This document is currently under review and Marine Scotland is working with the Marine Litter Strategy Steering Group to develop a new strategy to focus actions on issues of greatest concern. This will be informed by feedback from our successful International Marine Conference held February 2019. As with the original document, there will be an overlap with the ambition of the National Litter Strategy given that a significant amount of marine litter originates from land.

Joint working under the original Strategy continues and additionally work continues under a previous Programme for Government commitment in 2017-18 on marine litter sinks. We are monitoring and maintaining a known litter sink at Arrochar to improve our understanding, and awaiting the trial of innovative plastic prevention projects currently in Zero Waste Scotland’s funding application process.

The Scottish Government supports Operation Clean Sweep (OCS), which is a voluntary commitment by members of the plastics industry to prevent nurdle spills, clean up any nurdle spills responsibly and to prevent them entering our water systems. Marine Scotland is working with the plastics industry, including INEOS, Eunomia and Fidra, the East Lothian plastic pollution focused charity, to develop a trial of a supply chain approach which will ensure minimum handling practice standards are applied across all businesses using nurdles. The approach will be auditable, allowing transparency for retailers and consumers. The trial design should be ready to test by the end of 2019 and the Pre-Production Plastic Pellet Loss Steering Group to report to the Cabinet Secretary in September 2020.

The Scottish Government continues to take action to reduce the amount of litter transferring from land into the marine environment:

- On 8 May I announced proposals for an ambitious Deposit Return Scheme that will include PET plastic and glass bottles and aluminium cans, a 20p deposit amount and a target return rate of 90%.
- In April, I announced plans to introduce a specific criminal offence of littering from vehicles to be included in a future Circular Economy Bill.
- The Scottish Government was the first administration in the UK to propose legislation banning plastic-cotton buds and are on track to deliver this first, within 2019.
- In 2018, The Scottish Government updated statutory guidance – the Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse - to increase its focus on prevention. Zero Waste Scotland is developing a new monitoring system for littering and is supporting local authorities in zoning land to meet the requirements of the Code.
- I established the Expert Panel on environmental charging and other measures to consider how best to reduce dependence on single-use items that are commonly littered and ensure these items remain within the circular economy. They are considering single-use cups first and will make their recommendations over the summer.
- The Scottish Government will continue to provide targeted support, for example, project funding to Keep Scotland Beautiful to deliver the Upstream Battle project to increase the awareness of terrestrial littering and its impact on waterways and the marine environment. Initial findings from this project will be reported spring 2020.

Blue Carbon

The Scottish Government has continued to engage with the Scottish Blue Carbon Forum [the Forum] since it was launched in November 2018. The Forum is supporting world-class research and will build an evidence map for blue carbon to inform policy development. The current research programme focusses on assessing the scale of blue carbon resources in Scottish waters, furthering understanding of blue carbon capture and storage, and developing knowledge of how disturbance affects these processes. The research programme was developed by Marine Scotland in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), St Andrew's University, Glasgow University, Heriot-Watt University, and the Scottish Association for Marine Science. The programme consists of one post-doctoral study and 6 PhDs; a further 3 PhDs are funded by SNH.

The Scottish Government is also funding a pilot project to produce a comprehensive audit of blue carbon resources in Orkney. The results of the audit will be available to the local planning partnership to inform the development of their regional marine plan [expected completion of the audit July 2019]. This project is a world first, aiming to develop and test a robust methodology for the comprehensive auditing of blue carbon reserves at a regional scale. A funding announcement regarding further blue carbon research is due to be made imminently.

This summer (July 2019), a number of the PhD students will join the Marine Scotland vessel Scotia to take part in a 'floating university' research sampling campaign in Scottish waters alongside scientists from Marine Scotland. Furthermore, Professor Bill Austin is seconded to work with Scottish Government officials one day per week, assessing the potential role of our MPA network in blue carbon habitat management.

Kelp

As the Committee is aware, I announced a review to further gather evidence to help ensure existing seaweed harvesting activity and future proposals are sustainable and Scotland's marine environment is protected. A seaweed review steering group has been established and will advise on all aspects of the review – which will be wider than kelp and consider all seaweed and cultivation as well as wild harvesting. To ensure a broad range of interests are represented, membership includes organisations from various sectors representing conservation, science, enterprise, biotechnology, fisheries and the seaweed industry association.

The initial meeting of the seaweed review steering group was held on 16 May 2019 and focused mainly on governance, scope and terms of reference. Once the note of the meeting and papers have been agreed by the group they will be made publicly available. I will ensure that the Committee is updated as soon as the papers are published.

EMFF

Discussions have started with the UK Government on the process for allocating funding for the replacement to the EMFF and the case required to be submitted to HMT. Informal consultations with stakeholders have also started in order to build the required business case and to seek views on what has worked well under the EMFF and what changes should be considered. Further consultation will take place once further details are available such as the level of funding, number of year it is available and the general shape and suggested priorities of the new programme. Timelines are unclear at this point however we would hope to have the replacement programme ready to roll out at the end of the EMFF.

Marine Scotland Financial Model

Marine Scotland have not been formally tasked with reviewing its charging model. It is though actively taking forward a piece of work to assess the opportunities for increasing the levels of income generated, of which a review of the charging model forms a large part.

Marine Scotland has ambitions to move towards an operational model similar to SEPA in which a large element of the programme is self-funded. This will help safeguard the activity that Marine Scotland is already committed to but also provide the additional funding to expand upon the work programme in priority areas, of which marine environmental enhancement would be one such area.

Inshore Fisheries Management

Marine Scotland is progressing the realisation of the strategic aims of its Inshore Fisheries Strategy through a range of programmes and initiatives. The **Inshore Fisheries Pilots** programme is exploring a localised approach to fisheries management with local fishers working in partnership to design local solutions to local pressures. Both spatial and temporal arrangements in facilitating harmonious fishing practices in an ever increasingly competitive space are being tested around Scotland's inshore coastal waters in Mull and the Outer Hebrides on the west and Arbroath on the east.

The network of Scotland's **Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups** are partners in the pilot programme as well as taking forward a wide range of initiatives as part of their Regional Fisheries Management Plans, all of which are helping to strengthen Scotland's inshore fisheries evidence base.

St Andrews University are also contributing a significant programme of work in this sphere which is enabling and informing our Programme for Government commitment to **Modernise Scotland's Inshore Commercial Fleet** through the **Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Database System** (SIFIDS). The Public Contracts Scotland process has almost been completed to enable publication of an Invitation to Tender in relation to fulfilment of this commitment to deploy appropriate vessel monitoring and tracking technologies across the inshore fleet. We are currently prioritising the scallop dredge fleet in the modernisation programme in order to streamline alignment between fishing activity and our approach to protecting the marine environment.