

News story: Statement on Ofwat and rebuilding public trust in the water sector

Ofwat, the economic regulator of the water sector in England and Wales, has set out its [agenda](#) for rebuilding public trust in the water sector.

On 31 January, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Defra, wrote to Jonson Cox, Chairman of Ofwat, asking him to investigate what changes could be made to improve water companies' corporate behaviours.

The Environment Agency regulates the environmental performance of water companies. In February, the Environment Agency released the [State of the Environment report for water quality](#).

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

"We welcome the Secretary of State and Ofwat's call for water companies to act as diligently for their customers and the natural world as their owners. Jonson Cox says they should consider sharing water resources better. Today, the Environment Agency is meeting senior water company representatives to agree how to increase collaboration and coordination across the sector.

"Since 2005, the water industry has invested billions in the environment and brought compliance for discharge at wastewater treatment works to 99 per cent, but this is not a moment for congratulations. Water companies are responsible for at least one serious pollution incident every week. The courts need to make fines for pollution incidents proportionate to the turnover of companies. Sentencing guidelines in 2014 did bring in higher fines for environmental offences, but financial penalties must force board members to seriously consider environment risk, and not see it as an operational expense.

"In line with the ambition of the 25 Year Environment Plan, water companies also need to do more to act on climate change. England's flood and drought risks are increasing so we need to see more action to provide water security. Water companies shouldn't think of climate resilience as just expenditure. On Friday, Mark Carney spoke of the major opportunity for investors and creditors it brings in long-term infrastructure."

News story: Changes to the assessment

economic link conditions

All UK fishing licences contain a condition that requires vessels to demonstrate a genuine economic link with the UK. The economic link condition applies to landings of quota species and is assessed on a yearly basis.

From 1 May 2018 we will be changing the current assessment period of 1 April to 31 March to 01 January to 31 December (the 'calendar year'). This is to bring the assessment period in line with the yearly monitoring of quota uptake and to help those vessel owners who are required to comply with this condition to manage their quota for the year.

This change will also ensure that the English inshore fleet will benefit earlier in the year from quota donations made in fulfillment of the economic link condition. This gives the English fleet a greater opportunity to use the quota in what can be seasonal fisheries.

The way in which vessel owners must demonstrate an economic link with the UK will not be changed and are listed below by:

- landing over 50% by weight of their catch (which are subject to EU quotas) into UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man ports.
- demonstrating that at least 50% of the total crew man days at sea were accounted for by crew normally resident in UK coastal areas.
- providing proof that routine expenditure in the UK on goods and services for the vessel was equal to either: i) 50% of the value of quota stocks landed net of crew wages, or ii) 50% of the vessel's total operating expenditure for the year, net of crew wages.
- donating quota to the English under-10m fleet equivalent to a value representing 10% of the value of catch landed overseas.
- any combination of the above methods agreed by the MMO.

The change to the assessment period is not expected to affect the ability of vessel owners to comply with the economic link condition.

Open consultation: Litter and refuse: updating enforcement guidance

We want to know what you think about our guidance on proportionate and effective use of fixed penalties for littering and related offences. This guidance applies to England only.

The guidance is relevant for other environmental fixed penalty powers such as for abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, parking, and offences related to

domestic waste bins.

We committed in the Litter Strategy for England to publish improved guidance to promote proportionate and responsible enforcement. We intend to put this guidance into the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. Land managers in England have to have regard to this code.

Guidance: Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme: year 2 projects in the Caribbean

Updated: Grenada case study added

The Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme aims to support the sustainable growth of Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean regions.

The Programme will provide marine data and capacity building in all in scope SIDS. Specific outputs in the second year of the programme in the Caribbean will be:

1. In St Vincent & the Grenadines [work in year 1](#) will be expanded to provide high quality seabed habitat maps. In addition to new work in Belize, Guyana, and Jamaica.
2. Ocean acidification sensors will be installed in Dominica, providing real-time observations of coastal water acidity and temperature.
3. A solar-powered tide gauge will be installed in Belize with a satellite-linked data transmission system that will be connected to the IOC's Tsunami Early Warning System.
4. A sustainable Fisheries programme will be developed in the Caribbean SIDS, continuing Year 1 activity to progress Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation to valuable fisheries.
5. Work will continue to support future aquaculture development in the Caribbean
6. A containerised marine environmental laboratory is being manufactured to provide regional access to state of the art marine sensors and technology.
7. Regional data management training workshops will be held in both the Pacific and Caribbean, to help improve the efficiency, use and economic return on national and regional marine data collection.
8. Hydrographic Action Plans for in scope SIDS providing an analysis of scientific data and existing local capacity to manage their marine environment, and a commitment from each government to use these in national economic development planning.

9. Marine Environmental Action Plans and a commitment from each government to use these in national development planning. These plans will provide an analysis of environmental, scientific and sustainability priorities, and an assessment of the oceans management capacity of each country.
-

How to tame your dragon

Two Animal Care students from the Barony campus at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) have reached the final of a UK-wide animal husbandry competition.