

Consultation launched to support marine renewables

Press release

The consultation will examine how the UK can build back greener through marine renewable projects across the country.



- New consultation launched on how government can support marine energy projects, such as floating offshore wind farms, tidal stream and wave energy
- views invited on how project costs could be reduced, environmental impacts minimised, and how supply chains are able to benefit in all parts of the UK

The government is launching a new [call for evidence](#) to examine how the UK can build back greener through marine renewable projects across the country.

Marine renewables include emerging technologies such as floating offshore wind farms, tidal stream and wave energy. The consultation will invite views from developers and other interested parties on areas including:

- how projects could be funded
- how costs could be reduced
- how the environmental impacts can best be handled
- how supply chains could benefit in the nations and regions of the UK

The new consultation builds on the UK's success in renewable energy so far, with more offshore wind capacity than any other country in the world and well over a third of its energy now coming from renewables.

Secretary of State for Business and Energy Alok Sharma said:

As an island nation we are perfectly placed to capitalise on clean marine energy, building on our world-leading position in offshore wind.

Examining how to make the most of our natural resources and support marine technologies that are cost-effective for the consumer will be crucial as we build back better, creating green jobs and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Marine technologies could benefit every part of the UK. For example, tidal stream projects that harness the energy of tides could be suitable for the Highlands and Islands and North Wales, while floating offshore wind turbines could be suitable for deeper waters off the coast of Scotland, Wales and South West England.

The call for evidence comes after the recent consultation on the fourth round of the successful Contracts for Difference auction. This new consultation builds on that work to provide the government with evidence to base its decisions on future support for marine renewables.

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[Homeowners to see savings available under new Green Homes Grant scheme](#)

- Homeowners and landlords given head start in making the most of the new Green Homes Grant scheme
- website offers personalised energy plan, and access to trusted local tradespeople to carry out the work
- scheme is part of the government's plans to build back greener, with more than 600,000 new homes set to become more energy efficient and more than 100,000 skilled jobs supported

Homeowners and landlords can from today (Friday 28 August) see for themselves how the government's new Green Homes Grant scheme can help make their homes warmer and more energy efficient.

Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma today unveiled a new opportunity for consumers to get tips for making their homes more energy efficient, and details of how the Green Homes Grant scheme can make installations cheaper. These will be available on a revamped [Simple Energy Advice website](#).

The site offers a quick energy survey for consumers to see how energy efficient their homes already are, and where improvements can be made. Taking as little as 5 minutes, once completed homeowners and landlords can receive a personalised energy plan.

The Green Home Grants scheme, due to open by the end of September, will allow

consumers to obtain funding for up to two-thirds of the cost of the energy saving measures identified – up to £5000 – in the form of new vouchers. Lower income households could be entitled to have as much as £10,000 of the costs covered.

The scheme will cover green home improvements including insulation of walls, floors and roofs, the installation of double or triple glazing when replacing single glazing, and low-carbon heating. These measures could help families save up to £600 a year on their energy bills.

The [Simple Energy Advice website](#) then offers people access to fully accredited tradespeople in their area able to carry out the work needed, so they can get quotes ready for when the vouchers become available.

Business and Energy Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

Green Homes Grants are a key part of our plans to build back greener, helping make 600,000 homes more energy efficient with government vouchers, while supporting 100,000 skilled jobs and supporting our transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

From today people will have the chance to see how this scheme could help save money on their energy bills and connect to trusted local tradespeople across the country, so they are ready for the scheme's launch in September.

Announced in August, the Green Homes Grant scheme will see the government fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements up to £10,000 to make over 600,000 homes across the country more energy efficient and support over 100,000 jobs in green construction.

Energy Savings Trust Chief Executive, Mike Thornton, said:

The Green Homes Grant scheme is a great opportunity to get a grant to cut energy bills. Now the website is live, we urge people to go online to create a personalised plan for energy efficiency in their home as a first step to getting their grant.

View the [Simple Energy Advice website](#).

Anyone wishing to be accredited to complete work under the Green Homes Grant scheme can simply register with [TrustMark](#) via their website, with registration taking as few as 5 working days for those who already have membership of a recognised trade body such as the Federation of Master Builders, the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency and Building Engineering Services Association, or who are already certified under the [Microgeneration Certification Scheme](#).

Installers must meet Publicly Available Specification Standards to install

energy efficiency measures. All work under the Green Homes Grant scheme must be completed to PAS 2030:2017, however if an installer has already transitioned to PAS 2030:2019 they can work to this standard instead.

Installers must meet the relevant Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) to install low carbon heat measures.

UK Government to fund COVID-19 research in Scotland

The UK Government is investing £8.4 million in COVID-19 immunology research projects across the UK, including the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee.

It is the biggest ever contribution to COVID-19 immunology research in the UK.

Three new UK-wide studies will receive funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to understand immune responses to COVID-19.

Together, it is hoped these studies will improve the treatment of patients and inform the development of vaccines and therapies.

The Scottish universities are taking part in the largest study, the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium, which will receive £6.5 million and bring together leading immunologists from 17 UK universities. The University of Edinburgh is also involved in another study.

Dr Christopher Lucas, University of Edinburgh, will lead a study titled 'Inflammation in COVID-19: Exploration of Critical Aspects of Pathogenesis', which will receive £394,000.

It will focus on the key features of fatal COVID-19 and the impact the virus has upon the lungs and other vital organs.

Using authorised hospital post-mortem examinations of patients who have died from COVID-19, this study will provide a unique opportunity for expert clinicians and scientists to study the whole body in a level of detail that is not possible during life.

Dr Christopher Lucas said:

We have learned so much from COVID-19 patients during the past six months. However, there is only so much that we can learn from clinical examinations and blood tests.

By having a deeper look at those who have died from COVID-19 through post-mortem examination, we will increase our understanding of what is happening to the body in the most severe cases of this disease.

Critically, this will allow us to rapidly answer key clinical questions and help inform the care of patients and the development of new treatments.

The UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium will investigate key questions including:

- how long does immunity from COVID-19 last?
- why are some people's immune systems better able to fight off the virus?
- why do some people's immune responses cause damage, especially to the lungs?
- how does the virus 'hide from' the immune system and how can this be tackled?
- does immunity to previous infection with seasonal coronaviruses (which cause the common cold) alter a person's outcome with SARS-CoV-2?

Better understanding of these immune responses, particularly the T cell response, could provide targets for new therapies to treat COVID-19 and inform the efforts to develop a vaccine.

The project will use samples and data from major UK COVID-19 projects already underway, funded by UKRI and NIHR, including ISARIC-4C (characterizing and following more than 75,000 hospitalized patients with COVID-19) and the genomic studies COG-UK (sequencing the SARS-CoV-2 virus genomes) and GenOMICC (sequencing the genomes of people with COVID-19).

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

Scotland has a world-leading life science and research sector. This UK Government investment underpins the significance of our universities and academics nationally and internationally.

We have much to learn about understanding immune responses to COVID-19.

These studies, we hope, will improve the treatment of patients and inform scientists as they develop future treatment. It is a

commendable contribution in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Professor Massimo Palmarini, Director of the MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research (CVR) said:

My colleagues and I at the CVR are extremely proud to be involved in the UK-CIC consortium, and are grateful to UKRI and NIHR for the generous funding support.

It's now more important than ever that the immunology community work together, as we aim to address important, unanswered questions about SARS-CoV-2 as we move through this pandemic.

£500,000 funding for innovative research to diagnose TB in cattle faster

Ground-breaking scientific research aimed at detecting tuberculosis in cattle (bTB) will take place after five projects were awarded a combined investment of £500,000, the government has announced today (Friday 28 August).

bTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. More than 30,000 cattle are slaughtered each year due to bTB and cattle diagnostics are one of a range of tools that will help the country eradicate the disease in England by 2038 as we shift away from badger culling.

The programme, run by Defra on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales, will fund innovative research projects using cutting-edge technologies such as machine learning aimed at detecting infection in cattle herds faster.

Five schemes, led by various leading research institutes, have been selected to receive up to £100,000 each for up to 12 months for proof of concept research.

UK Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Richard Irvine said:

Bovine TB leads to the slaughter of over 30,000 cattle every year and considerable trauma for farmers as they suffer the loss of highly prized animals and valued herds.

This investment, which we hope will enable infection to be diagnosed and acted upon more quickly in the future, underlines the government's commitment to invest in world-leading scientific research in our battle to tackle this insidious disease.

Christianne Glossop, CVO for Wales, said:

We are pleased to work alongside colleagues across the UK in introducing this new diagnostics programme, which will help give farmers across Wales and the UK the confidence that instances of TB will be identified early, allowing farmers and relevant authorities to respond accordingly and limiting the spread of the disease.

The rapid, early identification of infection is a cornerstone of our eradication programme. We look forward to viewing the results of the project once new diagnostic methods are in place.

These research proposals will use a range of new concepts and technologies which aim to detect TB infections in cattle, including:

- machine learning for improved interpretation of the bTB skin test
- rapid and increased sensitivity test to determine bTB status
- mass spectrometry profiling of non-invasive cattle samples (mainly saliva or nasal fluids), to accurately detect bTB at early infection stage
- mid-infrared spectroscopy of milk samples as a rapid and accurate non-invasive tool for monitoring the bTB status in a herd
- identifying novel diagnostics antigens to underpin a future test for Detecting Infected amongst Vaccinated Animals (DIVA)

Alongside this, the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) research to speed up the diagnosis of TB in cattle and other livestock will soon be put into practice. From next year we expect to be able to use a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, which can identify bTB in post-mortem tissue samples significantly faster than traditional methods, and produce results with seven days rather than the usual two months.

The test should be ready for routine use at APHA laboratories from early 2021, initially on suspected lesions of TB detected at routine slaughter of cattle, and from non-bovine animals. This will bring benefits to affected animal keepers by reducing the time taken to determine whether TB is present in a sample and, if the PCR results are negative, lift the herd movement restrictions much sooner than under the current protocols.

The [government's response to an independent review of its 25 year bTB strategy](#), led by Professor Sir Charles Godfray, set out plans to phase out intensive culling in the next few years, and outlined the need for a combined approach which includes improved testing, alongside other measures such as badger and cattle vaccination to eradicate the disease in England by 2038.

In July, it was announced that [APHA had been given the green light for trials of a new cattle vaccine](#) and DIVA (Differentiating Infected amongst Vaccinated) skin test thanks to world-leading research from government scientists. We are now preparing to start field trials for these tools in 2021.

Defra has today published a report on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales which highlights the financial impact of TB on our beef and dairy sectors. The [report](#) shows the cost of a TB breakdown directly borne by cattle farms varies significantly, with a median value of around £6,600 across all farms in the survey. Across England and Wales median costs for herds of more than 300 cattle are around £18,600 whilst those for herds up to 50 cattle are around £1,700. Median costs for chronic breakdowns over 273 days are around £16,000.

The latest statistics on bTB in England show the overall number of new herd incidents of the disease is down by 10% in the last year (to May 2020), with a 15% reduction in the number of herds not officially free of the disease due to an incident. [Full details of these statistics are available here.](#)

The latest statistics on bTB in Wales show the overall number of new herd incidents of the disease is down by 10% in the last year (to May 2020), with a 11% reduction in the number of herds not officially free of the disease due to an incident. [Full details of these statistics are available here.](#)

[Foreign Secretary statement on Prime Minister Abe stepping down](#)

Press release

The Foreign Secretary has paid tribute to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I was sorry to learn that Shinzo Abe is stepping down as Prime Minister, and I pay tribute to the great things he has achieved as Japan's longest serving leader.

He leaves a strengthened UK-Japanese friendship, which we look forward to continuing in the years ahead. I wish him well for the future.

Further information

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