

The £1 Billion Challenge: Scottish Conservation Finance Project aims to drive significant investment into Scotland's natural environment

📅 28 February 2019

An ambitious new initiative aims to pioneer new ways of funding nature conservation in Scotland through the launch of the £1 Billion Challenge.

Led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Scottish Conservation Finance Project aims to generate new forms of investment in Scotland's stocks of natural capital in ways that will deliver significant environmental, social and economic benefits, as well as returns for investors.

The project brings together a dynamic mix of organisations from the private, public and non-profit sectors to develop cutting-edge investment and funding models for large-scale nature conservation activities, for example planting native woodlands, restoring oyster reefs and creating urban green spaces.

The London launch of the £1 Billion Challenge will take place at the Natural Capital Investment Conference at the Royal Society on Thursday 28 February.

This event follows a successful Edinburgh launch earlier this month which included speakers such as Gary Gillespie, Chief Economist at the Scottish Government; Francesca Osowska, Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage and Richard Mattison, Chief Executive of Trucost, a part of S&P Global.

Jonny Hughes, Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust said:

"Globally, investment in nature needs to increase substantially to meet the growing challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss.

"Scotland was among the first nations in the world to pledge support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and has been at the forefront of a number of pioneering environmental initiatives, including the World Forum on Natural Capital.

"The aim of this new initiative is to provide a practical opportunity to come together, exchange ideas and collectively achieve a lasting impact. Ultimately we want to begin to drive billions of pounds of investment into Scottish conservation in the coming years."

According to a 2016 report by Credit Suisse AG and the McKinsey Center for Business and Environment an estimated USD\$300 – \$400 billion per year is needed globally to preserve healthy ecosystems on land and in the oceans. Currently only around \$52 billion is available per year, mostly in the form

of public and philanthropic funds.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

"In Scotland, we currently using the resources of three planets, but only have one. Good leaders say – there's only one planet, we have to work within it. But great leaders say – how do we turn this from a threat into an opportunity for our organisation? The Scottish Conservation Finance Project is an exciting opportunity to bring the right people together to meet this challenge."

John Rowan, former Group Treasurer of Virgin Money adds:

"The Scottish Conservation Finance Project should offer a variety of sustainable investment opportunities. It is well understood that these can provide good diversification opportunities for investors."

A diverse range of organisations has helped shape the early stages of the project. These include Conservation Capital, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, Confor, Scottish Natural Heritage, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, Crown Estate Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Water and Virgin Money, alongside project initiators SEPA and the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Additional comments

Neil Birnie, Chief Executive, Conservation Capital said:

"Supporting nature-based businesses as a tool for conservation finance has proven successful in other parts of the world. Scotland has fantastic natural assets, talented entrepreneurs and a government focused on strengthening our natural capital. This initiative represents an exciting new development for both nature conservation and the business community in Scotland."

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive, Confor said:

"The challenge of protecting and increasing natural capital is big, urgent and requires large-scale, new investment to be unlocked. We welcome SEPA and the Scottish Wildlife Trust taking on that challenge and we're looking forward to working with the partnership they have assembled to make a real difference for Scotland."

Charlotte Wright, Chief Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) said:

"Scotland's natural environment, and particularly that of the Highlands and Islands, is world famous. It is instrumental in attracting people to visit, to live, to work and to study here. It underpins not only the quality of life but many of our key economic sectors such as aquaculture, food and drink, life sciences and creative industries, and of course tourism. These are so important to local economies and communities, often in the most rural parts

of our country. It is therefore crucial that regional economic development is carried out sustainably and in the context of appropriate investment in nature conservation and I am delighted that HIE is part of the Scottish Conservation Finance Project and the £1 Billion Challenge.”

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Notes to Editors

About the Scottish Wildlife Trust:

- The Scottish Wildlife Trust is Scotland’s leading nature conservation charity, representing over 40,000 members who care for wildlife and the natural environment.
- For over 50 years, the Trust has worked with its members, partners and supporters in pursuit of its vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems across Scotland’s land and seas.
- The Trust successfully champions the cause of wildlife through policy and campaigning work, demonstrates best practice through practical conservation and innovative partnerships, and inspires people to take positive action through its education and engagement activities.
- The Trust manages a network of 120 wildlife reserves across Scotland and is a member of the UK-wide Wildlife Trusts movement.
- The Trust receives financial assistance and support from a range of organisations, funders and individuals including Scottish Natural Heritage and players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

The Natural Capital Investment Conference is the leading forum to catalyse investment in the UK’s natural environment and takes place 28th February at the Royal Society in London. Register at ecosystemsknowledge.net/naturalcapitalconference

Next steps to ensure Mossmorran compliance announced by SEPA

 27 February 2019

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has completed its investigation into a number of unplanned flaring events at the Mossmorran Complex during 2017 and 2018.

- SEPA has completed its investigation into unplanned flaring events at Mossmorran.
- Final Warning Letters served on both operators in April 2018.
- Permit variations served on both operators to ensure they take all appropriate preventative measures against noise and vibration emissions

through the application of 'Best Available Techniques (BAT)' and ensure that no significant pollution is caused.

- Both operators are required to complete evaluation of the 'Best Available Techniques (BAT)' to prevent and, where that is not practicable, reduce emissions of noise, vibration and smoke associated with flaring.
- An enhanced programme of air quality monitoring is being undertaken by SEPA, to inform relevant public agencies.
- The environmental performance of ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Ltd will be kept under review and SEPA will not hesitate to take further action in line with its Enforcement Policy if appropriate.

In August 2018, SEPA announced an investigation into ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited. SEPA also announced a review of, then served, operating permit variations on both operators to strengthen noise and vibration controls whilst the investigation was underway.

The variations included the requirement to complete an evaluation of the Best Available Techniques (BAT) to prevent and, where that is not practicable, reduce emissions of noise, vibration and smoke associated with flaring. The outcome of the BAT assessment is an essential part of understanding what can be done to stop unacceptable and preventable impacts of flaring.

SEPA is currently undertaking air quality monitoring in the vicinity of the Mossmorran complex and a forward programme for environmental monitoring is being discussed with the Operators and partner organisations.

SEPA CEO, Terry A'Hearn, attended community meetings and was clear both that SEPA was listening to local communities and that compliance was non-negotiable.

He explained:

"Whilst flaring is an important safety mechanism, and is permitted through permit conditions, the impact of any flaring events must be mitigated so as not to have an unacceptable impact on local communities.

"SEPA remains clear that the flaring in June 2017 was preventable and unacceptable and issued Final Warning Letters to both companies in that regard. Communities experienced further unplanned flaring in October 2017, March 2018 and again in May 2018.

"With a firm focus on ensuring stringent compliance and mitigating the impacts of flaring, SEPA has concluded that robust enforcement action taken is currently appropriate and effective. The environmental performance of ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Ltd will be kept under review and SEPA reserves the right to take further action in line with its Enforcement Policy."

Best Available Techniques assessment crucial to ongoing compliance

The outcome of the BAT assessment is an essential part of understanding what can be done to stop unacceptable and preventable impacts of flaring.

SEPA has held review meetings at key stages with both companies to ensure progress. The interim reports on progress towards the evaluation of Best Available Techniques for flaring, which were required by 30 November 2018, have been submitted and are available to view on SEPA's Public Register.

They indicate that the operators are progressing towards completion by the required date of the 30 April 2019 and that the scope of the assessment covers the appropriate breadth and depth. Progress to date has highlighted potential ground flare technologies and site based techniques that may reduce and/or minimise noise, vibration and/or smoke from flaring. The companies have advised that further assessment is required to determine what combination results in the best overall benefit.

In addition to publishing the interim reports SEPA is committed to publishing the operators' final assessments.

Terry A'Hearn stressed that both operators must continue their commitment to implementing Best Available Techniques.

"We have used our enforcement policy to guide our decisions in taking what we consider to be the most appropriate and effective actions at this time in order to secure compliance. We will continue to work with Exxonmobil Chemical Limited and Shell UK Limited to provide advice and guidance if required, and will ensure any proposals are acceptable and appropriate. If this is not the case we will take any necessary action."

Enhanced programme of air quality monitoring being undertaken by SEPA

SEPA is currently undertaking air quality monitoring in the vicinity of the Mossmorran complex. Following a consultation with community representatives, through the Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay Community Safety Liaison Committee, a trailer has been located at the farm to the North East of the complex and diffusion tubes will be placed in community locations.

Information is being shared with the Independent Air Quality Review Group (including community representatives), Fife Council, NHS Fife and Health Protection Scotland.

A forward programme for environmental monitoring is being discussed with the Operators and partner organisations.

Ongoing communication with communities

SEPA has worked within the limitations of communicating during a live regulatory investigation to keep local communities informed through the Mossmorran Communities Working Group; the Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay Community Safety Liaison Committee, the Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay Independent Air Quality Review Group and SEPA's dedicated [Mossmorran information hub](#).

SEPA will continue to work to keep good lines of communications open with appropriate groups and elected representatives to explain what is being done, hear concerns and provide reassurances. In addition SEPA has committed to

keeping the public informed through the dedicated Mossmorran hub, and anyone with concerns or queries not related to an ongoing pollution incident can email communities@sepa.org.uk during office hours.

Information about a potential or ongoing pollution incident (including flaring) should go to our 24 hour pollution hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or via sepa.org.uk/report. The earlier we know about a potential issue, and the more information we have, the better we can investigate.

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Notes to editors

- Links to the Final Warning Letters, permit variations and the interim reports on progress towards the evaluation of Best Available Techniques for flaring are all available on our Mossmorran Hub at www.sepa.org.uk/mossmorran

£2,412.81 fine for illegal landfill site in Penicuik

 25 February 2019

A waste management company was fined £612.81 and two of senior staff £900 each on 18 February 2019 for illegally disposing of waste at a site in Penicuik.

D.A.M. Recycling Ltd pled guilty to keeping controlled waste without the authority of a waste management licence. Alan O'Connor, a director, and David Shaw, a manager, of the company pled guilty to consent, connivance or neglect in failing to ensure that only the inert wastes permitted were deposited at Bowlea Smithy.

The case was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) after an extensive investigation.

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's Chief Executive, said:

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and we're clear that compliance is non-negotiable. This is at the very core of our One Planet Prosperity Strategy. We have a good track record of compliance in Scotland but unfortunately we do have some people and businesses that occasionally don't meet those standards. When that's the case it's our job to make sure such people are held to account.

"SEPA is committed to cracking down on waste criminals and this case was the first for SEPA's specialist Waste Crime Team. Their specialist skills were

essential in investigating this company and its directors, and the number of staff involved from across the organisation demonstrates our commitment to tackling criminal behaviour. They worked hard to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"We're disappointed that these activities took place, despite the best efforts of SEPA officers, but we are pleased they have been held to account. We hope this successful prosecution sends a message to everybody operating in Scotland. SEPA is here to make sure that action will be taken if you don't pay attention to your environmental responsibilities."

In February 2013 a Waste Management Licence exemption was granted for the use of waste soil and stone to raise the height of a field so it could be returned to agricultural use. The exemption was for a maximum of 20,000 tonnes. This type of exemption only allows pre-sorted waste soil and stone, which are classed as inert waste, to be brought on site. No other type of waste is permitted.

SEPA started receiving complaints not long after that suggested both the type and quantity of waste being brought on site was outwith the exemption. Initial investigations by SEPA officers failed to find evidence of this, but complaints were ongoing. In December 2013 SEPA's Waste Crime Team began directed surveillance activity and SEPA officers witnessed waste being driven on to the site and immediately buried under soil and stones in order to hide it.

SEPA employees from a variety of disciplines including specialist Waste Crime Team officers, field chemists, ecologists and hydrologists, together with external contractors, including a Land Surveyor assessed the site and took various samples for analysis.

Concentrations of methane and carbon dioxide gases emitting from a site are indicative of decomposition from non-inert wastes. The gas measurements taken showed significantly elevated levels of Methane and CO₂ in certain areas. These elevated levels informed SEPA as to which areas to further investigate by the digging of test pits.

A total of 12 test pits were dug and illegal waste was excavated from eight of them. This included waste plasterboard, glass, wood, plastics, metals, insulation materials, plastic sheeting, roofing felt, plastic piping; household items and municipal wastes including paper, plastics, food waste, food packaging, clothing, mattresses, sofas cushions, paper, carpets, newspapers, shoes, cardboard and bags. All were buried between one and four metres underground and had been covered with waste soil and stones.

Strong unpleasant odours, described as a rotten egg smell, were noted during site assessments by SEPA staff and contractors. This can be attributed to the Hydrogen Sulphide content of the gas created by decomposing controlled waste found to be buried at the site. During excavations black rotting waste including mattresses, carpets and plastics was discovered, and SEPA staff detected a very strong smell of decomposing waste. SEPA has continued to monitor the site. It was estimated that 20,480 tonnes of inert wastes were

buried.

Alan O'Connor and David Shaw were served with a Statutory Notice in April 2014 requiring them to move all the wastes not conforming to the original Waste Management Licence Exemption but the Notice was not complied with by August 2014.

Gas monitoring in September 2017 showed that landfill type gas was still being produced.

Jim Ferguson, SEPA's Reporting Officer, said:

"Between 7.00 and .45 each week day morning, an excavator would dig a hole at the site and a lorry would arrive and deposit its load into the hole, which was then immediately covered up. This was very quick compared to the rest of the work conducted during the rest of the day, where inert construction waste and soils were left openly on the ground before spread out on top of the site. This activity showed a deliberate attempt to hide the nature of the waste being buried at the site, by people who knew it was not permitted.

"The site was essentially being run as an illegal landfill site. A legal facility would have authorisation from SEPA to ensure protection of the environment, including requirements for containment of potentially harmful emissions to the environment, site security, controls over the type of waste accepted and protection of the nearby Lead Burn. This site charged to accept waste that was deposited there, but did not have any of the associated running costs.

"We hope this case is also a reminder to anyone who entrusts their waste to others. You have a duty of care too – you must ensure your waste only goes to a carrier that is appropriately registered, and that they take it to an appropriately licenced site. You can find out more on our website."

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Notes to editor

The exact charges DAM Recycling Limited, Alan O'Connor and David Shaw pled guilty to on 17 January 2019 were:

- On various occasions between 25 February 2013 and 19 August 2014 at Bowlea Smithy, Howgate, Penicuik, EH26 8PX you DAM RECYCLING LIMITED did keep controlled waste, namely inter alia motor vehicle parts, plasterboard, glass, wood, plastics, metals, insulation materials, plastic sheeting, roofing felt, plastic piping, household items and municipal wastes including paper, plastics, food waste, food packaging, clothing, mattresses, sofa cushions, carpets, newspapers, shows, cardboard and bags in or on said land otherwise than in accordance with a waste management licence in that you did keep said controlled wastes without the authority of a waste management licence: CONTRARY to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 33(1)(b)(i)

- On various occasions between 23 February 2013 and 19 August 2014 at Bowlea Smithy, Howgate, Penicuiuk, EH26 8PX, a body corporate namely DAM Recycling Ltd, a registered company, company number SC345853, registered office address formerly at 26 Jenks Loan, Newtongrange, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 4RP, committed an offence under Sections 33(1)(b) and 33(1)(c) of the aftermentioned act and when said offences were committed you ALAN O'CONNOR and DAVID SHAW were a director, partner, manager secretary or other similar of the body corporate, or a person purporting to act in such capacity and said offence was committed with your consent and connivance or was attributable to neglect on your part in that you did fail to ensure that only inert wastes were deposited at said Bowlea Smithy and as a consequence did cause harm to the environment; CONTRARY to Section 157 (1) Environmental Protection Act 1990
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Action against flooding

Communities across Scotland will benefit from more than £700,000 additional funding to improve flood protection.

This includes £300,000 to support the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in its role as the national flood forecasting, flood warning and strategic flood risk management authority this year. It is also proposed to increase by a further £200,000 to £1.6 million for 2019/20.

The 'Scottish Flood Forum' will receive £33,000 in 2019/20 to work with stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of making flood resilient repairs and installing flood protection measures for property.

And £180,00 has been made available to gather Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data, which surveys terrain and will provide robust data to improve assessment and management of flood risk.

Speaking ahead of her appearance at Scotland's annual flood risk management conference in Glasgow, **Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham** said:

"Flooding can cause utter devastation to communities, as we saw in 2015. It's vital that we do everything we can to prepare for the worst, and this additional funding will improve our resilience against future flooding.

"It will allow us to increase our understanding of when and where flooding is most likely to occur, and to support those communities affected.

"The Scottish Government is spending £420 million over ten years to protect homes and businesses in our most flood-prone areas – demonstrating our commitment to tackling this age-old problem.

"Ensuring our communities, society, economy and environment are protected

from the impacts of climate change is a crucial step to delivering a greener, fairer and more prosperous country.”

Welcoming the increased funding, **SEPA’s Chief Executive Terry A’Hearn** said:

“Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s environment, including helping Scotland prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding in the face of clear science on climate change.

“With SEPA’s flood forecasting and warning services being critical to Scotland’s public services, private businesses and communities, today’s funding boost will make a real difference to new science, technology, and training that underpins our aim of making Scotland more flood resilient.”

Background

LiDAR data will be available free of charge to stakeholders via the Scottish Remote Sensing Portal. This is in line with Scotland’s Digital Strategy, where the Scottish Government is working with public sector bodies to invest in new collective data agreements.

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20 years of good VIBES: Scottish Environment Business Awards celebrates 20th anniversary

 31 January 2019

As Scotland continues to focus on improving its environmental performance, the VIBES – Scottish Environmental Business Awards is celebrating those that have helped to make a difference since the awards were launched 20 years ago.

Many of these businesses gathered at Dumbarton Football Club on Tuesday (29 January) to mark the start of VIBES 20th anniversary celebrations; which aims to recognise those who have made a difference and to inspire others to adopt more sustainable practices.

It’s a key milestone for the environmental awards and while progress is being made in Scotland’s sustainable development, organisers of the awards are keen to encourage more businesses and sectors to look at how they can play their part in tackling the ongoing challenges faced by today’s planet whilst embracing the economic opportunities they present.

The event focussed on one of Scotland’s biggest industries, whisky which is

also leading the way in environmental best practice. Distillers have implemented a strong focus on a circular economy approach as well as using low amounts of water, materials and carbon-based energy.

Attendees heard from the Scotch Whisky Association and Chivas Brothers – Pernod Ricard as well as some of their supply chain on the environmental and business benefits of a circular economy approach – just one of the many ways businesses can improve their sustainable performance.

Ronald Daalmans, Environmental Sustainability Manager from Chivas Brothers – Pernod Ricard, headline sponsor of VIBES, said: “As an early VIBES winner, the continued improvements in environmental performance over the last 16 years have highlighted the importance of partnership working to achieve our goals. This approach will be even more important for the significant challenges that remain.”

Commenting, Terry A’Hearn, chief executive of SEPA, said: “The scale of environmental challenges facing humanity is enormous, with a real urgency to act. Only businesses that embrace the economic opportunity of sustainable solutions to environmental challenges will thrive.

“We want the best environmental performers to be the most successful businesses and SEPA is committed to helping Scottish businesses recognise the benefits of good environmental performance within environmental rules and regulations. Scotch Whisky is a great example, where we have seen consistently high compliance for several years – demonstrating that high environmental performance and prosperity are mutually dependent.”

Over its 20 years, the Awards have illustrated the diverse ways businesses from across a variety of sectors are responding to these environmental challenges; from developing innovative products to making simple operational changes and as part of its anniversary VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards is launching a special award to find the best of VIBES.

This anniversary award will recognise past winners of VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards that can demonstrate their continuous improvement and their contribution to Scotland’s sustainable development. Previous winners can apply from February, and VIBES will select up to 10 entries to showcase throughout the celebratory year, with the public selecting the winner at the official awards ceremony later this year.

Terry A’Hearn, added: “The VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards celebrate business leadership in sustainable environmental investment, and are an excellent opportunity to recognise and reward companies for going beyond ‘business as usual’ and driving sustainable growth through innovation.

“It is very encouraging how many of Scotland’s businesses have led the way and are making a difference which will not only support the environment but also protect their bottom line. This was reflected in the fact that over 90% of the UK delegation for the 2018 European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) were from Scotland and the SEPA backed VIBES programme. I look forward to hearing more about the 20th anniversary over the coming

months.”

To obtain an application form for the Best of VIBES Award, please contact vibes@sepa.org.uk. For more information on VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, please visit www.vibes.org.uk

Ends

Notes to editor

About VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards

VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards is a strategic partnership between Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland, Energy Saving Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

The Awards are further supported by CBI Scotland, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, Bright Green Business, Quality Scotland and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

The Awards are accredited by the RSA Environment Awards Accreditation Scheme (www.rsaaccreditation.org).

Issued on behalf of VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards by The BIG Partnership