

£75 million boost to modernise UK fishing industry and level up coastal communities

Fishing communities across the UK will benefit from better infrastructure, strengthened supply chains, new jobs and an investment in skills thanks to a £75 million boost for the sector announced by UK Government today.

The investment will strengthen the sector's ability to land more fish in the UK and take them to market faster. This will be achieved by improving the capacity and efficiency of our harbours and processing facilities while boosting the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry and supporting jobs, increasing opportunities for coastal communities and levelling up across the country.

A £65 million infrastructure scheme will be made available for projects such as modernising ports and harbours alongside increasing capacity and efficiency at processing and aquaculture facilities. A competition will be run to identify the best projects, prioritising those that reduce carbon emissions, helping increase the sustainability of the sector and contributing towards the UK's commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050.

Up to £10 million will also be used to encourage new entrants into the processing, catching and aquaculture sectors, alongside training and upskilling current workers. We will do this by offering an improved package of training to people joining the industry and making it easier for people from coastal communities to progress through their career.

The two funding schemes are the second and third parts of the £100 million UK Seafood Fund designed to level up coastal communities across the UK. This follows the [Science and Innovation pillar](#), announced in September, which is investing in new technology, trialling new gear and supporting world-class research to improve the productivity and long-term sustainability of the industry.

The investment will ensure the industry and coastal communities are equipped to benefit from additional quota gained as a result of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed last year with the EU. Following our departure from the Common Fisheries Policy, there have been uplifts in quota for UK vessels, with the value of UK-EU fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 totalling approximately £333 million.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

A year on from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a positive picture is emerging for our fishing industry.

Today, we are announcing a £65 million infrastructure scheme which will allow us to modernise ports and harbours and increase capacity and efficiency at processing facilities. A £10 million fund will encourage new entrants into the processing, catching and aquaculture sectors, and train and upskill those in the industry.

We are committed to levelling up coastal communities across the UK, and this marks a period of rejuvenation for our fishing industry.

Sustainability is an important aspect of both schemes. The Infrastructure pillar will invest in the transition to renewable energy. Examples could include the electrification of UK ports to accommodate docking of electric or hybrid powered ships as well as increasing use of solar panels. Port electrification has already proven effective in cutting fossil fuel consumption and reducing emissions produced by the fishing industry. The transition of the UK seafood industry to more sustainable practices and a greater use of renewable sources will drive down energy costs, protect fish stocks in the future and improve sales as well as building on the UK's reputation as a global leader in action to protect the environment.

Supporting the long-term future of the fishing sector, fishers will also be trained in more sustainable fishing techniques. This will help businesses work alongside offshore wind developments and existing Marine Protected Areas. The funding will also provide further support for fishers and industry workers through the development of new, tailored courses in business management, mathematics and literacy, as well as courses on health, safety and wellbeing improvements to existing courses with funding for staff and equipment.

We will invite industry to put forward bids for Infrastructure and Skills and Training with funding is provided to those that most benefit the industry. There will be several opportunities to bid for Infrastructure funding as we look to target different elements of the industry.

A further £1 million will be dedicated to promoting UK seafood, further details of which will be set out in 2022.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove, said:

This multi-million pound investment will have a real and tangible impact on coastal communities across country and the UK fish industry.

It will support the creation of jobs and training opportunities that will help put the industry on a sure footing for the future.

We are working hard to boost local communities and spread opportunity to every corner of the country as we level up the nation.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The UK Government is committed to Wales's fishing industry and to ensuring its many coastal communities enjoy a sustainable, prosperous future.

I encourage everyone in Wales eligible to apply for this funding to take up the opportunity to upskill their workforce, improve facilities, drive innovation and boost recruitment.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

We want to guarantee our fishing industry has a bright future and today's allocation of funding is a great step forward. From upgrading ports and improving processing facilities to boosting training and encouraging recruitment, it all brings a massive boost for the industry.

Our engagement with Scotland's fish and seafood sector is ongoing. We are listening to concerns and we are acting upon them for the benefit of business owners, workers and Scotland's wider coastal communities.

This funding will be felt throughout the country as we support improvements to the UK supply chain by helping establish greater coordination between regions and nations of the UK. Funding will also ensure training schemes are coordinated so that benefits are felt across the Union.

This comes as the UK government also publishes its [response](#) to a consultation with industry on proposed changes, collectively known as the 'economic link'. This will increase the percentage of fish that must be landed in the UK by English registered vessels following our departure from the EU, providing a boost to fishing companies and producers, further strengthening the UK economy. The changes apply to UK vessels fishing against English quota and will come into effect from 1 April 2022.

In a further move to ensure that fishing communities reap the benefits of Brexit, the package of measures known as the 'economic link', also includes increasing the minimum percentage of UK crew members that must be on board vessels to 70%, creating more job opportunities for UK residents. It will contribute to the financial boost to the local economies in fishing communities. The amount of fish that must be landed in the UK after it is caught will rise from 50 to 70%, meaning more fish being sold and processed in the UK. Vessels that do not meet the landing or crewing requirement will be required to donate quota that provides valuable extra fishing opportunities to the inshore fleet. This will be increased from 16.5% to 20% in 2022 and we will seek to increase the current threshold over time.

These changes will provide a further boost to the fishing industry and the

wider economy following our departure from the European Union. Funding to infrastructure will ensure the industry is equipped to fully benefit from these changes and support the levelling up of UK coastal villages, towns and cities.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke said:

I'm delighted that we are supporting coastal communities across the country to level up by investing £75m in modernising and upskilling the fishing industry. The UK Seafood Fund will boost opportunities for coastal communities by creating jobs and supporting the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry.