

Natural flood management work resumes to increase flood resilience in Leeds

Natural flood management work to increase flood resilience across the Aire catchment in Leeds continues as the next tree planting season is set to begin.

The Environment Agency, working alongside Leeds City Council and other partners, will be implementing a range of nature-based solutions across the Upper Aire catchment to reduce flood risk in the area as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme's Natural Flood Management project. Natural flood management can help to reduce flood risk by mimicking natural processes and slowing the flow of water.

At the end of the last planting season, £3.7m had been invested in the scheme so far with a further £1.1m forecast for this year.

Two major interventions for the project are soil aeration and tree planting, delivered by landowners and strategic partners on behalf of the Environment Agency, and the White Rose Forest respectively.

Soil aeration helps increase the storage capacity of water in the ground by using a machine to poke holes into compacted soil and allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate through. This reduces surface water run-off that could contribute to peak flows in rivers and their connected streams, therefore reducing flood risk. This technique is also beneficial as it makes soil rich and fertile for growing crops.

So far 288 hectares of soil aeration has been successfully carried out, with a further 218 hectares currently being delivered, or in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, over 410,000 trees have been planted in the catchment and, as the next tree planting season begins, the Environment Agency and partners have set an ambitious target of over 100,000 trees to be planted between October 2022 and March 2023. This equates to approximately 55 hectares or 77 football pitches.

Jenny Longley, Area flood risk manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency is committed to providing the highest protection against flooding in Leeds.

Alongside our traditional flood defences, nature-based solutions can reduce flood risks and have a range of positive benefits for the city such as increased biodiversity, and improved habitat and water quality.

We're excited to be working with our partners to deliver this work as part of the Leeds scheme, which will ensure the area is more

resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Councillor Helen Hayden, Leeds City Council's executive member for infrastructure and climate, said:

Increasing the flood resilience of Leeds is an important part of our response to the climate emergency.

When complete in 2023, the engineering works on Leeds FAS2 will provide significant flood protection to thousands of residents and hundreds of businesses in Leeds. These sustainable, nature-based solutions will complement our engineered defences, and ensure that the FAS2 scheme is even more resilient to the effects of climate change.

We are proud to be working with the Environment Agency on a natural flood management scheme of this scale and delighted that we are on track to have planted over half a million trees by March 2023, as well as completing vast areas of soil aeration and other Natural Flood Management techniques.

This work allows us to slow the flow of water and considerably reduce flood risk, and also capture huge amounts of carbon, create a range of habitats for wildlife, increase the efficiency of farmland in our region, and create areas of natural beauty for residents to enjoy for generations to come.

Other natural flood risk measures are also being delivered through an innovative platform known as NatureBid. The NatureBid project is an auction that provides the opportunity for landowners and farmers to bid for funding to conduct targeted natural flood management measures onto their land. The auction was carried out last year; successful bids began being implemented across the catchment over the summer and will continue through this planting season up to March 2023.

Some of the measures that will be carried out from the NatureBid 2 project include tree planting, soil aeration, creating new hedgerows and buffer strips, and installing leaky dams, which all help to slow the flow of water in the catchment and reduce peak flows downstream and in doing so decrease the risk of flooding.

Natural Flood Management also offers wider benefits including improving soil health, improving habitats and providing greater biodiversity for wildlife and increasing carbon sequestration.

Read more about natural flood management in the Upper Aire catchment on [Leeds City Council's Commonplace website](#).

If you have land and are interested in tree planting, visit the White Rose Forest's website on www.whiteroseforest.org/aireriver.

[UK convenes Joint Expeditionary Force ministers in Edinburgh](#)

Defence Ministers and senior representatives from the ten participating nations of the [Joint Expeditionary Force \(JEF\)](#) met in Edinburgh, Scotland, today to discuss shared challenges and commitments as a group of like-minded nations.

The UK convened the meeting as the framework nation, and it comes eight months after the group [last met in the UK](#) – at Belvoir Castle on the eve of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

The meeting today took place in the Cabinet Room of Queen Elizabeth House, the headquarters of the UK Government in Scotland. The group agreed to deepen cooperation on hybrid threats and to protect Critical National Infrastructure, including underwater cables and pipelines.

The Joint Expeditionary Force partners also discussed Russia's persistent aggression which seeks to weaken western societies and poses a challenge to the security of Northern Europe.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our nations remain steadfast in our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Joint Expeditionary Force has been at the forefront of providing diplomatic, financial, humanitarian and military support, something we will continue to do to until Russia has withdrawn their forces.

Over the past eight months, our contribution through the JEF has been steady and committed, seeing vital military provision achieved through the International Fund for Ukraine – and our work will continue as we remain determined to bolster the security of Northern Europe and Ukraine.

The meeting was held as the Netherlands and Norway announced further commitments to the [International Fund for Ukraine \(IFU\)](#). The fund was initiated by the UK and the money pledged to the fund is used to purchase equipment directly from manufacturers meaning it will Ukraine at pace.

Participants in the fund are drafting a framework with Ukraine which sets out who has responsibility for what. The UK has contributed £250 million to date and the fund totals over half a billion pounds.

The Joint Expeditionary Force comprises of Denmark, Estonia, Finland,

Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The nations share the same purpose, values and a common focus on security and stability in the JEF core regions of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The group provides a responsive, capable, and ready military force that undertakes integrated activities at sea, on land and in the air, across northern Europe. These activities are preventative and proportionate and demonstrate solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in the JEF core regions.

The meeting followed a [visit by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#) yesterday to see some of the 10,000 Ukrainian recruits being trained by the UK this year. The UK has led training of over 7,400 Ukrainian personnel so far, with 1,900 currently going through training. Representatives from the JEF nations also visited the training yesterday.

The UK-led programme is being supported by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand the Netherlands, and Latvia. Australia will support from 2023.

[Government accepts recommendations on import measures for Biodiesel and Wire Rod](#)

The government has today [10 November 2022] agreed with the Trade Remedies Authority's recommendation on anti-dumping and countervailing measures on imports of Biodiesel from the USA and Canada. It has also accepted the recommendation on anti-dumping measures on imports of Wire Rod from China.

Biodiesel

After reviewing the measures on biodiesel imports, which were transitioned from the European Union system when the UK left the EU, the TRA recommended that existing tariffs on imports of fatty-acid mono-alkyl esters (FAME) Biodiesel be kept at their current levels for five years from 30 January 2021, but that tariffs on imports of hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO) Biodiesel be [removed](#). The UK has an established FAME production industry but no domestic HVO production. This means that the UK's FAME production industry will continue to be protected from dumped and subsidised Biodiesel which is exported from the USA (and in some cases consigned from Canada), but that HVO from these countries can be imported, which will benefit the UK's agricultural and transport industries as well as users of oil-fired heating.

Green fuels offer alternative to diesel

FAME and HVO are created using a wide variety of oils and animal fats, including used cooking oils, animal fats/tallow, soya oil, rapeseed oil and sunflower oil. FAME is produced through esterification while HVO, also known as renewable Biodiesel, is made by hydrotreating used vegetable oils. Both types of Biodiesel are added to diesel to produce a blended road fuel which is sold at petrol stations. HVO performs better in this use and is also suitable for a range of other uses.

The TRA's investigations found that Government-subsidised producers in the US would be likely to dump FAME Biodiesel in the UK in the future and cause harm to UK industry if the measures no longer applied. Although the TRA found that dumping of HVO would also be likely to occur if the duty were no longer applied, there would be no injury to domestic manufacturers/businesses as there is no HVO industry in the UK. In addition, HVO is more expensive than FAME so the imports are unlikely to compete with domestically produced FAME. The TRA also established that there is demand for HVO in the UK for use in heating buildings as it offers a cost-effective and more environmentally friendly alternative to existing heating fuels.

Wire Rod

Wire Rod in the UK is predominantly used in construction, tyre reinforcement and steel springs in vehicles. The UK market for Wire Rod is estimated to be worth more than £740 million per year.

Historically, the UK was an attractive market for Chinese exporters of Wire Rod before the existing measure was imposed. Since the measure was imposed by the European Union in 2008, the volume of imports dropped significantly. The TRA's investigation found evidence of high production and significant inventories of Wire Rod in China suggesting that dumping would be likely to occur again if the measures were removed.

The TRA recommended that the measures on Wire Rod be maintained [at their current levels](#) until 30 January 2026 – that is five years subsequent to the date when the measure would have expired (30 January 2021) had no transition review been initiated.

Background information

About the TRA

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether trade remedies measures are needed on imports. Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the UK's behalf until the UK left the EU.
- Anti-dumping measures counter goods being 'dumped' into countries at prices below their normal price in their country of origin and are one of the three types of trade remedies – along with countervailing measures against countervailable subsidies and safeguard measures– that are allowed under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

- Forty-four EU trade remedies measures that were of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is reviewing each one to check if it is suitable for UK needs. The biodiesel measure is the latest to be completed.

About the products

- HVO and FAME Biodiesel have different production processes: HVO Biodiesel is produced through hydrotreatment (which uses hydrogen as the catalyst to remove oxygen from the vegetable oils), whereas traditional FAME Biodiesel is produced through esterification (the reaction of an alcohol with acid). FAME Biodiesel production requires other reagents such as methanol and produces glycerol as a by-product. FAME is seen as a transitional alternative to fossil fuels as, while it does offer some environmental benefits, it is not without its drawbacks. Some of the problems of high fame content include: Relatively short shelf life, water contamination due to higher water content, encourages diesel bug growth, increased chance of injector fouling, higher fuel consumption rate due to the fuel being less powerful, gradual degradation of fuel due to oxidation and hydrolysis, which can damage machinery.
- HVO Biodiesel is considered a type of “drop-in fuel” which, theoretically, can be used in its pure form in diesel-powered vehicles/machinery without any modification to engines.
- Wire Rod includes bars and rods, hot-rolled, in irregularly wound coils of iron, non-alloy steel or alloy steel other than of stainless-steel.

Report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: UK response, November 2022

Thank you, Ambassador Hasani, for your presentation on recent activities. It certainly makes clear the broad range of work, key to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, which you and your team cover.

For eight months now, we have witnessed the humanitarian catastrophe stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. From its effects on energy prices, to the increased risk of trafficking, the destabilising and degenerative effects of this war of choice are significant and numerous. Inflation in Ukraine is forecast to exceed 30% by the end of 2022, eroding real incomes and increasing poverty; and the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance has estimated a funding gap in its 2023 budget of 38 billion dollars. And as we have heard in this forum, the war has done 37 billion euros worth of damage to Ukraine's natural environment, with pollution, forest fires, damage to nature reserves, and destruction of water resources. All are direct results of Russia's aggression.

We therefore support your decision to continue to shift your office's focus to remedy these effects; as well as your suite of projects in response, including assessing the environmental damage. Russia must be held to account for all their actions in Ukraine. Credible and thorough assessments are an essential part of this.

I would like to focus my remarks on three interlinked areas of security that have become increasingly important since the start of Russia's war.

First, energy security.

We are pleased to see the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) address this important topic, through the protection of critical energy infrastructure from natural and man-made disasters; and supporting participating States to diversify their energy mix to include renewable energy, energy efficiency, and alternative fuels.

The dramatic rise in global energy prices, exacerbated by Russia's weaponisation of energy, has highlighted the importance of reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. The [UK's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) and our [Net Zero Strategy](#) set out our vision; and at COP27, [our Prime Minister announced a further 65 and a half million pounds for the Clean Energy Innovation Facility](#), providing grants to researchers and scientists in developing countries to accelerate the development of clean technology.

This shift can help us in addressing the second issue – climate security.

The UK sees an undeniable link between climate, nature, peace and security. The impacts of climate change multiply the threats faced by vulnerable populations. We were pleased to see the continuation of your office's flagship climate project in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

We are clear that we must accelerate climate action. Under the UK's COP Presidency, almost all developed country climate finance providers made new, forward-looking climate finance commitments. The [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) means that '1.5 degrees' remains in sight, but this goal will only be achieved through immediate, sustained global effort. As we hand over the Presidency to another member of the OSCE family – Egypt – we must maintain the momentum that parties built at COP26.

Climate change increases competition for water and land, adding to the risk of the third threat – food insecurity.

As you said at the Economic and Environmental Committee meeting in June, armed conflicts and climate change have direct consequences on food security in the OSCE region. Your office's energy projects improve the sustainability and resilience of the food supply chain.

Today's global food security crisis was exacerbated by Russia's brutal war. Farmers are on the frontline – including in Ukraine where brave farmers continue to plant and harvest their crops. We must support them to export their grain and to rebuild their agriculture.

And finally, we share your assessment that the economic empowerment of women is a pre-requisite for their full and effective participation in society, and has a reinforcing effect on our common security. We welcome the integration of a gender perspective in your projects. Challenging destructive gender stereotypes is essential to combat the root cause of women's disempowerment.

I would like to thank you again, Ambassador Hasani, for all your and your team's work these past six months.

Thank you.

Second ASEAN Economic Ministers-UK Consultation – Joint Statement

1. The Second ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) – United Kingdom Consultation was held on 10 November 2022. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce of the Royal Government of Cambodia, and Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for the Department of International Trade of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK).
2. The Meeting was pleased to note that the economies of ASEAN and the UK are on their path to post-COVID-19 recovery. According to statistics, total UK trade with ASEAN increased by 3.7 per cent from £36.6 billion in 2020 to £38.0 billion in 2021. The Meeting also noted that foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow from the UK to the ASEAN region had been growing prior to being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the Meeting noted that in 2020, the FDI inflow from the UK into ASEAN was at least £32.8 billion, £19.0 billion lower than in 2019. In 2020, ASEAN accounted for at least 2.0 per cent of the total UK outward FDI stock.
3. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to forge a closer cooperation to enable the continued growth of the UK and ASEAN economies following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the UK's support to the region's COVID-19 pandemic responses, including through its contribution made to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and to the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan.
4. The Meeting noted that the post-COVID-19 economic recovery remains vulnerable to adverse global economic developments. The Meeting expressed its deep concerns on geopolitical tension and continued risks to global food and energy security, and rising inflationary pressure.
5. The Meeting exchanged views on ASEAN's and the UK's approach in the Indo-

Pacific. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to ASEAN Centrality and unity in the evolving regional architecture and reiterated the commitment to support an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules based, built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms to support the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

6. The Meeting noted paragraph 14 of the Chairman's Statement of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Sessions with the Dialogue Partners and Trilateral Meetings (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 3-4 August 2022) and underscored the importance of multilateralism, adherence to international law, and respect for sovereignty in contributing to global and regional peace, stability, and prosperity.
7. The Meeting welcomed the growing economic cooperation between ASEAN and the UK following the establishment of the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership last year. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to continue strengthening economic cooperation between ASEAN and the UK, as specified in the 2021 Joint Ministerial Declaration for Future Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the UK (Joint Ministerial Declaration). To this end, the Meeting endorsed the Work Plan to Implement the Joint Ministerial Declaration for Future Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the UK, and tasked ASEAN and UK Economic Officials to manage and update the Work Plan as necessary.
8. The Meeting highlighted that since the endorsement of the Joint Ministerial Declaration, the UK had provided support to ASEAN under each of the 11 priority areas. The UK has delivered 73 activities working across 23 ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of working together to address shared resilience, the need for free and open markets, diverse supply chains, and a deep trading relationship between the UK and ASEAN, in order to build greater supply chain resilience. The Meeting welcomed the findings of the deep dive study into the regional value chain for medical technologies, presented to the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Division in July 2022 and the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting in September 2022. Both of these activities are part of the effective implementation of Accelerated COVID-19 Economic Support (ACES) programme. The Meeting also thanked the UK for inviting the Chair of the G7 Economic Resilience Panel, Lord Mark Sedwill, to present the findings of the Panel to ASEAN Senior Economic Officials. The Meeting noted the recent publication of the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy.
9. The Meeting noted the UK's participation in the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation and the ASEAN Network of Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Experts to share expertise and technical assistance to progress ASEAN priorities in combating intellectual property infringements and counterfeits, especially in the area of e-commerce trade. The Meeting further noted the UK's participation in the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition, encouraging continued engagement with the UK's Competition and Markets Authority following their inclusion in the ASEAN Competition

Conference in December 2021 and the delivery of capacity building regarding competition policy for digital markets in August 2022.

10. The Meeting recognised the critical role of the multilateral trading system centred on the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The Meeting welcomed the successful outcomes of the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) held on 12-17 June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting expressed its optimism that the series of decisions made at the MC12, namely the “Geneva Package”, laid the foundations for future initiatives and has shown there is widespread commitment from members to work to enhance the WTO’s effectiveness. There was agreement that there is now the momentum, the focus, and the foundations to build on these outcomes. The WTO’s members now need to capitalise on this moment and start laying the groundwork to ensure a fruitful MC13, which will help reinvigorate the WTO and improve the trust of the global community in the multilateral trading system. The Meeting also reiterated its support for a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, free, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, whilst also highlighting the need to reform the WTO to ensure it remains effective in its operation, fit-for-purpose and forward looking. The UK and ASEAN will work together to encourage compromise and build consensus.
11. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to promote regulatory excellence in ASEAN. The Meeting welcomed the findings of the “Adoption of International Standards in ASEAN” report by the British Standards Institute, and thanked the UK for the workshop with the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) and encouraged the UK’s continued participation in the group’s regular meetings. The Meeting noted the UK’s longstanding support of the ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network and noted the special project exploring learning from the pandemic and future opportunities for regulatory reform in the region, including through new technology such as digital consultation to improve effectiveness and simplicity of regulation to enable business growth and trade.
12. The Meeting looked forward to harnessing the Digital Innovation Partnership to drive the growth of our digital economies under three thematic pillars: Digital Economy Business Partnerships; Digital Trade Policy, Regulation and Standards, and; Digital Government Transformation and Digital Inclusion. The Meeting welcomed the ASEAN-UK Digital Dialogue, held on 8 September 2022, which helped facilitate public and private sector collaboration on digital innovation and technology.
13. The Meeting noted the UK’s significant contribution to ASEAN in tackling climate change. The Meeting welcomed British International Investment (BII) investment of up to £500 million in the Indo-Pacific and noted that it will be reviewing investment opportunities in the Philippines and Indonesia amongst others, focussing on climate finance investments. The Meeting also noted that the UK has committed up to £107 million to the ASEAN Green Catalytic Finance Facility – fulfilling one of our flagship COP26

commitments. The Meeting welcomed the delivery of the ASEAN-UK Sustainable Leadership in Infrastructure Course and noted that the course was designed specifically with ASEAN's priorities in mind, as set out in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025. The Meeting also highlighted other areas of cooperation that ASEAN and the UK will continue to build on, such as financial services, women's economic empowerment, and support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

14. The Meeting exchanged views with the United Kingdom-ASEAN Business Council (UKABC) and noted the briefing by the UKABC on the recent economic activities between the private sectors from the UK and ASEAN including, the ASEAN Financial Literacy Conference and the UK-ASEAN Business Forum, among others. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the invaluable efforts by the UKABC to further improve collaboration between the private sectors between ASEAN and the UK and looked forward to continued collaboration.
15. The Meeting expressed its support for Indonesia's G20 Presidency under the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" and Thailand as host of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) under the theme "Open. Connect. Balance.". The Meeting noted that these processes provide a unique opportunity for all participating countries/economies to jointly advance the collective global and regional agenda and efforts to bring peace, prosperity and sustainable and inclusive development to all our peoples.
16. The Meeting reflected on the success of the first full year of ASEAN-UK cooperation now that the UK is an ASEAN Dialogue Partner. The Meeting highlighted the UK's commitment to deliver impactful, tangible results through our ASEAN-UK partnership, enabling economic growth in the ASEAN region and strengthening ASEAN-UK trade ties for the benefit of our business communities and people.