

Building a New Scotland

Our marine sector in an independent Scotland

Easy Read Version

Introduction



Scotland's marine sector is our sea, coast, and freshwater environments. It includes the plants and animals that live in them, and the industries and people who use them.



The marine sector brings economic, social, and environmental benefits to Scotland.



Our seas, coasts and islands are part of our identity and way of life. Our marine industries create jobs that help our coastal and island communities to thrive.



Scotland's marine sector can benefit us all if we have the powers to manage it. This paper says how we could do this with independence.

Importance of the marine sector in Scotland



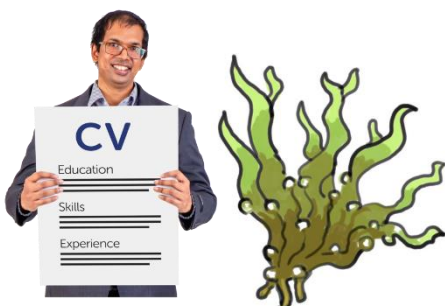
The marine sector supports Scotland's economy through the natural resources it provides. It helps to grow the Scottish economy.



Our seas are nearly 6 times larger than the land area of Scotland.



The marine sector is important to Scotland. In 2021 Scottish salmon was the UK's biggest food export. Export means things made in one country but sold in another country.



Scotland also has growing marine tourism and seaweed sectors. These help to create more jobs in many coastal and island communities.



Scotland's seas already provide wind and other forms of renewable energy. This would provide a clean and secure energy supply in the future.



Our marine environment is important. It has many different plants and animals including different types of seabirds and seaweed.



Scotland has a strong record in protecting our marine environment. However, more is needed to tackle climate change and the loss of living things such as plants, animals, and birds.



We are working with communities to strengthen marine protection. We want to prepare for and reverse climate change.

The limits of the current system?



The UK Government makes some decisions on the marine sector across the whole UK. Those decisions are not always the best decisions for the marine sector in Scotland.



Scotland left the EU even though most voters in Scotland did not want to. This led to:



- Scotland having fewer fishing opportunities for some types of fish.



- New or higher costs for exporting to the EU.



- The loss of freedom of movement, reducing access to workers for the seafood industry. It can be harder for people from the EU to move to, or stay in, our coastal and island communities.



Other important legal powers for Scotland's marine sector are also under UK Government control.



This includes being able to make agreements with other countries or international organisations to help Scottish interests.



Because of that, Scotland cannot agree more new deals for our marine sector at an international level.



Scottish priorities like salmon may be seen as less important than other UK interests in UK free trade discussions.



The UK Government also has very different views on issues like marine environment protections and marine funding.



The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government cannot always stop these being applied to Scotland.

Scotland's marine sector and independence



Independence would allow The Scottish Government and Parliament to make key decisions about the future of Scotland's marine sector.



Scotland would continue to improve the marine sector and make changes for Scotland's needs.



With independence, Scotland would be able to apply to join the EU. This would give access to the biggest single market in the world.



Our seafood businesses, coastal communities and marine science sector would benefit from the freedom of movement within the EU.



As an EU member state, Scotland would be able to help make EU laws that affect the marine sector.



We would be able to speed up the move to renewable energy in the sea and grow the blue economy.



Blue economy or ocean economy are economic activities linked with the oceans and seas.



We would be able to agree a fair share of EU funding to invest in our seafood industry, our coastal communities, and our marine science sector.



Scotland would have a voice on the world stage. We would be able to make agreements at international level. We would work with other countries on marine plans.



Our marine sector is a great opportunity. We look forward to discussing the best way forward for the sector and for Scotland.



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