

## **Case Study**

### **Seabed Leasing for Aquaculture**

Aquaculture is the “farming” of aquatic species, including fish, shellfish and seaweed. It is an important part of the Scottish economy, supporting around 8000 jobs across the country, often in more remote regions. With the ongoing growth in industries such as seaweed cultivation for food, health and packaging, managing aquaculture leasing fairly and sustainably across the country is an important task.

Crown Estate Scotland manages the seabed and half the foreshore across Scotland, with over 560 seabed sites leased to operators to farm fin and shellfish. It also licences seaweed harvesting at small scales, in consultation with organisations such as NatureScot.



Although Crown Estate Scotland does not play a role in regulating the aquaculture industry, it does invest in research and enabling activity to contribute to sustainability. A recent commissioned report on seaweed cultivation identified the potential economic benefits to coastal communities, and provided a roadmap for the sustainable development of the industry.

Ensuring that seabed leasing is done equitably is also important to the ongoing success of aquaculture. Crown Estate Scotland is undertaking a review of terms to

support future development of the industry. The results of this review are expected to be available in January 2022.

## **CASE STUDY**

### **Community management at Tobermory Harbour**

Long-term options such as transfer or delegation sit alongside the tried and tested model of leasing and licensing areas of seabed to organisations with statutory regulating powers in the marine environment. Under current arrangements, leases for up to 150 years can be granted, giving long term security to facilitate and enable investment and sustainable development of coastal communities.

One example of a successful management approach is Tobermory Harbour. Tobermory is a busy fishing and pleasure boat port on the north side of the Isle of Mull, which acts as a stepping stone to many of the other Hebridean Islands and West coast communities. Founded in 1983, the Tobermory Harbour Association is a community owned hub that manages and maintains many of the facilities within the harbour.



Building on many years of partnership work by Tobermory Harbour Association staff and volunteers, The Crown Estate, and now the team at Crown Estate Scotland, a thriving and sustainable business has been established, culminating in the Harbour Association applying for and being granted statutory powers to become a Harbour Authority, whilst remaining a community-run and community-driven organisation.

The 2017 Harbour Empowerment Order grants statutory powers security to the Tobermory Harbour Association, and provides them the capacity to make decisions benefiting the local area. This management arrangement is replicated across Scotland, whereby Crown Estate Scotland manages the landlord responsibility for the seabed alongside a statutory harbour authority providing the regulatory framework for safe operation of marine activities within the area.



## **CASE STUDY**

### **Pilot Scheme Management Agreement**

The Local Management Pilots Scheme was launched in 2018 by Crown Estate Scotland to explore different methods of managing assets, empowering communities and giving people more say in decisions that impact the land, foreshore and sea near where they live.

One of the successful applicants to the Pilot Scheme was the Forth District Salmon Fisheries Board (Forth DSFB). This is a statutory organisation formed in 1868, with a remit to protect and improve fisheries within the Forth region. It is formed of a Board elected by members who have fishing rights across the area.



In 2020, Forth DSFB signed an agreement with Crown Estate Scotland, which will see them take on extra responsibility over salmon fishing rights across the area. The change of management will allow for more areas to be proactively managed for both fishing and recreation, with resulting economic and environmental benefits.

Part of the agreement was funding from Crown Estate Scotland to support a new project officer employed by Forth DSFB. With this extra capacity, the Board will manage the collection of rent for the current fishing rights leases, and manage new lease applications. Forth DSFB will also work proactively with other groups to open up new fishing possibilities, and provide further opportunities for the local community and for tourism to the region.