The Scottish Coastal Forum (SCF) was set up in 1996 as a national-level stakeholder engagement forum, committed to facilitating communication between stakeholders to support integrated management of coastal (and, subsequently, marine) resources.

**Does the Bill allow Crown Estate Scotland, or a delegated manager, to appropriately manage the Scottish assets?**

The SCF submitted its views in March 2017 to the public consultation process for the long-term management of The Crown Estate in Scotland. Notwithstanding the underlying aims envisaged by The Smith Commission, the Forum suggested that revenue generated by Scottish marine and coastal assets should support a bespoke mechanism for funding marine planning and coastal management around Scotland.

From a practical perspective, the SCF considered that an approach that retained the management of marine and coastal assets at a national level was probably the best option for enabling our suggestion. We noted that whilst this approach had limitations in relation to the delivery of The Smith Commission’s recommendations, it enabled a long-term and sustainable way to support the Scottish Government’s ability to implement a network of 11 Scottish Marine Regions and their Marine Planning Partnerships. These Partnerships are intended to develop detailed Regional Marine Plans to complement the strategic policies for sustainable economic growth outlined in the Scottish National Marine Plan, published in 2015. The first two such Partnerships, for the Clyde and Shetland Marine Regions, enable representation of important local interests during the process of Regional Marine Plan development and thus go some considerable way towards achieving the underlying aims envisaged by the Smith Commission.

The SCF welcomes the intention to consider other, non-economic aspects of asset management in the new arrangements. The Bill’s presumption against the sale of marine and coastal assets should avoid fragmentation of the asset base and devolved management done within nationally-agreed priorities and policies, e.g. the Scottish National Marine Plan, should also lead to a more integrated approach to the long-term sustainable use of our marine and coastal resources.

However, the ‘case-by-case’ approach envisaged by the Bill’s provisions offers the prospect of uncertainty and inconsistency of approach in different geographic areas across the country, which would not be welcome. There needs to be oversight in relation to ensuring that national policies and objectives are met. It is also unlikely that it would do better than what has been put in place, on an interim basis, to retain a consistent basis for the management of the assets and to reduce duplication of effort amongst those dealing with them.
Are the powers to allow the transfer of the management function appropriate?
The Scottish Coastal Forum has no comment to make on the powers allowing the transfer of the management function.

Are the managers’ powers and duties as listed in the Bill appropriate?
The Scottish Coastal Forum has no comment to make on the proposals for the managers’ powers and duties as listed in the Bill.

Should any additional power or function of the Scottish Crown Estate not currently provided for in the Bill be included?
The Scottish Coastal Forum wishes to reiterate its view that whatever management option is decided-upon, the revenue stream generated by marine-related assets – or, at least, a considerable proportion of it - should support a bespoke mechanism for funding a Scotland-wide programme of marine planning and an integrated approach to coastal management in local communities.

Any additional information
At present, Marine Planning Partnerships are operating in the Shetland and Clyde Marine Regions, with Orkney having been identified as the next to be established. However, Marine Scotland has made it clear that the extension of the network beyond these areas is limited by financial factors, amongst others. A defined and sustainable revenue stream from marine and coastal assets to support the setting-up and running of the Marine Planning Partnerships would secure the financial support for the current entities and enable the phased rolling-out of the others to be completed at a faster pace than currently envisaged.

Scotland has been in the vanguard of European approaches to marine planning in the last decade but the true benefits of marine planning, which would include the alignment of many of the objectives set out for the sustainable management of the assets of The Crown Estate in Scotland, can only be realised with adequate and appropriate investment in the associated processes. There is a risk that poorly-resourced Regional Marine Plans, or delays to the rolling-out of this innovative and ground-breaking approach, will result in Scotland failing to achieve its desired goals of balancing multi-sectoral interests in meeting national goals relating to food and energy security or delivering overall improvements in ocean governance that could optimise resource use for the wider benefit of society.

The Scottish Coastal Forum remains committed to the opinion that funds raised from Scotland’s marine and coastal assets should be directed towards supporting their successful and sustainable management, for the benefit of Scotland as a whole and as part of our overall marine planning process.