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Mairi Gougeon MSP

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Finlay Carson MSP  
Convener of Rural Affairs, Islands and  
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24 January 2023

Dear Finlay,

**Post Budget 2023-24 Scrutiny - follow-up information**

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide an update on the draft 2023-2024 Budget at the session on 11 January 2023.

As I set out in my opening statement, the 2023-2024 Budget takes place in the most turbulent economic and financial context that most people can remember, and we have chosen a progressive path: to invest in our people, our economy and our public services.

The spend of the Rural Affairs and Islands portfolio supports some of our most fragile communities, businesses and sectors at a time when they are continuing to feel the effects of multiple shocks: EU Exit, recovering from the pandemic and, of course, dealing with the significant challenges of the cost crisis.

Some £650 million will continue to be invested into the rural economy, providing much needed economic stability. Our commitment to supporting the ambitions for our islands remains strong, with £8.5 million allocated for the islands programme and the carbon neutral islands project. As I have discussed with Committee previously, we continue to try to break down the silos and engage and collaborate with other portfolios across Scottish Government.

I appreciate the Committee's particular interest in the £33m of ring fenced funding that was put towards the 2022-23 Emergency Budget Review from my portfolio. As I

outlined at the session these ring fenced funds do not form part of the RAI budget for 2023-2024, however the Deputy First Minister has confirmed they will return to the portfolio in future years. As they have not been returned for the 2023-2024 financial year, I will be discussing when the fund will be returned as part of future budget setting.

At Committee I agreed to provide more detailed background into various areas, these are included in annex A. In addition, I also advised I would provide further context around smaller schemes. I have included a table in annex B outlining this information. I will also follow up on the other areas discussed at the session when the information becomes available.

The Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings will respond to the Committee directly about the impact on rural housing for the Scottish Government mandate to ensure all buildings are energy efficient by 2025.

As you can see from the 2023-2024 Budget and our discussions, my priorities remain to support rural, island and coastal communities and businesses to flourish and thrive under the most difficult of circumstances. I trust this letter and the information contained, provide the additional detail to support the Committee's scrutiny.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mairi Gougeon', written in a cursive style.

**MAIRI GOUGEON**

## **Annex A: Follow-up information/actions**

### **Agriculture**

**Action:** Provide a breakdown of the what is involved in Agricultural Transformation – the budget line seems to have a reduction from £45m to £5m (is it now spread over a couple of budget lines).

**Response:**

The Agricultural Transformation (Programme) Fund (ATF) is intended to underpin support for the agricultural sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve efficiency and enhance Scotland's natural environment through the period of transition.

As I mentioned at the session, the full amount of the ATF capital funds (£5m) was allocated to Sustainable Agriculture Capital Grant Scheme (SACGS) for financial year 2022-2023, and following my announcement on 20 January 2023 I can also confirm that this year's £5 million ATF will extend support for slurry storage for 2023-2024 [Investing in sustainable agriculture - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot). This support will help the sector meet the regulatory requirements introduced to improve the storage of slurry and digestate on farms.

When the ATF was launched in 2021-2022 it had an allocation of £45m, with £20m of that made up of Financial Transactions (FTs). That funding was not spent in 2021-2022 as the impact of COVID-19 made it difficult to progress a loans scheme for capital projects. Subsequently FTs have not been included in future years budgets for the portfolio because an FT based scheme could not compete with existing loan products from commercial lenders, and the Scottish Government would not wish to enter into competition with those lenders.

As Committee knows, I have been working closely with the sector on the transition to net zero so that particular budget line should not be looked at in isolation, it should be viewed as part of range of activities and initiatives that support the Agricultural vision. For example, in 2023-2024 over £44m is earmarked for the transition – through National Test Programme, Agricultural Reform Programme and Agricultural Transformation Fund – to support the transformation of how farming and food production is supported in Scotland, helping it to become a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture and to support the industry to achieve statutory emissions target.

**Action:** Provide information on each of the schemes as set out in the Bute House agreement and Programme for Government for 'Organic Farming'

**Response:**

Support for conversion to, and maintenance of, organic farmland is available through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS), which seeks to promote land management practices which protect and enhance Scotland's natural heritage, improve water quality, manage flood risk and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

As announced on 20 January 2023, the area cap will be suspended for AECS 2023 applications for the conversion to and maintenance of organic farmland. Businesses may apply to support more than the current cap of 1000 ha through AECS, including more than the 300 ha cap for arable land, improved grassland and vegetable and fruit land. This step signals the Scottish Government's clear support for organic farming as a nature friendly approach and is consistent with the Vision for Agriculture.

In addition to this funding, support is provided to the organics sector through the £5m Recovery Fund awarded to Scotland Food & Drink. The Scottish Government has also funded an Organic Development Manager post.

The Soil Analysis option is available to all farms under Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) through the National Test Programme (NTP). This encourages businesses to follow best business practice, to spend time analysing the residual nutrient levels, pH level, phosphate, potash and carbon content of their soils. The supplied data must also have recommendations that will allow them to plan nutrient applications for their next crop based on Scottish conditions.

NTP was launched in 2022 and will deliver Scottish Government investment of up to £51m over three years. It is based on, and informed by, the work and recommendations of the Farmer-led Groups, particularly to ensure we begin with tackling the most urgent needs, and will create a base upon which to build a whole-farm low carbon approach.

Regarding your question relating to participation payments for organic production, I understand these are being introduced in the Republic of Ireland in 2023-2024 in line with their aim to increase the amount of land farmed organically from 2% to 7.5% by 2027. We will keep appraised of developments in the Republic of Ireland to better understand how participation payments are delivered and the benefits of this approach.

**Action: Provide further information on the slurry storage element of AECS:**

- **Outline of the criteria for funding**
- **Will it be realistic for farmers from Orkney to the Borders to apply for that funding**
- **Will funding for slurry storage be a higher percentage of the AECs funding**

**Response:**

AECS seeks to provide targeted support to land managers to undertake specific actions on environmental management, including for slurry storage.

Support for slurry storage via AECS has been targeted to farms with livestock which are situated within SEPA priority catchment areas, helping to improve water quality and mitigate climate change. We have invested £7.4m in slurry storage via AECS to date.

Applicants are required to prepare a Manure & Slurry management plan and a drainage plan for their steading.

As noted above, in 2023-2024 I have widened access to slurry storage funding through use of the Agricultural Transformation Fund (ATF). This fund has previously been used to underpin support for the agricultural sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve efficiency and enhance Scotland's natural environment through the period of transition.

This means that the £5m budget allocation for the fund will be used to extend support for slurry storage across Scotland nationally, opening up the availability of support to all areas (other than in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones) where it is appropriate to do so.

This will surpass the previous targeted support that has been available under AECS and will help the sector meet the regulatory requirements introduced to improve the storage of slurry and digestate on farms. As well as tackling climate change, by moving to a more environmentally sustainable approach, farmers and crofters can help the long-term economic sustainability and resilience of their businesses.

To simplify administration, this support will be accessed using the existing slurry storage option which is available under AECS.

**Action: Provide information on what feedback / support the farmers receive after soil test/carbon audit tests take place through the National Test Programme.**

**Response:**

The NTP - via Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) - Carbon Audit and Soil Analysis both require advice and recommendations to be supplied by qualified advisors. For carbon audits they must have been reviewed by, and have recommendations from, a Farm Business Adviser Accreditation Scheme for Scotland (FBAASS) adviser/associate as to actions that can be taken that will reduce emissions.

Soil analysis documentation must include details on pH level, phosphate, potash and carbon, with recommendations that will allow our customers to efficiently plan nutrient applications for their next crop based on Scottish conditions. By including recommendations rather than just data we have ensured that our customers not only have the information to meaningfully make a difference to their business, but also have a climate change impact.

Additionally, officials are working on arrangements to contact those who have recently completed their carbon audits through the NTP to highlight what further support is available through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS). Following the completion of soil analysis, it is recommended that businesses are directed to the FAS specialist advice, which provides businesses with specialist advice to develop soil and nutrient management plans.

**Action: Provide information on the funding for the FAS.**

**Response:**

FAS facilitates access to largely free, high quality generic and bespoke advice to the agricultural sector and in 2023-24 the budget is £5m.

In 2022-23 it attracted over 3,000 participants to their events, over 250k views of their videos, over 638 advice line enquiries, and over 1m website views.

The service has evolved into a concept well placed to adapt, keep pace with such challenges and through a range of means – including publications, webinars, peer support groups, podcasts etc – it delivers its advice. Some examples include:

- A range of low and no cost ideas to help farmers identify, support and improve biodiversity on their land;
- Awareness of woodland planting and the benefits for businesses, carbon sequestration and habitat;
- Ideas to help farmers manage carbon on their farm and adapt to a changing climate, making their business more resilient to future changes;
- Business management advice such as benchmarking, using data and resource efficient farming as well as responding to specific business challenges and developments including international trading relationships, markets, increasing environmental concerns and public demands, coupled with a revision to subsidy support.

FAS also delivers carbon audits and, as I mentioned at the session, in 2022 they received a surge in demand for carbon audits, exceeding their target of 250 and delivering 322 within four months.

**Action: Provide information on who received 2022 funding / awards made for Knowledge Innovation Transfer Fund (KTIF)**

**Response:**

Since 2015, Scottish Government has supported 52 projects under the Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund totalling approximately £8m and supporting around 20 different organisations.

In addition to the Monitor Farm Programme discussed during the session, in 2022-2023 the Scottish Government has also awarded approximately £366k of KTIF funding to seven projects (outlined below). Projects must draw down on their grant in arrears, and have begun to submit claims, all of which are assumed to finish on budget.

**Funded projects 2022-2023:**

**Project 1:** ‘Data driven decisions in Potatoes’ facilitated by Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS). KTIF Award - £21,244. This is a knowledge transfer based project.

**Overview:** The project seeks to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Scottish ware growers. To support potato growers to become more productive and sustainable, reducing their impact on the environment/biodiversity.

**Project 2:** ‘Trustable IoT’ facilitated by Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC). KTIF Award - £62,832. This is an innovation based project.

**Overview:** The project seeks to develop set of open source standardised processes for IoT (Internet of Things) sensors and digital devices that measure and triangulate biodiversity baselines and improvements.

**Project 3:** ‘Reducing Inputs’ facilitated by Soil Association (Scotland). KTIF Award - £18,000. This is a knowledge transfer based project.

Overview: The project aims to inspire and inform farmers and growers to reduce their use of external inputs including synthetic nitrogen-based fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides; to reduce carbon footprints, tackle disease resistance, improve soil health and ecological performance, protect natural capital and boost financial resilience.

**Project 4:** ‘Decarbonising Scottish Malting Barley production’ facilitated by Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS). KTIF Award - £ 37,287. This is a knowledge transfer based project.

Overview: This project’s primary aim is to raise the awareness and understanding amongst farmer producers of the emissions associated with producing malting barley.

**Project 5:** ‘Agroecology: enabling the transition’ facilitated by Nourish Scotland. KTIF Award - £112,500. This is a knowledge transfer based project.

Overview: This project builds the previous project ‘Agroecology - facilitating mindset change’ and its design builds on the learning from that programme. It aims to widen and deepen understanding of agroecology specifically through a farmer to farmer/crofter to crofter cooperative learning programme.

**Project 6:** ‘Wader Friendly Farmers: Building a Stronger Network’ facilitated by Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). KTIF Award - £27,825. This is a knowledge transfer based project.

Overview: The project will look to increase the number of farmers and landowners who are engaged with the Working for Waders Initiative, increase the area of land positively managed for waders and improve data collection from the projects.

**Project 7:** ‘Farm Carbon Storage Network’ facilitated by Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC). KTIF Award - £85,970. This is an innovation based project.

Overview: This project seeks to develop a representative farmer group that will estimate their farm carbon stock using soil testing and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) surveys.

**Action:** Provide information on current Small Farm Grants pilot (and if possible advise what qualifies as a small farm)

**Response:**

As I mentioned at the session, we are working with Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) to understand how we can better support small farms. Part of this will also involve working in partnership with small farm stakeholders on the scope of the future pilot. The Scottish Government will provide further information to Committee about this work in due course.

The Small Farms Grants Scheme currently identifies a small farm as 'a holding that was between three and 30 hectares of eligible agricultural area' - as defined in article 4(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013.

## Islands

**Action: Provide further information on cross-portfolio working in relation to employment and retention**

**Response:**

In terms of projects supporting training and skills, in Year Two of the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF), up to £20m was invested across 33 projects to continue to support individuals who need to upskill or retrain and offering specific assistance in sectors affected by Covid-19, Brexit or the transition to net zero. Through one such project, Treòir | Voar | Virr, Fèisean nan Gàidheal was afforded the opportunity to strengthen links with island schools, island-based freelance artists, and in partnership with West Highland College UHI to offer island-specific arts and culture related activities in primary schools. At community level, feedback indicates the project benefited all involved, creating employment and training opportunities for freelance tutors following a very difficult period for the arts sector.

Additionally, we are working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland to support the delivery of the Island Skills Project which will develop and deliver a targeted, place-based approach to skills development in the islands. The project will explore how best to identify local needs and employment priorities, and to then signpost and fund skills solutions that meet these needs in order to keep people in, or allow people to move to, locations that are suffering from acute population decline.

As Committee will be aware, the Islands Growth Deal was signed in Kirkwall on 20 January 2023 by the Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise, the UK Government's Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Leaders of Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. This is a significant milestone, with each government investing £50 million in the Deal, split evenly across each island authority, and regional partners leveraging a further £293m to deliver a Deal worth almost £400m.

The 16 projects and programmes that will be delivered span a number of areas including: low carbon; ports infrastructure; housing; skills; sustainable tourism; creative industries; space industries, food and drink and business innovation. Islands Deal partners anticipate the Deal will directly deliver up to 1,300 new jobs, aimed at retaining and attracting young people to address demographic challenges in the islands, and supporting the islands to be among the first places in the UK to achieve net zero. It will create the foundation for an innovation-focused recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and showcase the islands' outstanding natural environment, heritage, culture and creativity to the world.

The Scottish Government has also committed, with oversight from the Ministerial Population Taskforce, to developing a Talent Attraction and Migration Service for Scotland – including our island communities. Brought together, this will improve Scotland's ability to attract and recruit workers from outside of Scotland with the skills



that our economy will need in the future, and support international workers in the migration and relocation process. The service aims to launch in 2023.

**Action: Provide information on the Cost Crisis funding of £1.4m and what the money will be/has been used for**

**Response:**

The six island local authorities are all in the process of finalising or utilising their allocations from the Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund. Further detail of some of the activities undertaken by each local authority is provided below:

*Shetland Islands Council* is using some of their allocation to trial free breakfasts for junior and high school children until the end of March. Kitchen staff will provide a hot drink, a choice of cereals, toast and fruit for pupils in the mornings before the start of the school day and will be available to more than 1400 pupils across the islands. They are also utilising some of the funding to support their Winter Activities Fund which enables organisations to provide activities, where it might otherwise be difficult to do so, due to higher operating costs this winter. It has also allowed for additional hours to be provided for the Anchor for Families team, to support households to access support and funding through the cost crisis.

*Orkney Islands Council* is using some of their allocation to support Third Sector organisations with the impact of the higher electricity costs. Third sector groups are critical to supporting families and individuals through the winter and are themselves facing existential threats in the cost crisis.

*Comhairle nan Eilean Siar* has added its allocation to already identified funding to support community groups' work to assist with current cost pressures. Whilst some of this support will be by way of direct payments to low-income households and those in receipt of Council Tax Reductions, Comhairle Members and community groups have also highlighted other initiatives which would provide valuable support within communities. This could be through support for foodbanks, provision of vouchers, warm spaces for people to meet up, meals, and the Comhairle has opened a portal for applications.

*Argyll and Bute Council* is finalising arrangements and has indicated it will build on previous approaches to distribute its allocation as soon as possible. This will centre on supporting low-income households on the islands (in excess of 1,000 households) and other specific support to access food.

*North Ayrshire Council* is building on existing participatory approaches to allocate funding to third and voluntary sector organisations to extend activity to support access to food, energy support and transport costs. The Authority will work with locality partnerships to oversee and monitor the impact of the funding. Details are being agreed locally and will be announced in the coming weeks.

Final decisions are to be confirmed by *The Highland Council*, but they have indicated they will build on the existing funding the Council has allocated to support low income and vulnerable households. The Council is also inviting proposals from the island communities in respect of the capital element of the Fund provided by the Scottish

Government. These proposals are likely to include some small capital items for community halls and larger capital investments.

**Action: Provide an update on Carbon Neutral Islands**

**Response:**

I updated Parliament during a debate on 19 January 2023 with regards to the Carbon Neutral Islands Project. The debate focused on the 'First Steps Towards Decarbonisation' and a report was also published setting out work of the project to date.

As set out in the [report](#), work is progressing on each of the six islands included in the project. Our delivery partner, Community Energy Scotland (CES) are carrying out in-depth carbon audits on each island and supporting communities in developing Community Climate Change Action Plans. This will ensure that island voices are embedded in the project as we move towards implementing decarbonisation actions. Within each community a steering group, made up of various key stakeholders, has been established. They have appointed a local anchor organisation and a Community Development Officer whose role is to engage with the community, whilst supporting the auditing process and development of the Action Plans. This will ensure a wide range of views are taken into account.

The project also has a schools element, to help engage young islanders on climate change and empower them to apply this knowledge within their own islands. Further, the project has developed an international strategy to share and learn from other countries. So far, conversations have taken place with Malta, the Faroe Islands, the Falkland Islands, Ireland, Finland, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

The work carried out to date has been important in laying the foundations of the project, whilst taking the time to ensure alignment with existing efforts and to ensure island communities are engaged in the process.

Going forward, it is critical that all island communities benefit from the opportunities the transition to net zero presents.

**Marine**

**Action: Provide detailed calculation for the £62m shortfall for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**

**Response:**

Under the EMFF the UK had €243m for the duration of the programme (2014-2020), of which Scotland received 46% (€107.7m). Together with associated indirect assistance, this equated to £150m for Scotland over the course of the programme. This, however, represented less than 2% of the overall available funding, despite Scotland having 13% of EU aquaculture production (including 94% of total EU salmon production), 9% of the sea fisheries landings and the fourth largest EU sea area to manage.

The £62m per year figure is an estimation of what would be – based on Scotland’s extensive sea area and marine assets, and had the UK Government chosen to prioritise negotiations in this area when the UK was a member state – a more equitable Scottish share of the overall EMFF. Noting, by way of comparison, that France received €588 million in EMFF funding between 2014 and 2020, despite having a smaller core sea area than Scotland. The figure is based on the budget for the EMFF fund.

As outlined during the session, EMFF has since been replaced by the €6.1bn European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) which has a different and expanded scope, and so calculations on potential shares under the two funds are not directly comparable.

What is clear, however, is that the UK Government’s historic pattern of deprioritisation and underinvestment in Scotland’s marine sector is now being repeated post-Brexit. The UK Government first awarded only a single-year settlement of only £14m in resource funds to Scotland for marine and fisheries funding in 2021-2022. At its subsequent spending review, it announced a further £14m p/a for the next three years, also in resource funds. If we were still in the EU, we would have the certainty and flexibility of a funding programme covering seven years, allowing for long-term planning and investment in marine and fisheries – rather than the short-term three years of the UK Spending Review.

**Action: Advise committee when Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) consultation has been published**

**Response:**

Following analysis of the consultation responses, we are currently finalising the Scottish Government’s response to the various consultation questions, and expect to be in a position to confirm publication date for the REM consultation reports shortly.

**Action: Provide further information on risk management / how intelligence reports are prioritised**

**Response:**

We have used the National Intelligence Model, developed by the Police, as the basis for our risk-based approach. This enables us to incorporate best practise from policing approaches into our Compliance work. The infographic provides an overview of how the model is used in Marine Scotland:

## How the NIM is incorporated within MSC

- Risk Assessment
  - Intelligence
  - Inspections results
  - Catch data
  - Infringement data
  - Targeted Analysis
  - Historic trends
- This list is not exhaustive*



Review of actions taken and priorities to develop future procedures/actions to mitigate or improve performance.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken by comparing levels of non-compliance

Report all data back from actions taken to inform future requirements

- Issues – current non-compliant activity that requires resource to change non-compliant behaviours.
- Risks – expected problem areas that are yet to occur but require mitigations to prevent becoming resource intensive issues.
- Grading of Risks/Issues to prioritise actions according to agreed level of operational action required in line with the model.

The NIM illustrates tiered approach to operational action that requires a varied level of resource and prioritisation to achieve an acceptable resolution.

- Level 1 - Local issues (within single office issues)
- Level 2 - Cross border issues (Multi office issues could be across business areas, or other FA's)
- Level 3 a) Multi-Agency issues  
b) Serious/Organised non-compliance

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### Key aspects:

- It enables us to prioritise and task our land, sea and aerial assets that cover a vast sea area in the most effective way.
- We have the ability to flex and react immediately (both from intelligence and what we observe).
- Evaluation of our intelligence and outcomes enables us to continually improve.
- We have and continue to improve connections with partners interested in similar aspects of enforcement, allowing for the sharing of both the intelligence gathered.

### How this works in practise

- 1) **Information/Data:** All Intelligence reports are triaged as they are received to determine if any require an immediate response in terms of tasking. For those not immediately tasked, these are reviewed weekly and next steps agreed. We receive an average of 53 reports a week from a range of sources: our own assets, such as a fishery office, the UK Fisheries Management Centre, a vessel or an aircraft, or from members of the public, other fishery administrations or other enforcement agencies. The type of information we receive will vary depending on the time of year.
- 2) **Issues/Risk:** The intelligence and information we receive is then assessed alongside the knowledge of historic trends, emerging trends, knowledge from local offices of particular localised/geographical issues and from sources other intelligence and enforcement agencies help to determine the priority issues. The assessment will vary depending on the type of intelligence received. An example of what is considered is provided below:

- Seek to confirm the timing of the alleged incident.
- Satisfy ourselves that this is a potential infringement of the regulations by considering a vessel's nationality, flag state and licences.

- Assess the scale of the alleged incursion both in terms of time and value of any potential illegal fishing e.g. was the vessel fishing for 15 minutes or 5 hours? We do this using several systems including as Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), our partners within the Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC) and any of our available assets.
- Consider if there are mitigating circumstances e.g. poor weather, prior notification of a breakdown, etc.
- Respond in a proportionate manner, which may be immediate if it's assessed to be a high value, high risk situation, or over the following days and weeks if it is a lower risk.

- 3) Operational Actions:** In the instance of a high risk, high priority offence, an asset would be tasked immediately to confirm non-compliant activity has taken place. Once this has been confirmed, enforcement action would follow in line with our operating procedures. In the instance of a lower risk offence, analysis would be undertaken to determine the levels of non-compliance. This would be incorporated in to the ongoing tasking and prioritisation review. Over a month, intelligence reports will result in the specific tasking of an average of:
- 35 boardings from marine assets
  - Around 12-16 surveillance flights
  - 89 boardings by coastal officers

However, these figure can fluctuate throughout the year for a number of reasons, and will be a mix of ad hoc opportunistic boardings along with specific targeted inspections depending on the operational priorities.

**4) Review and Evaluation -** We review and analyse outcomes and:

- review whether our response was proportionate;
- consider if the action taken was successful and whether we are confident there will be a change in behaviour moving forward;
- look to see if there any gaps in data or information that need to be addressed;
- acknowledge if there were any unexpected challenges that need resolved or escalated; and
- discuss whether there is anything that we could have done better/could do better by speaking to all parties involved in the operational work stream. This can include other Fishery Administrations or enforcement agencies.

**Examples of intelligence gathering and tasking:**

*Discarding:*

As a result of data analysis of the catch and landing data vessels were suspected to be breaching the landing obligation. Due to behavioural changes of fishers in the presence of our Marine assets and during boardings our aerial asset was deployed to gather further evidence, which then allowed our coastal officers to conduct interviews of those suspected. This resulted in a Fixed Penalty Notice, which was subsequently paid.

*Marine Protected Areas:*

Following our own intelligence and analysis suggesting a vessel was strategically operating within South Arran MPA, our aerial asset was tasked to locate and determine the vessels activity. This resulted in the gathering of the evidence required to prove that the vessel was indeed fishing within the MPA. This case was concluded by the coastal officers, with the Master invited for interview and the case reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal.

*Marine Protected Areas:*

We received intelligence that a vessel was fishing within a MPA (where fishing is prohibited), and local officers were dispatched to gather evidence from land. This didn't uncover sufficient evidence but was prioritised for follow up. A Marine Protection Vessel was then tasked to the area with an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to gather evidence that fishing activity had taken place. Due to vessel tracking technology available we were able to locate the exact area, confirm that fishing activity had in fact taken place by the damage under the water and were able to gather sufficient evidence to report this case to the Crown Office.

**Action: Provide information on projects and awards funded through the Marine Fund Scotland scheme so far this year**

**Response:**

In 2022-23 60 grant awards have been made to date through the Marine Fund Scotland, and information of each is published on the Marine Fund Scotland webpages which can be found following this link: [Marine Fund Scotland 2022-2023: beneficiaries - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

**Action: Provide information on the £2.2m saving as part of the Emergency Budget Review (EBR) (enhanced workforce controls and reduced research)**

**Response:**

The Marine Scotland budget was increased in 2022-23 and whilst there has been an increase in the staff and research activities that underpin the budget uplift, the rate of growth is lower than that previously projected due to the enhanced workforce controls that were instigated in the Scottish Government and a longer lead in required for offshore research projects.

## Annex B

**Action:** Provide information on what is included within the ‘Business Development’ Budget line and other funding to L4.

**Response:**

As discussed at the session, the following table provides information on smaller schemes that sit below level 4 and therefore are not shown in published documents. It is not a comprehensive breakdown of the RAI budget or all schemes.

Rural Affairs and Islands Portfolio		
1. Agricultural Support and Related Services		Schemes / projects / programmes *
Scottish Rural Development Programme - £115.5 million	Business Development Resource	Monitor Farm, Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund, Small Farms, Farm Advisory Service and New Entrants
	Business Development Capital	Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (previously included FPMC)
	Less Favoured Area Support Scheme	no smaller schemes
	Agri Environmental Measures Resource and Capital	no smaller schemes
	Farm Woodland Schemes	Legacy commitments from historic schemes
	Farmland Premium Scheme	
	Farm Woodland Premium Scheme	
	Technical Assistance	no smaller schemes

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<b>2. Rural Services</b>		
<b>Rural Economy and Communities - £1.5 million</b>	Rural Cohesion	Scottish Rural Action, National Rural Mental Health Forum, Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland and Growbiz.
	Support for Agricultural Training (LANTRA)	no smaller schemes
<b>Agricultural and Horticultural Advice and Support - £2.2 million</b>	Public Good Advice	Women in Agriculture, Land Matching Service and Climate Change Initiatives

\*2023-24 allocations for smaller schemes / projects / programmes are still to be determined and confirmed.

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