

Blue Finance 2026

Delivered by OCF

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Financing marine and coastal nature recovery

Wednesday 11 November 2026
One Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London

THE DAY IN FOUR TRACKS

- A** Scaling the market
- B** Blended finance and catalytic capital
- D** Procurement, disclosure and influence
- C** The last mile



Ocean
and Coastal
Futures

Organised by Ocean and Coastal Futures
coastal-futures.net/blue-finance-26
conference@coastms.co.uk

Financing marine and coastal nature recovery

Wednesday 11 November 2026 · One Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London

The investment case for the ocean is made. The live question is why capital is not moving at the pace the coast needs, and how it reaches the places where recovery actually happens. **Blue Finance 2026 puts the people who allocate capital in the same room as the people who deliver in the water**, for one day, to work on that question.

This year the programme focuses on UK waters. Speakers from Australia, and from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's work in the Baltic and Mediterranean regions, bring experience from markets that are further ahead, as examples to test against the UK position. Around 200 delegates are expected from finance, government, project delivery, research and NGOs.

The day is organised around four tracks. Each opens with short presentations from people with a model, evidence or an international comparison to set out, followed by a chaired discussion. Each track sets out one question it aims to answer.

The day at a glance

Draft · timings and content subject to change

08:45	Registration, coffee and exhibition
09:30	Welcome, and ministerial address from the Welsh Government
09:50	Keynote: The Crown Estate
10:05	● Track A Scaling the market
11:00	Two-minute silence for Armistice Day, then coffee
11:30	● Track B Blended finance and catalytic capital
12:45	● Track D Procurement, disclosure and influence
13:05	Lunch
13:50	● Track C The last mile In parallel, Council Room, 13:50 to 14:50: Saltmarsh and coastal risk workshop (places limited)
15:05	Tea
15:25	Report from the saltmarsh workshop
15:35	Closing panel: what has to change for the money to move?
16:25	Close
16:30	Drinks reception (tbc)

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Why now

The UK's marine nature markets are being designed now, and money is starting to move before the rules are settled. Offshore wind developers now have a route to pay for environmental compensation, and marine net gain is still being developed. The Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland have both backed a roadmap for high-integrity marine natural capital markets. Wales is developing a nature finance strategy, and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 made rural affairs and coastal communities an area of competence for strategic authorities. Choices made over the next two years will decide how these markets work and who they reach. Blue Finance 2026 brings together the people making those choices while they can still be shaped.

The conclusions of the day will be published in a short report after the conference, and the programme leaves time in every break to meet investors, funders, developers and project leads.

Opening

08:45	Registration	Coffee and exhibition
09:30	Welcome 20 min	David Tudor , Chief Executive, Ocean and Coastal Futures Liŷr Gruffydd MS , Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability, Welsh Government (video address)
09:50	Keynote 15 min	Andreas Arvanitakis , Director of Nature Opportunities, The Crown Estate

TRACK A · 10:05 TO 11:00

Scaling the market

Building investable natural capital markets for marine nature

The UK has the parts of a marine nature market: seabed landowners mapping where restoration is possible, codes and standards in development, developers facing new obligations, and investors looking for projects. What it lacks is a market in which ready projects and willing capital reliably meet.

The track opens with lessons from Australia, where carbon and nature markets are further developed and legal design has shaped what buyers trust. The panel then brings together the people who own the seabed, measure the outcomes, invest the money and carry the obligations, and asks what each needs from the others. Buyers will only pay at scale for outcomes they can verify, so market integrity and verification run through the discussion.

THE QUESTION

What stops ready projects and willing capital from meeting in UK waters, and who can change that?

10:05	Presentation 10 min	Professor Justine Bell-James , University of Queensland Lessons from Australia's carbon and nature markets
10:15	Presentation 10 min	Beth Siddons , Head of Ocean Finance, Howell Marine Consulting Enabling conditions for a UK marine natural capital market
10:25	Panel 35 min	Chair: tbc 1. Mike Spain , Crown Estate Scotland 2. Gus Fordyce , National Oceanography Centre 3. Eoin Murray , Rebalance Earth 4. Jennifer Godwin , Seabed User and Developer Group The two presenters join for questions.
11:00	Break 30 min	Two-minute silence for Armistice Day, then coffee

Blended finance and catalytic capital

How public, philanthropic and concessional money is used to bring private capital in

Most marine and coastal restoration cannot yet stand on private returns alone. Blended finance uses public, philanthropic and concessional money to carry the risks private investors will not, so that their capital can follow. The approach is established in development finance and in other geographies. The question for the UK is what transfers.

The track opens with the EBRD's experience of building markets in the Baltic and Mediterranean regions. The panel then tests it against UK practice:

- a water company investing in catchment and coastal outcomes, including its work at Southend and Great Yarmouth;
- the view from a global financial group on what it takes for private capital to commit;
- Wales's approach to pooling nature investment through Marine Fund Cymru;
- the part public bodies can play in unlocking private finance.

THE QUESTION

Which uses of public and philanthropic money bring private capital in rather than replacing it, and what would it take to use them in UK waters?

11:30	Framing address 10 min	Adonai Herrera-Martínez , Director, Environment and Sustainability, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Building markets for marine nature: the EBRD's experience in the Baltic and Mediterranean regions
11:40	Panel 65 min	Chair: tbc 1. Jonathan Glerum , Anglian Water 2. Sudip Hazra , MUFG Sustainable Investment Institute 3. Gareth Cunningham , Marine Conservation Society 4. Environment Agency (tbc)

Procurement, disclosure and influence

Financing prevention, not just repair

Most discussion of blue finance is about paying to restore what has been lost. This track looks at the levers that reduce harm in the first place, and at companies paying for nature in their own supply chains: corporate buying power, disclosure regimes and investor influence.

The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) framework is changing what companies report about their impacts and dependencies on nature, including the ocean, and what investors can ask of them. Valerie Pinkerton, who leads TNFD engagement at the Green Finance Institute, sets out what disclosure is beginning to change in seafood and other supply chains. Wietse van der Werf of the Sea Ranger Service then shows what it looks like when companies act, through the partnerships in which Tesco and Nestlé Purina fund marine restoration that his organisation delivers.

THE QUESTION

What makes companies pay for nature in their supply chains, and how can disclosure and buying power change what happens in the water?

12:45	Presentation 10 min	Valerie Pinkerton , Green Finance Institute What nature disclosure is changing in supply chains
12:55	Presentation 10 min	Wietse van der Werf , Founder and CEO, Sea Ranger Service How we work with Tesco and Nestlé Purina to fund marine restoration
13:05	Lunch 45 min	Lunch and exhibition

The last mile

Getting finance to communities and the coast

Capital accumulates at the top, while the people who deliver recovery work at a scale finance is not built to serve. A community group or a local authority may need tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds, where many institutional investors will not consider deals of that size, and due diligence costs much the same whatever the size of the deal. The routes most often proposed are aggregation, intermediaries and public bodies acting as counterparties, and few of these yet exist at sea.

This track hears from the places where the work happens: local authorities developing new ways to value and finance coastal nature, a council-led seagrass token in Plymouth Sound, a community-led marine protected area on Arran, and restoration at Studland Bay. The discussion asks each of them what they need, what kind of money, and from whom.

THE QUESTION

What would it take for finance to reach the organisations delivering recovery on the coast, at the scale they work at?

13:50	Presentation 10 min	Beccy MacDonald-Lofts , Freelancer and LGA Coastal SIG Emerging frameworks to enable investment on the coast
14:00	Presentation 10 min	Kat Deeney , Plymouth City Council, and Professor Siân Rees , University of Plymouth The Seagrass Token: from pilot to scale in Plymouth Sound
14:10	Projects in the water 20 min	Áine Purcell-Milton, Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) Financing a community-led marine protected area David Brown, Restore Nature Delivery Manager, National Trust Purbeck Estate Restoring Studland Bay seagrass meadows
14:30	Discussion 35 min	Chair: Kat Bruce , Protected Areas Foundation Beccy MacDonald-Lofts, Freelancer and LGA Coastal SIG Kat Deeney, Plymouth City Council Áine Purcell-Milton, COAST David Brown, National Trust Purbeck Estate

WORKSHOP · 13:50 TO 14:50 · COUNCIL ROOM, IN PARALLEL WITH TRACK C

Saltmarsh and coastal risk: who pays, and how do we go to scale?

Convened by Athena Blue, The Crown Estate and UKCEH · Facilitator: Kirsty Schneeberger MBE

Saltmarsh can reduce flood and erosion risk, support wildlife and fisheries, and help protect coastal infrastructure. Building on the UK Saltmarsh Finance Day at Rochester, this workshop asks:

- how those who benefit from restored saltmarsh (insurers, water companies, infrastructure owners and flood authorities) can recognise and pay for that value;
- how to build up from project-by-project funding to an investment strategy at national scale, with a flagship portfolio;
- how to build in benefit to local communities.

The session runs for 60 minutes in five parts: (1) the ecology and the opportunity map; (2) projects in the water; (3) risk-holder perspectives, including insurance; (4) a facilitated discussion on the route to scale; (5) capturing conclusions for the report back. Speakers are to be confirmed.

Kirsty Schneeberger reports the conclusions to the main conference at 15:25. **Places are limited, and delegates will be given information to select this workshop in advance.**

THE QUESTION

Can those who carry coastal risk pay for the saltmarsh that reduces it, and what would it take to do this at national scale?

15:05	Tea 20 min	Tea and exhibition
15:25	Report back 10 min	Kirsty Schneeberger MBE , Founder and CEO, Athena Blue Conclusions from the saltmarsh and coastal risk workshop

CLOSING PANEL • 15:35 TO 16:25

What has to change for the money to move?

The closing panel takes the day's discussion to one practical question: what has to change, and who has to change it, for private capital to reach marine and coastal recovery at scale? The panel brings three perspectives:

- how public funding decisions and devolution shape whether private investment follows, including rural affairs and coastal communities becoming an area of competence for strategic authorities under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026;
- how marine protected areas can be funded over the long term;
- what a commercial shellfish venture needs from investors and government to grow.

THE QUESTION

What has to change, in policy, public funding and the market, for private capital to reach marine and coastal recovery at scale?

15:35	Panel 50 min	Chair: tbc 1. Christopher Kerr , Head of ESG, Davitt Jones Bould 2. Belinda Bramley , Protected Areas Foundation 3. Sarah Holmyard , Offshore Shellfish
16:25	Close 5 min	David Tudor , Ocean and Coastal Futures
16:30	Reception	Drinks reception (tbc)

Practical information

Timing. Registration opens at 08:45. The conference runs from 09:30 to 16:25.

Remembrance. At 11:00 the conference will observe a two-minute silence for Armistice Day.

Rooms. The afternoon runs in two rooms. Track C is in the auditorium; the saltmarsh workshop is in the Council Room from 13:50 to 14:50, and delegates will be given information to select it in advance.

Who is in the room. Investors, nature finance specialists, development finance, foundations and the advisers who structure deals; government departments, regulators, project developers and coastal partnerships; researchers, NGOs and corporate buyers.

Report. A short report on the day's conclusions will be published after the conference.

Status. This is a draft programme. Timings and content, including speakers and titles, are subject to change.

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UK Sustainable Investment
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Organised by Ocean and Coastal Futures
coastal-futures.net/blue-finance-26

Contact
conference@coastms.co.uk

Speakers

Listed alphabetically by surname. Further speakers, including chairs, will be added as they are confirmed.



KEYNOTE

Andreas Arvanitakis

Director of Nature Opportunities, The Crown Estate
Keynote



TRACK A

Professor Justine Bell-James

University of Queensland
Presentation



CLOSING PANEL

Belinda Bramley

Protected Areas Foundation
Panellist



TRACK C

David Brown

Restore Nature Delivery Manager, National Trust Purbeck Estate
Presentation and discussion



TRACK C

Kat Bruce

Protected Areas Foundation
Chair



TRACK B

Gareth Cunningham

Marine Conservation Society
Panellist



TRACK C

Kat Deeney

Plymouth City Council
Presentation and discussion



TRACK A

Gus Fordyce

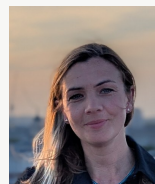
National Oceanography Centre
Panellist



TRACK B

Jonathan Glerum

Anglian Water
Panellist



TRACK A

Jennifer Godwin

Seabed User and Developer Group
Panellist



OPENING

Llyr Gruffydd MS

Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability, Welsh Government
Video address



TRACK B

Sudip Hazra

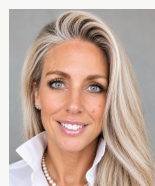
MUFG Sustainable Investment Institute
Panellist



TRACK B

Adonai Herrera-Martínez

Director, Environment and Sustainability, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Framing address



CLOSING PANEL

Sarah Holmyard

Offshore Shellfish
Panellist

**CLOSING PANEL****Christopher Kerr**

Head of ESG, Davitt Jones Bould
Panellist

**TRACK C****Beccy MacDonald-Lofts**

Freelancer and LGA Coastal SIG
Presentation and discussion

**TRACK A****Eoin Murray**

Rebalance Earth
Panellist

**TRACK D****Valerie Pinkerton**

Green Finance Institute
Presentation

**TRACK C****Áine Purcell-Milton**

Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)
Presentation and discussion

**TRACK C****Professor Siân Rees**

University of Plymouth
Presentation

**WORKSHOP****Kirsty Schneeberger MBE**

Founder and CEO, Athena Blue
Workshop facilitator and report back

**TRACK A****Beth Siddons**

Head of Ocean Finance, Howell Marine
Consulting
Presentation

**TRACK A****Mike Spain**

Crown Estate Scotland
Panellist

**TRACK D****Wietse van der Werf**

Founder and CEO, Sea Ranger Service
Presentation