

# Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund

## Marine Environment Protection Fund



1



2



3

### The history

In April 2004 Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) became one of four distributing bodies that deliver Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) projects in the marine environment. The fund which Cefas administers on behalf of Defra is called the Marine Environment Protection Fund (MEPF), which contributes to the second objective of the ALSF: 'promoting environmentally friendly extraction and transport' in the context of the marine environment that:

- reduce the local effects of marine aggregate extraction
- promote environmentally friendly practices for the extraction of marine aggregate
- undertake strategic research into the environmental consequences of marine aggregate extraction; and
- reduce the environmental impacts of using marine aggregate in coastal protection schemes.

Substantial progress has been made so far, and although the impacts and consequences of aggregate extraction in the marine environment are still relatively unexplored, it is acknowledged that without the ALSF funding would not be available to adequately develop these key objectives.

### The current MEPF projects

- Assessment of the rehabilitation of the seabed following marine aggregate dredging
- Eastern English Channel seabed habitat mapping
- Predictive framework for assessment of recoverability of marine benthic communities following cessation of aggregate dredging
- Marine aggregate extraction risk assessment framework
- Coupling physical and ecological models: a new approach to predicting the impacts of aggregate extraction on biological recovery
- Marine ALSF GIS database

These research projects involve the successful collaboration, partnership working and contributions of professionals from the following organisations: ABP (Marine Environmental Research), BGS, BMAPA, British Oceanographic Data Centre, Cefas, Defra, GeoData Institute, HR Wallingford, JNCC, Marine Ecological Surveys, MIRO, ODPM, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, The Crown Estate, UCL.

Full details of these projects and regular progress reports are available at: [www.alsf-mepf.org.uk/projects](http://www.alsf-mepf.org.uk/projects)

In addition to funding research projects, the MEPF was also established to procure science co-ordination and conferences on behalf of the four Marine ALSF Distributing Bodies.

1 Research vessel Cefas Endeavour.

2 Grab sample.

3 Suction dredger in action.

## Contact us

Kate Francis  
MEPF Secretariat  
Cefas Lowestoft Laboratory  
Pakefield Road  
Lowestoft  
NR33 0HT

Tel: +44 (0) 1502 524361  
Email [k.r.francis@cefas.co.uk](mailto:k.r.francis@cefas.co.uk)

## The future

Following a review in Summer 2005 of the Marine ALSF objectives and outcomes so far, the priorities for MEPF research in 2006/07 were identified by the MALSF Steering Group and included studies on:

- Seabed resource mapping relevant to geology, habitats, benthic biology and fisheries and archaeology.
- Impacts of dredging to improve knowledge of physical processes, utilising the ecosystem approach.
- Long term cumulative effects of dredging, and remediation studies
- Socio-economic effects

It is recognised that the ability of the Marine ALSF to meet these objectives depends on the continuation of the fund beyond March 2007, as marine research is often expensive and requires long-term studies in order to produce sound scientific outputs.

## About Cefas

Cefas is a multidisciplinary scientific research and consultancy centre providing a comprehensive range of services in fisheries management, environmental monitoring and assessment, and aquaculture to a large number of clients worldwide. We have more than 500 staff based in 3 laboratories, our own ocean going research vessel, and over 100 years of fisheries experience. We have a long and successful track record in delivering high quality services to clients in a confidential and impartial manner. ([www.cefas.co.uk](http://www.cefas.co.uk))

Cefas Technology Limited (CTL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cefas specialising in the application of Cefas technology to specific customer needs in a cost effective and focussed manner. CTL systems are developed by teams that are experienced in fisheries and environmental management and of working closely with clients to ensure that their needs are fully met. ([www.cefastechnology.co.uk](http://www.cefastechnology.co.uk))