

POST-BREXIT POLICY IN THE UK: A NEW DAWN?

The future of agri-environment and fisheries

Whatever kind of Brexit is negotiated, leaving the EU also means leaving the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy – the key frameworks regulating these sectors. These two reports bring together current evidence and the views of stakeholders across both sectors, to identify priorities and examine the potential risks and opportunities for future policy, and to identify new governance options. Although both sectors face unique challenges, they also share common challenges and opportunities.

Common challenges

Priority: Common for both policy areas is the low attention and priority received from policy-makers. Given the scale of the challenge that lies ahead and the changes Brexit necessitates policy-makers must consider these sectors carefully in order to sustain the environment and related livelihoods.

Cooperation: Continued cooperation with the EU post-Brexit is essential. Pollution and fish stocks are transboundary in nature, and the economies of the agriculture and fisheries sectors are dependent on the movement of goods and labour.

Trade: Future trade agreements with the EU and other countries will impact profits, employment, rural development and the environment.

Capacity: There is a risk that leaving the EU will weaken existing environmental protections and enforcement of fisheries and conservation regulations due to a lack of civil service capacity.

Common opportunities

New ideas: Brexit presents a unique opportunity to think ambitiously about how to reform current policy and design more sustainable and forward-looking solutions. Future policy solutions must avoid the dangers of being constrained by past practices. There is scope to think holistically about environmental sustainability for future employment and economic development.

Devolution: Post-Brexit agricultural and fisheries policies needs to be sensitive to local environmental, economic and political conditions. Devolved authorities therefore need to play a meaningful role in their revision. An overarching UK-wide framework will be required to ensure coherence, synergy, and to facilitate international trade.

Public goods: Allocation of government support (such as funding, support payments or quota allocation) needs to take into account the provision of public goods, such as species and habitat protection or climate change mitigation. As such, it is crucial to reach a consensus on what a 'public good' means in each sector and how it should be valued to safeguard arguably the UK's greatest assets for its population – its countryside and coastal seas.