

NEWS



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CREW Letter: Welcome to the new quarterly CREW newsletter!

This edition coincides with my first anniversary as the CREW Impact Officer! For one-year I have been helping CREW to deliver their intention to **‘the right information, to the right people, in the right way at the right time’**. Three of my personal highlights since joining the team have been:

- Taking part in the Scottish Government ENRA (Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture) Science, Evidence and Policy conference where our poster won the Early Career Researcher prize, presenting two CREW water scarcity projects from an impact perspective ([Water Scarcity in Scotland: Future Impact for Distilleries and Agriculture](#) and [Scotland Faces Growing Water Scarcity: Research Highlights a Range of Adaptive Strategies](#)).
- Accompanying our partners at the [Hydro Nation Scholars Programme](#) to meet representatives of SPICe (the Scottish Parliament Information Centre) and sit in on FMQs.
- Attending CREW project events such as the in-person [hydro-sector project](#) dissemination event. It's always inspiring to see the potential impact of a project and meet enthusiastic researchers and project steering group (PSG) members.

With many exciting workshops, collaborations and meetings already in the diary for 2025, I'm looking forward to the year ahead. I'm also continually developing new impact activities to help project teams throughout and beyond the project lifecycle so watch this space!

We always value your feedback and would love to know what you would be interested in reading in future issues of 'CREW NEWS' - enquiries@crew.ac.uk.

Best Wishes,

Amy Cooper

CREW Communications and Impact Officer

Who We Are and What We Do

CREW (Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters) is one of five Centres of Expertise funded by The Scottish Government. The centres focus in on areas of high policy importance to deliver evidence directly to policy.

CREW supports Scotland's water sector through key policy areas, including **flooding, water quality, resource recovery, and rural sustainability**. Its work addresses **climate change adaptation, circular economy, net zero, and a just transition**.



The 2022-27 themes focus on [Hydrological Extremes, Coasts and Risk Management](#), [Land and Water Resource Management](#), and [Water Quality and Health](#), with **Water and Society** as a cross-cutting priority. CREW's research is responsive to emerging challenges, ensuring evidence-based support for water policy and management.

Workshop Spotlight

DelugeAI: A review of the emerging opportunities of using artificial intelligence for flood forecasting in Scotland



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow



DelugeAI is funded by the CREW through the Science Policy Fellowship call: Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence for flood forecasting in Scotland (CSPF2025_01)



Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence for flood forecasting in Scotland

Recently the CREW DelugeAI project team held a workshop gathering area experts to share knowledge, identify opportunities and discuss challenges

surrounding AI and flood forecasting. The workshop, funded as part of a [CREW Science Policy Fellowship](#), involved talks by key figures from institutions such as Sweden's National Hydrometeorological Institute, the UK Met Office and Deltares. The team took the opportunity to share some preliminary findings and also had sessions to discuss important topics.

CREW would like to thank the research team (University of Strathclyde) and the Project Steering Group (SEPA, Environment Agency and Scottish Government) for their continuing dedication and support to the project and in addressing this important issue.

Look out for the upcoming CREW DelugeAI workshop article on our [news page](#), and the full project outputs in Summer 2025. For more information, please visit the [project page](#).

Calls For Proposals

Natural Capital and River Basin Management Planning: Protecting and Improving Scotland's Water Environment

Overview: CREW invites proposals for a c. 9-month capacity building project to conduct an evidence synthesis to assess the current state of knowledge of how investments in protecting and improving natural capital influence the state of the water environment. The synthesis will also explore the wider benefits these investments provide for nature, climate adaptation, public health, net zero targets and agriculture.

Budget: Funding available: **£83,000 exclusive of VAT** (where applicable).

Deadline: Wednesday 6th May, midday.

For more information and to read the full specification, please [visit the project page](#).



Transitioning surface water collection to surface water reuse systems

Overview: This capacity building project aims to explore the emerging area of interest in surface water reuse before the next regulatory planning period (April 2027-March 2033) and demonstrate clear policy/strategic alignment. The project will focus on non-potable uses, such as non-food agriculture, car washing, and cooling systems, which are less regulated, but may still require adherence to local planning and environmental legislation.

Budget: Funding available: **£85,000 exclusive of VAT** (where applicable).

Deadline: Wednesday 7th May, midday.

For more information and to read the full specification, please [visit the project page](#).

CREW Project Highlights

Scotland Explores New Strategies to Monitor Freshwater and Wetland Ecosystems

[Publication page](#)



Scotland is rethinking how freshwater and wetland ecosystems are monitored to better align with its goal to halt biodiversity loss by 2030. This project reviewed monitoring approaches to support healthy freshwater and wetland ecosystems in Scotland. It identified multiple pressures on these ecosystems and suggested a holistic flexible monitoring framework that integrates diverse data sources. Key recommendations include enhancing collaboration and data sharing, incorporating automation (e.g. for inputting data) and citizen science, and using indicators to track ecosystem health.

CREW would like to thank the research team (the University of Dundee) and the Project Steering Group (NatureScot, SEPA and the Scottish Government) for their efforts on this project.



Review of psychoactive substances wastewater monitoring approaches

[Publication page](#)

Scotland faces a significant public health challenge due to high drug-related deaths. Existing monitoring methods provide limited data on drug use. Wastewater-based epidemiology (WWBE) could

enhance Scotland's drug monitoring by detecting psychoactive substances in wastewater, offering real-time insights into drug consumption. This project assessed the feasibility of WWBE and identified key substances, analytical methods, and infrastructure needs. Findings from the project suggest that WWBE is viable and beneficial but requires funding and expanded staffing capacity. A trial is recommended for specific drugs using advanced laboratory techniques. Improved public health monitoring could help identify actions to reduce and prevent drug harm.

CREW would like to thank the research team (The James Hutton Institute, the University of Strathclyde and BioSS) and the Project Steering Group (Public Health Scotland, Scottish Water and the Scottish Government) for their efforts on this project.

Evaluation Feedback

After the completion of a project CREW sends out an evaluation form to gather information on the project experience, to assess our own performance, evaluate impact and help us improve our processes.

We have recently developed further impact evaluation forms to collect evidence of project impact at around the 6-month and 12-month point post-project completion. We will slowly start to roll these forms out for all relevant projects.

All of us at CREW appreciate the time that is taken to complete these forms. We collect all the information that you submit to us so that we can discuss it as a team, figuring out how we can improve as we move forward with future projects.

Key points recently discussed:

- **Report Accessibility** – We have received a handful of comments about the two-column format of reports being difficult to read online. This format is in line with academic reporting and due to the length of our main reports we feel two-columns are more practical and cost-effective. However, we will revisit this during our accessibility meetings. We also offer and produce a range of outputs such as website summaries, infographics and videos in addition to the main report and could provide a different format of report if requested.
- **Project length and tight timescales** – We acknowledge that project timescales can be challenging, particularly for urgent call down projects. The science-policy work commissioned by CREW is demand driven. This means that some projects must be completed within a certain timescale to respond to policy needs. Additionally, our funding is linked to financial years, as such project start, and end dates need to align with our funding cycles. We communicate anticipated project timescales in our calls for proposals. Pre-contract meetings are then held with the preferred bidder and project steering group to discuss aspects including timing and scope, and we revisit the milestones with research teams and project steering groups throughout the project. Requested changes to milestones and deadlines are considered and adjustments made where supported and feasible, on a case-by-case basis.
- **Infographics, videos and visual meeting notes** – We have received several positive comments about the high-quality and effectiveness of some of the visual media produced by project teams to convey a message. As a note, infographics and videos are included on the list of outputs that can be requested during the formation of a project request. This is also something that can be discussed with the CREW team during initial project and impact meetings.

We have recently added the mention of a graphic artist or designer being subcontracted to co-deliver these aspects in recent calls in response to some informal feedback from both academics and PSG members. Through including this more explicitly in the request, we hope to ensure researchers feel supported in producing these outputs, and the outputs produced are of high quality and useful for the needs of the PSG.

Register of Expertise

Connecting opportunities and expertise in water science and policy, the Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) fosters collaboration between research and decision-making. Our Register of Expertise plays a key role in this effort. Please consider adding your skills and knowledge to the network.



Why should I register

Connect to opportunities

Reach out to colleagues and share your work

Explore skills and find solutions

Widen your network

[Register](#)



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