

A lush green forest with a waterfall in the background and a hiker on a path in the foreground. The scene is dense with various types of trees and ferns, creating a vibrant and natural setting. The waterfall is a prominent feature in the center-left, cascading down a rocky ledge. A hiker with a red backpack is visible on a narrow dirt path in the lower right foreground, providing a sense of scale to the vast forest.

Nature Finance Tracker UK

Bringing greater
transparency to UK
international nature
finance spending

Analysis by Campaign for Nature and
Conservation International UK,
February 2026

Overview

Nature is in crisis. Around the world, ecosystems are degraded, species are disappearing, and the natural systems that regulate our climate are under threat. International finance to protect and restore nature has never been more critical.

In 2021, ahead of hosting COP26 in Glasgow, the UK government made an ambitious commitment: £3 billion to protect and restore nature between 2021 and 2026, with £1.5 billion specifically for forests. This represented a step-change in the UK's climate finance ambitions.

But there was a problem: **For the last five years no one could see where the money was going.**



The Transparency Gap

Despite nature finance being one of the most popular categories of UK aid spending with the British public, tracking how this money is spent has been nearly impossible. The UK government:

- Stopped publishing consolidated project-level climate finance data in 2020
- Introduced no recurring public reporting when the nature commitment began in 2021
- Now only reports through UN frameworks with a two-year lag

This lack of transparency makes it difficult to:

- Hold government accountable for its commitments
- Understand which approaches to nature conservation are being prioritized
- Assess whether funding is reaching the most effective interventions
- Learn lessons and improve programme design

Understanding UK International Climate Finance

International Climate Finance (ICF) is the part of the UK government's aid budget that supports developing countries to respond to climate change. The UK first began providing ICF in 2011 as part of a collective commitment by developed nations to provide \$100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020, a goal that has since been increased to \$300 billion per year by 2035.

The UK structures its climate finance in five-year cycles. In 2019, the UK committed to provide £11.6 billion in ICF between 2021 and 2026-known as 'ICF3' which ends in March 2026. The £3 billion nature pledge represents a landmark allocation within this broader commitment.

Our Mission

The UK International Nature Finance Tracker was created to fill this gap. Using data obtained through Freedom of Information requests covering 2021-2025, we provide the first comprehensive public analysis of UK nature finance spending since the commitment began.

Our goal is simple: to make UK international nature finance visible, understandable, and accountable.

What You'll Find Here

- **Complete spending data** for 2021-2025 across all government departments
- **Programme-level breakdowns** showing where money has actually gone
- **Clear visualisations** making complex finance flows easy to understand
- **Analysis of trends** including the shift from slow initial spending to recent acceleration
- **Recommendations** for improving transparency going forward



The Data

ICF Nature Spend by Department (2021-2025)

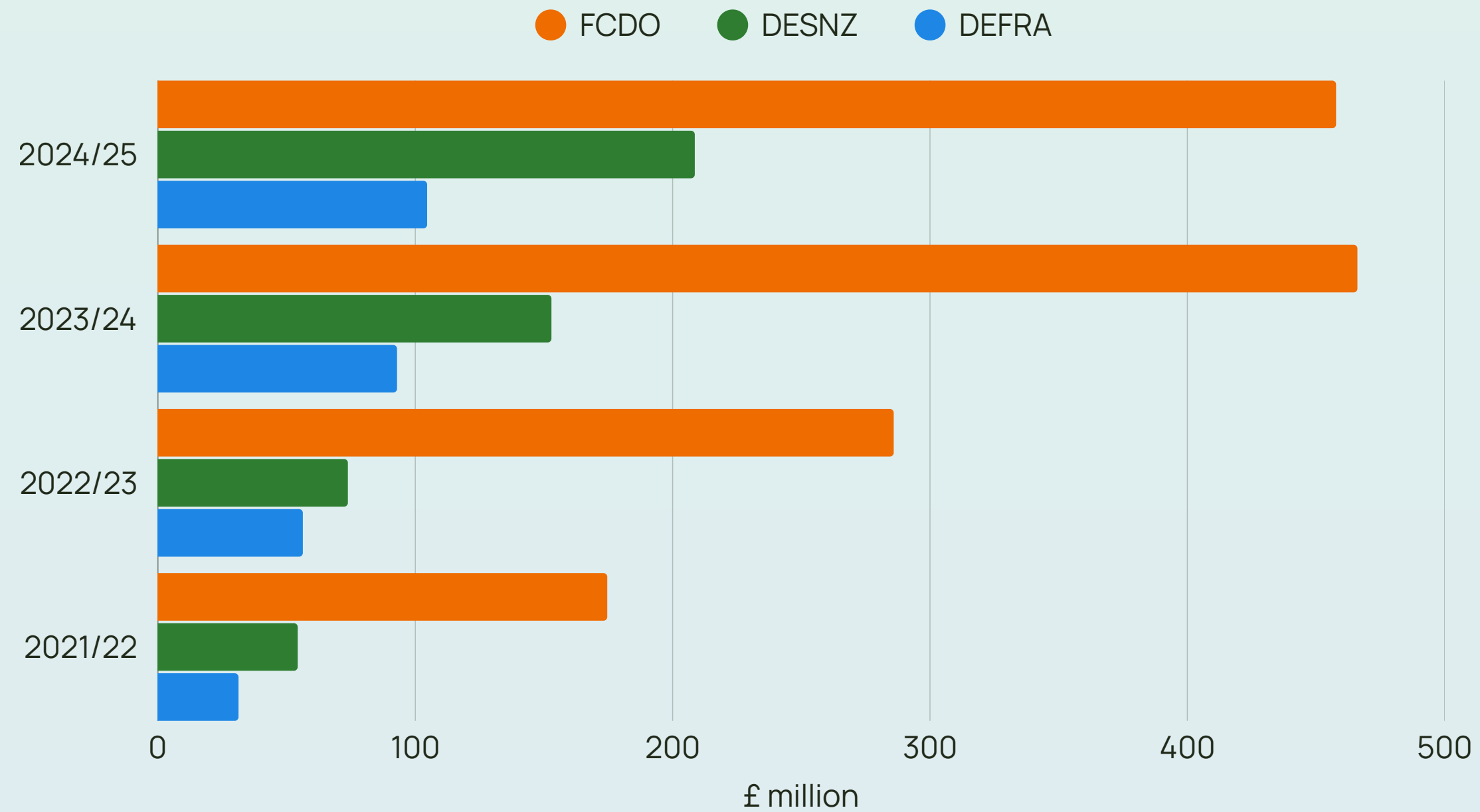
Three government departments deliver UK nature finance:

- **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO):** 64% of total spend
- **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ):** 23% of total spend
- **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA):** 13% of total spend

The visualisations on the following pages show how UK climate finance for nature has been spent across departments and programmes over the first four years of the ICF3 commitment period.

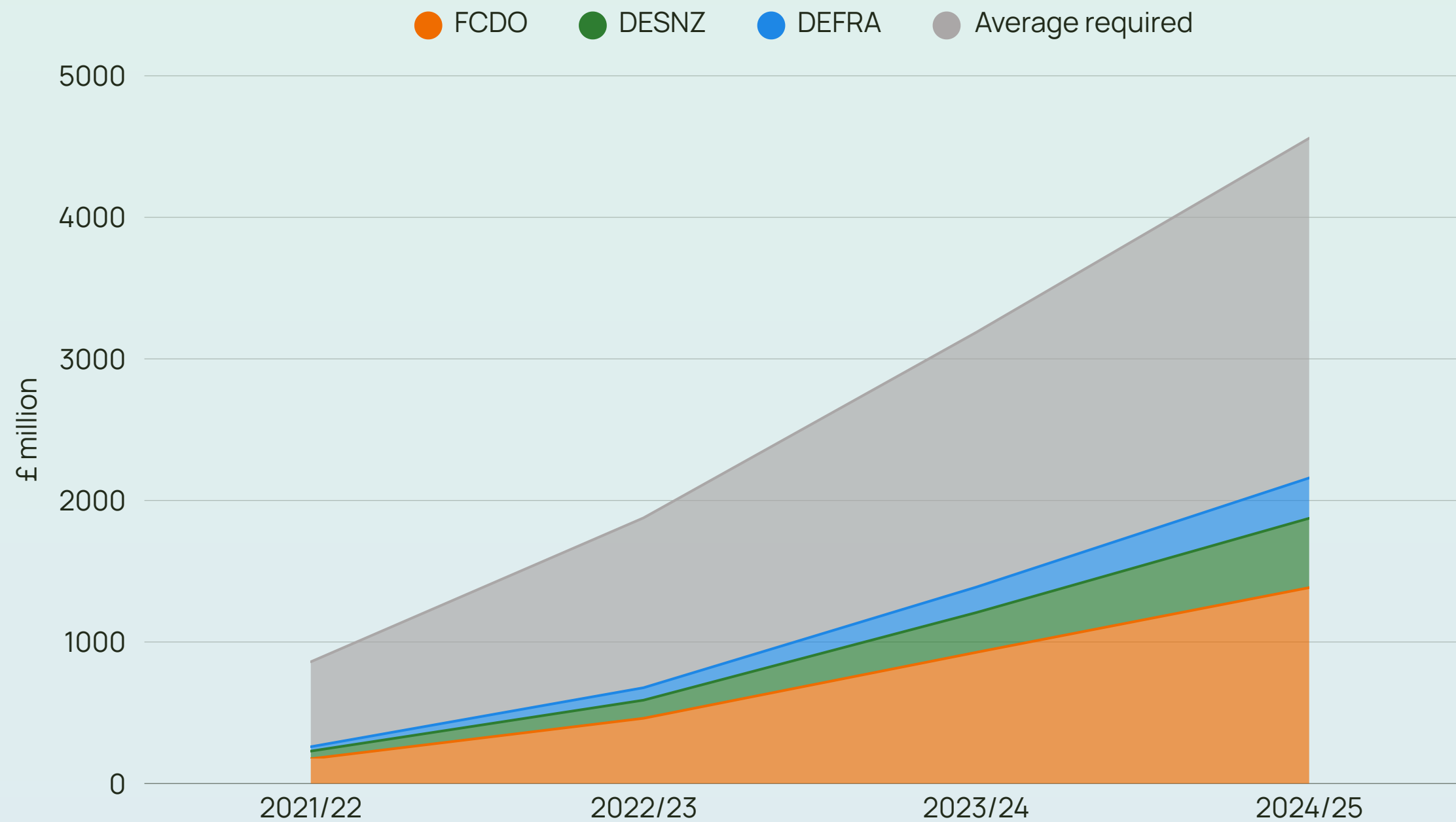
FCDO is responsible for a large percentage of total spend

Total annual recorded ICF nature spend by department

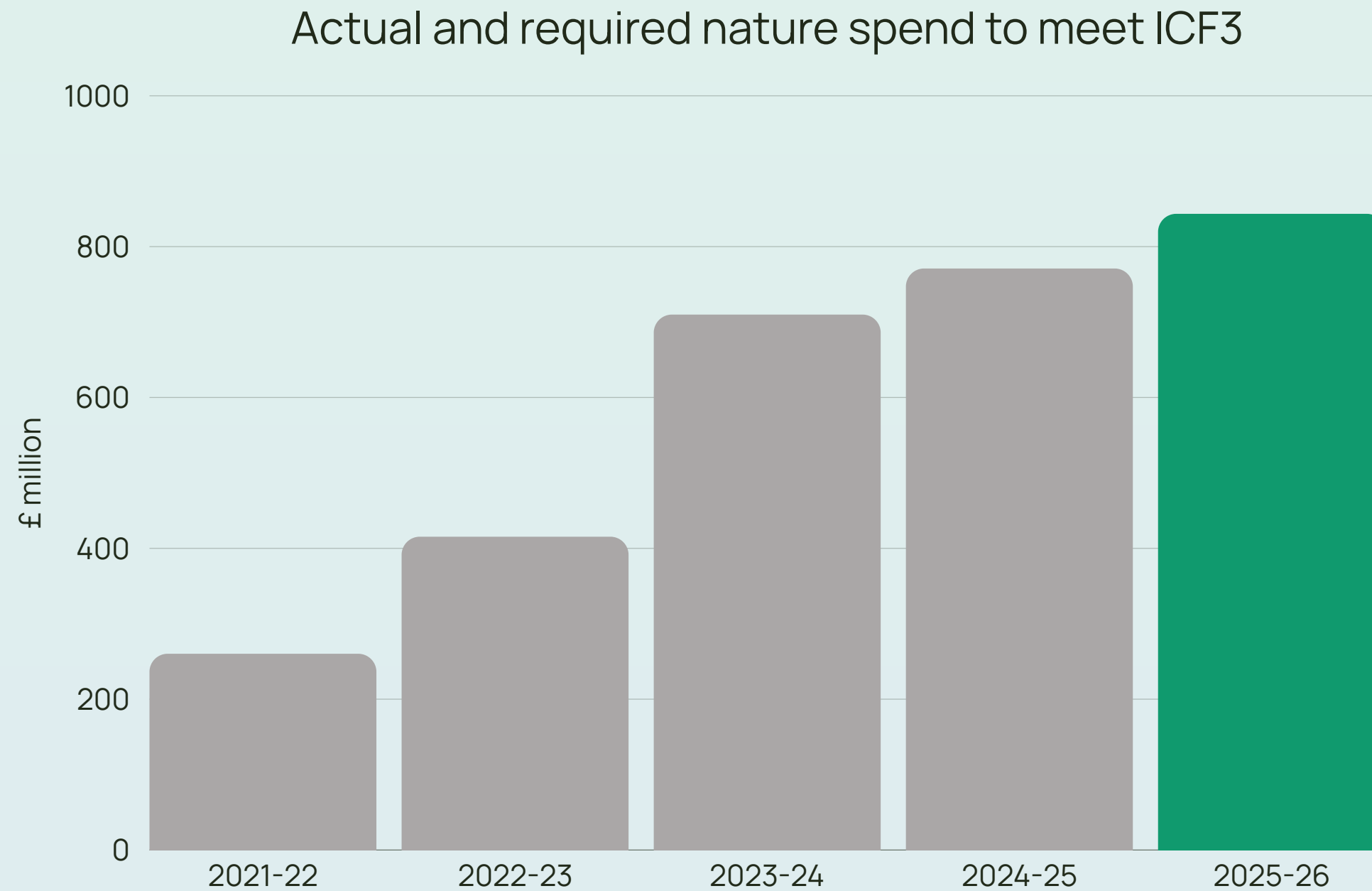


ICF nature spend lags behind the £600m annual requirement

ICF3 nature spend by department (cumulative) (£m)



Spending must reach £843.5m to meet the £3bn pledge



Actual spend is represented in grey (2021-2025) and required spend in green (2021-2025)



Department spend observation

- As with overall ICF spend, the first two years of the ICF3 period saw total rates of recorded ICF nature spend fall substantially below the annual average spend required to meet the pledge.
- While aggregate recorded spend then rose significantly in 2023/24 and 2024/25, total spend in 2025/26 will still need to be at least £843.5m in order to meet the UK's £3bn commitment.

Programme List

The FCDO accounts for the large majority of individual programmes reporting nature ICF, with a total of 96 programmes reporting some nature ICF spend in at least one year of ICF3 (to date). DESNZ recorded nature ICF spend through a total of 12 programmes, with DEFRA recording spend through 19.

This table shows recorded ICF nature spend by department and programme, identifying all programmes with cumulative expenditure over £20m in the first four years of ICF3 (with the remaining projects aggregated).

[Find out more here](#)

Department	Programme	2021-25 (£m)	%
FCDO	GCF	405.5	18.8
FCDO	GEF	274.2	12.7
FCDO / DESNZ	IFSLU	66.6	3.1
FCDO	FGMC	63.1	2.9
FCDO	CGIAR	48.9	2.3
FCDO	PHENOMENAL	47.3	2.2
FCDO	UK PACT	44.1	2
FCDO	ARCAN/CAFI	43.9	2
FCDO	EC2R	39.1	1.8
FCDO	ASEAN ACGF	30.8	1.4
FCDO	CARA	a	1.3
FCDO	CLARE	21.2	1
FCDO	All other FCDO (79)	275.5	12.8
DESNZ	SCALE / ENABLE	153.9	7.1
DESNZ	MFF	93.6	4.3
DESNZ	Amazon Fund	82.5	3.8
DESNZ	CIF NPC	65	3
DESNZ	AIM4Forests	31.5	1.5
DESNZ	REDD EM	30	1.4
DESNZ	All other DESNZ (4)	29.8	1.4
DEFRA	DARWIN	55.2	2.6
DEFRA	GFCR	36.3	1.7
DEFRA	OCPD	35.9	1.7
DEFRA	ICF R&D	33.6	1.6
DEFRA	PROBLUE	30.4	1.4
DEFRA	All other DEFRA (13)	93.7	4.3

🔍 Programme spend observation

- The FCDO accounts for the large majority of individual programmes reporting nature ICF, with a total of 96 programmes reporting some nature ICF spend in at least one year of ICF3 (to date). DEFRA recorded nature ICF spend through a total of 19 programmes, with DESNZ recording spend through 12.
- There is a predominant role for multilateral (e.g. Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Fund) and multi-bilateral (e.g. SCALE, Mobilising Finance for Forests, Amazon Fund) programmes in the UK's current nature ICF spend.
- Notably, the Darwin Initiative-the UK's flagship bilateral biodiversity programme-accounts for just 2.6% (£55.2 million) of total nature finance spending.
- The Biodiverse Landscapes Fund (BLF) is a £100m initiative to support nature in six priority landscapes. It is the most prominent bilateral nature-related ODA programme created in the past decade, yet it has received only £19.5m over ICF3 and has now been significantly scaled back following 2025 cuts to the UK aid budget.



Key Findings

Inadequate Transparency

Specific programme-level reporting of UK ICF flows is currently poor, and consistent public reporting of nature and forests flows on a project basis is non-existent.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, the UK has ceased to publish consolidated project-level information on its international climate finance flows on an annual basis, with the last EU-mandated reporting taking place in 2020 (for 2019 spend).

The UK now only reports its international climate finance flows on an itemised basis through the biannual UNFCCC reporting framework (undertaken with a two-year lag), meaning that the UK government does not currently intend to release official figures for UK ICF spend in 2023 and 2024 until late 2026, representing a substantial regression from prior established reporting practice.

Reporting Gaps

- **No consolidated reporting since 2020:** The UK government has not published consolidated project-level information on its international climate finance flows on an annual basis since 2020.
- **No nature-specific disclosure:** Since the introduction of a specific nature finance commitment in 2021 there has been no recurring public reporting of either total or programme-level nature spend.
- **Two-year reporting lag:** Official figures for 2023 and 2024 spending won't be released until late 2026.

Spending Patterns

- **Slow start, late surge:** The first two years of the ICF3 period saw total rates of recorded ICF nature spend fall substantially below the annual average required to meet the pledge.
- **£843.5m still needed:** While spending rose significantly in 2023/24 and 2024/25, at least £843.5m must be spent in 2025/26 to meet the £3bn commitment.
- **Multilateral focus:** Multilateral and multi-bilateral programming dominates UK nature ICF spend, with flagship bilateral programmes like Darwin Initiative playing minimal roles.

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, creating a large splash of water. The background shows a blue sky and distant mountains.

Recommendations

Publish annual itemised reports

What: The FCDO should be mandated to publish an itemised list of all UK ICF spend (including spend under the nature and forests ringfences) by calendar and financial year, within six months of the respective year close, in an accessible spreadsheet format (csv/xls).

Why: Timely, detailed reporting would enable meaningful oversight and allow civil society to engage constructively with UK climate finance programming while decisions are still relevant.

Integrate with aid statistics

What: Include a column for ICF status within the project-level disclosure reported annually through the UK aid statistics reporting process.

Why: This simple addition would make it easy to track climate finance within the broader aid reporting framework that already exists.

Report on results

What: Publish an itemised list of all the projects contributing to total current reported ICF results by year and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) value on an annual basis as part of the ICF results reporting process.

Why: The public deserves to know not just where money is going, but whether it's achieving its intended impact on nature protection and restoration.

Methodology

The figures provided in this analysis were obtained through separate Freedom of Information (Fol) requests to the FCDO, DESNZ and DEFRA, with responses received between September and November 2025.

[Find out more here](#)

About This Project

This website represents the first comprehensive public accounting of UK International Climate Finance for nature and forests since the introduction of specific nature commitments in 2021.

[Find out more here](#)



Questions or feedback about
this analysis?

For any inquiries or feedback regarding this project,
please contact Adrian Gahan (Campaign for Nature) or
Jonathan Hall (Conservation International UK)

The analysis on this website has been completed by Campaign For Nature and Conservation International UK.

