

# Natural Capital Initiative Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 (Reviewed August 2016)

The Natural Capital Initiative in context: 'Natural capital' is an increasingly popular metaphor for the features of the natural environment that underpin society, the economy and wellbeing. It recognises the reliance of financial, manufactured, human and social capital on the natural environment. In doing so, it is bringing about a step change in how the environment is prioritised and valued throughout society and in the economy. The increasing interest in natural capital and the development of enabling methodologies among science, policy and business communities has advanced both the scope and potential impact of this area in recent years. In order to ensure that this approach benefits both people and the natural environment in an integrated way, there is a need for a respected independent forum to bring together these communities to highlight, debate and distil relevant messages. Engaged in the role of natural capital within the evolving and changing policy landscape, the Natural Capital Initiative has over the past 7 years established a strong track-record as an effective convener, providing a platform for just such discussion, based on the effective and ethical use of evidence from across the natural and social sciences.

Partners: The Natural Capital Initiative is a partnership between four leading scientific organisations in the UK: The Royal Society of Biology, the British Ecological Society, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the James Hutton Institute.

## Making Natural Capital Count

Our mission is to support decision-making that results in the sustainable management of our natural capital based on sound science.

Our aim is to make possible the dialogues that help to answer natural capital questions. We do this by:

- Initiating and facilitating dialogue between people from academia, policy, business and civil society who make or influence decisions, to find shared solutions and approaches;
- Communicating independent, authoritative synthesis and evaluation of the scientific evidence-base.



## Our values

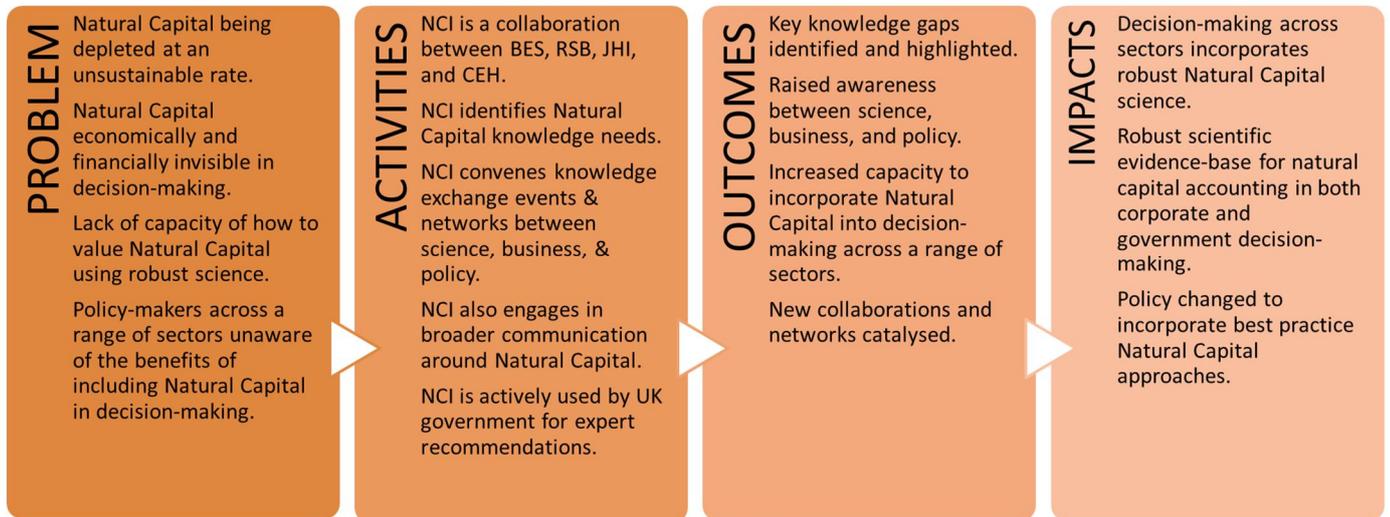
The NCI champions:

- Policy- and decision-making informed by scientific evidence;
- Interdisciplinary, cross-sector engagement;
- A whole-systems perspective that seeks to develop our resilience to change;
- A positive approach that aims to identify pragmatic solutions.

## Our position on the 'Natural Capital Approach'

The Natural Capital Initiative acts as a forum to discuss the opportunities, challenges and ethics of a natural capital approach to management of the environment. NCI advocates that development and application of the approach is based on best available sound science using robust biological and social evidence. This will help ensure that our natural environment is valued appropriately and managed sustainably.

## Our Theory of Change



Our principles of success: NCI partners agree that NCI activities should demonstrate the following:

- Promote the value of natural and/or social science in natural capital-related decision-making;
- Facilitate interdisciplinary working in order to inform and influence policy and practice in the public and/or private sectors;
- Create recognition for NCI as an honest broker: an objective, neutral, evidence-based convener.

## Our activities

NCI will work to *'Initiate and facilitate dialogue between people from academia, policy, business and civil society who make or influence decisions, to find shared solutions and approaches'* through:

- A 'Natural Capital Summit', to be held once every five years (subject to mid-term review). The aim of this event is to bring together representatives from the academic, policy, civil society and business sectors in order to increase appreciation of the natural capital concept, promote the value of integrated science in relation to planning and decision-making, engage participants in finding shared solutions and approaches, and highlight the state of progress towards effective inclusion of natural capital concepts in planning and practice. Outputs from the summit, e.g. joint statement/declaration, will be actively disseminated and used to inform future activity;
- 'NCI Dialogues' or 'Briefings' (public). These will be quarterly short, sharp public events. The aim is to develop shared language and approaches, and build understanding between sectors of varying perspectives. They will be co-hosted and/or sponsored;
- 'NCI Roundtables' (invite-only): In addition to NCI Dialogues, NCI will seek to engage potential corporate sponsors and/or policymakers in invited-participant roundtable discussions across the sectors, which will see small groups of key individuals meet to discuss and advance particular issues, resulting in tangible outcomes, e.g. solutions, shared messages, shared perspectives, new partnerships.

NCI will work to '*Communicate independent, authoritative synthesis and evaluation of the scientific evidence base*' through:

- Publication of event reports with tailored versions for target audiences, written in Plain English, with a particular emphasis on explaining terms and communicating ideas in a concise and engaging manner;
- Using the website and social media as a communications platform to stimulate discussion and dialogue across sectors, to present evidence on the effectiveness of natural capital stewardship and to communicate the outcomes of its other activity strands including ad hoc 'highlight topics' on the NCI website showcasing key definitive reviews, reports, papers on natural capital issues?
- Engagement and connection with existing platforms, networks and initiatives, identifying and taking-up opportunities, where possible, to make the NCI visible and audible at relevant events, and/or through relevant communications channels, where natural capital is or should be on the agenda. This will be on an on-going, opportunistic, and pragmatic basis. In so doing, NCI will place a particular emphasis on engaging professions and sectors that have not previously perceived stewardship of the natural environment to be (a major) part of their core business.

### Our Resource and Financial Future

NCI currently operates with a part time Project Officer, and considerable in-kind staff time from partner representatives. Partner organisations contribute a total of £20,000 per annum to running costs. Our Steering Group includes eminent experts in natural capital who provide ideas, advice and constructive criticism on NCI remit, values and activities.

NCI has developed a Fundraising Roadmap to secure the additional resource necessary to increase our activities and reach, and to provide a secure financial future for the Initiative without the need for ongoing support from the partner organisations. We will apply to Charitable Trusts for core funding including the employment of an NCI Manager and Project Officer, and specific project funding. We will also develop sector-specific project proposals which businesses and corporate entities will be invited to sponsor. We will initially engage with the following sectors:

- Food & Drink
- Built Environment
- Human Health and Wellbeing