



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023





Promoting sound science to underpin natural capital decisions

The NCI is an influential convener of natural capital professionals. Our vision is to grow a collaborative network that ensures sound natural capital science informs public policy and business decisions. Our dialogues and publications make effective use of evidence to seek positive solutions that enhance natural capital for the benefit of people and nature.

Who we are

The NCI is a partnership of leading UK science organisations - the Royal Society of Biology, the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and the James Hutton Institute.

Our Steering Group includes eminent experts who provide ideas, advice and constructive criticism on NCI values and activities.

We provide an independent platform for debate and joint working on natural capital challenges and solutions and work to ensure that evidence from across the natural and social sciences supports decision-making at national to local scales.

Why we come together

We recognise that better management of natural resources is vital to improve the environment and human health and wellbeing and increase resilience to climate change.

Our work is designed to encourage and incorporate sound and relevant science into this process.

The NCI aims to ensure that evidence developed by the partners and other collaborators is being proactively used to inform and influence policy.

What we do

The NCI addresses the most pressing issues in managing and protecting our rural, urban, freshwater and marine environments. We address emerging topics and gaps in natural capital thinking and practice, including:

- Integrated natural capital approaches for sustainable land and water planning
- The role of natural capital in delivering health and wellbeing
- Pioneering natural capital methods in marine environments
- Challenges for environmental governance in implementing natural capital approaches
- AI and big data for improving natural capital management and decision-making
- Ethics and natural capital
- Natural capital accounting in business
- Multiple values of nature

We address these through two main activities:

(a) facilitating dialogue between people from academia, policy, business and civil society

(b) producing reports and briefings to inform decisions about the sustainable management of natural capital.

To find shared solutions and approaches, we collaborate with other initiatives at national and regional levels.

In all NCI activities we aim to:

- Promote the importance of natural, economic and social sciences in natural capital decision-making
- Facilitate transdisciplinary working to influence policy and practice in the public and private sectors
- Increase recognition for NCI as an honest broker, convener and an objective, independent, evidence assessor.

How we do it

NCI events, reports and briefings synthesise the latest scientific evidence that can contribute to policy processes and the development of practical solutions in business and wider society.

In addition, they highlight knowledge gaps that the academic community can target to better support natural capital decision-making into the future. We do this through a number of ways.

Natural capital Summits every five years (to date held in 2009, 2014 and 2019) take stock and push forward natural capital science and action.

The Summits provide an opportunity for professionals from across sectors to find shared understanding and insights.

Outputs include joint statements, reports, media publications, new connections and projects, which are actively disseminated and used to inform future activities.

“The summit has definitely had an impact on policy. What we’ve seen since the last summit is the 25-year environment plan being developed by government and an environment bill is currently in front of parliament. Both of those have taken up the natural capital principle.”

Sir Ian Boyd, Defra chief scientific advisor 2012-2019

NCI Dialogues are inclusive events that encourage sharing of knowledge, challenges, approaches and solutions to priority topics (as above).

The Dialogues build common understanding and stimulate shared action across sectors from different starting perspectives.

For **NCI Roundtables** we invite key people

from academia, policy and practice to discuss cutting-edge issues freely and constructively to identify problems and solutions, find shared approaches and create new partnerships.

Reports, policy briefs and blogs address key policy processes and business and knowledge needs in a concise and engaging manner.

We actively disseminate our publications to influence policy, practitioner and business decisions.

NCI website and media platforms present evidence and stimulate discussions on natural capital stewardship across sectors. We showcase key reviews, reports and papers addressing natural capital issues.

The NCI participates in other events where natural capital is or should be on the agenda. We also engage with professions that have not previously perceived natural capital stewardship to be an important part of their business.

Ways we work

The NCI champions natural capital science and evidence in decision-making.

We promote:

- Collaboration across disciplines and sectors
- Whole system thinking
- Positive and practical approaches to improving natural capital

“The work that the NCI does is imperative to taking this whole area and discipline forward. People are willing to work together and they see that interdisciplinary is where we need to go forward.”

UKRI NERC sponsors at the NCI summits

Problem

Natural capital is depleted at an unsustainable rate, and is economically and financially invisible in decision-making.

Natural capital is a recognised high-level objective but there is a lack of action and capacity.

Opportunities are missed.

Activities

NCI identifies natural capital knowledge needs.

NCI convenes knowledge exchange events and networks between science, business & policy.

NCI creates products to influence natural capital decision-making.

Outcome

Key knowledge gaps are highlighted.

Raised awareness and increased capacity to account for natural capital in policy and practical decisions.

New collaborations and networks are catalysed.

Impact

New research is developed around natural capital.

Policies and decisions across sectors incorporate robust science and natural capital approaches.

Practical solutions help deliver a sustainable and resilient future.

Our impact

The NCI is a pioneer in the science-policy interface of natural capital thinking. Since 2009 our three high-level summits and over 20 targeted dialogue sessions, collectively involving over 1000 professionals, have contributed to developing natural capital science, policy and practice in the UK.

NCI reports have been quoted in parliamentary and policy exchange events, as well as science and policy committees on natural capital valuation and monitoring.

For example, a recent NCI workshop led to a policy directions paper used in developing the UK Government's 25-year Environment Plan, and more recent workshops have contributed to draft revisions of the HM Treasury's Dasgupta Review.

We continue to adapt and develop the means by which we connect experts, practitioners and policy-makers to improve natural capital management and provide natural capital solutions for a sustainable future.

Our future

Natural capital approaches have become central to UK government environmental policies. They are also essential to finding solutions to the nature, health and climate crises.

As a pioneer in natural capital thinking and a partnership of leading science organisations, the NCI is perfectly placed to tackle these challenges. Bringing people together remains at the heart of what we do, and this is more important now than ever.

We will continue to provide leading dialogue and shared messages from the natural capital community to ensure that decision making is based on sound science and new research develops in response to need.

Our future priority areas and work plans are shared separately in reports and work programmes.

We will collaborate where possible and seek sponsorships and funding from charitable trusts, government agencies and businesses whose aims we can assist. This is vital to the sustainability of the NCI.

NCI is a
partnership
of:



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naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk

