

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

05 December 2022

Dear First Minister

Scotland's natural capital – a critical foundation for Scotland's prosperity

The Scottish Forum on Natural Capital brings together private, public and third sector organisations to provide leadership on natural capital and raise understanding of the importance of Scotland's natural assets for our environmental, social, and economic prosperity.

Scotland's current and future economic prosperity relies on Scotland's natural capital. If it is depleted then business, society and communities will suffer. We believe passionately that actions are needed now to secure and improve Scotland's natural assets, providing benefits for the whole of society today and into the future, particularly considering the current economic realities in Scotland.

Natural assets have the potential to provide services, such as flood risk management, at lower costs than traditional engineered approaches, as well as being the foundation for our important land and sea-based industries and of course sequestering vast stores of carbon from the atmosphere.

We must not miss opportunities to embed natural capital thinking from the outset. In particular, the current redesign of agricultural policy, the National Marine Plan refresh, delivery strategies for the new Biodiversity Strategy and crucially the forthcoming Natural Environment Bill represent big opportunities to further mainstream this important agenda. We particularly encourage you to bring together experts and businesses to help inform the "legally binding nature targets" that this Bill will bring forward and we would be delighted to help facilitate this.

We urge the Scottish Government to continue to develop its approach to natural capital as a means of ensuring that natural assets are managed sustainably. We encourage the Scottish Government to hold firm on its ambition, expressed in Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, to develop a nature-positive economy and to rebuild Scotland's natural capital, tackling the climate and nature crises and create new opportunities for nature-based businesses and jobs.

Scottish Forum on Natural Capital

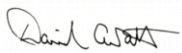
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We are particularly keen to see natural capital approaches embedded across all the delivery programmes of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, including in the creation of a values-led, high-integrity market for natural capital. The Scottish Forum enables cross-sector discussions and multi-stakeholder partnerships which are key to delivery of the ambition.

We continue to inform and drive action on natural capital through our membership and wider networks and the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital Steering Group stands ready to help the Scottish Government build a world-leading and highly ambitious programme, where all of Scottish society supports and pursues the protection, enhancement and rebuilding of nature as a key to Scotland's prosperity and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,



David Watt
Chair and Director of
Governance Express



Louisa Macdonell
Director Scotland at
Business in the
Community (BITC)



Jo Pike
Deputy Chair and Chief
Executive of the Scottish
Wildlife Trust



Marc Metzger
Professor of Environment
and Society at the
University of Edinburgh



Anne McCall
Director of RSPB
Scotland



Tom McKenna
Senior Manager at
Capitals Coalition and
Youth Representative



Chris Barber
Chief Financial Officer at
ICAS



William Austin
Professor of Marine
Geology at the University
of St. Andrews



Colin Campbell
Chief Executive of The
James Hutton Institute

The Scottish Government (and its agencies) is represented on the Steering Group of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital, and has been involved in discussions, but is not a signatory on this letter.