

BUSINESS LEADERS BELIEVE URGENT ACTION IS NECESSARY FOR SCOTLAND'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

29th October 2014

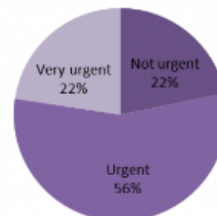
It was revealed today that 78% of Scottish business leaders believe urgent action is necessary to protect and enhance Scotland's 'natural capital'. The result comes from a survey of over 500 Scottish business leaders carried out by the Institute of Directors (Scotland) and ICAS in partnership with the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital.

The results were highlighted at a Scottish Forum on Natural Capital event today which brought together business leaders, government officials and environmental experts to raise awareness of the importance of natural capital to the economy and business.

'Natural capital' – the Earth's natural assets from which we derive vital benefits – was a new term to 61% of respondents but once explained, 95% said they believed a better understanding of the topic would benefit business, society and the environment.

Natural capital includes forests, rivers, land, minerals, oceans and other natural assets on which all human life depends. Collectively, they supply us with essential goods (such as food, medicine, fuel and building materials) and services (such as pollination, climate regulation and flood protection). Asked about who is responsible for protecting and enhancing Scotland's natural capital, the most popular response was collaborative initiatives between sectors (81%), with 70% saying government, 54% saying the private sector, 50% saying NGOs and 57% saying 'the population of Scotland/community groups'.

How urgent do you feel it is to take action to protect and enhance natural capital in Scotland?



Do you feel that a better understanding of our relationship with natural capital could contribute to better outcomes for business, society and the environment?



Executive Director of IoD Scotland, David Watt, said: "It's clear that while many business leaders are somewhat aware of the issue, there remains a knowledge gap around a deeper understanding of long-term impact and potential resolutions. It is important for Scotland that businesses step up to protect our country's greatest assets by becoming part of the solution."

Assistant Director at ICAS, Anne Adrain, said: "It is encouraging to see an increasing appetite for knowledge on the relationship between the natural environment and business activities. ICAS clearly has a key role in enhancing the understanding and awareness of what is becoming an increasingly

important area."

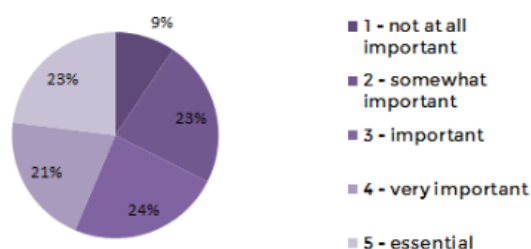
Chief Economic Adviser to the Scottish Government, Dr Gary Gillespie, said: "A country's natural capital is an important part of its asset base that supports economic growth, and maintaining its quality is essential for delivering sustainable economic growth over the long run."

"Scotland has a rich stock of natural capital, which supports many of our growth sectors, and many of the iconic products for which Scotland is famed. Greater recognition of the importance of natural capital will help enhance its contribution to the Scottish economy."

Co-Chair of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital and Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Jonny Hughes, said: "Scotland is showing real leadership internationally in this area, having hosted the first major global conference on this topic – the World Forum on Natural Capital – in Edinburgh last November."

"Building a fair, equitable and stable economy will depend on us restoring a healthy natural environment and this will only happen if business leaders, environment charities, governments and others work together. What is very clear from this survey is that business leaders want such collaboration for a brighter future for society, our economy and the natural world."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important you think Scotland's natural capital is to your organisation, based on the above definition.



The Scottish Forum on Natural Capital brings together public, private and voluntary sector organisations to protect and rebuild Scotland's natural capital. To date, there are over 50 member organisations including Alliance Trust, BT Scotland, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, SSE, SEPA, John Muir Trust, Buccleuch, James Hutton Institute, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Mazars LLP and the Scottish Government.

[You can download the full survey results by clicking here](#)