



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Business Plan 2021/22
Year Four of Connecting
People and Nature

Introduction

NatureScot is Scotland's nature agency. We work to improve nature in Scotland and inspire Scotland's people to care more about it.

This is the fourth and final annual business plan in support of Connecting People and Nature - our corporate plan for 2018-2022. A lot has changed since that plan was first published but what has become clearer than ever is the importance of our connectedness with nature.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated this, on both a global level, with clear links being identified between the degradation of nature and increasing pandemic risk; and at a local level where the nature on our doorsteps has become so important to our physical and mental wellbeing during lockdowns and restrictions.

The same human activities that drive biodiversity loss and climate change also drive pandemic risk through their impacts on our environment. We will lead with a coherent, evidence-based approach to secure a nature-rich future for Scotland by enriching biodiversity and leading nature-based solutions to climate change.

We continue to pursue this vision through delivery of the four outcomes set out in Connecting People and Nature:

- More people from across Scotland are enjoying and benefiting from nature
- The health and resilience of Scotland's nature is improved
- More investment in the management of Scotland's natural capital to improve prosperity and wellbeing
- We have transformed how we work

2021/22 Focus

A key factor in the re-emergence from Covid-19 will be the path we set ourselves. A green recovery is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. It addresses the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss as central components of a more resilient and inclusive economy.

We have identified a set of priority actions with emphasis on our leadership role with biodiversity and climate change actions and our support for a green recovery. Those priorities will support our core offers of:

- advancing nature-based solutions to promote a thriving environment;
- leading net zero natural resource management on land and sea; and
- redefining economic value by embedding the benefits of natural capital.

This will ensure that we focus our resources where they can maximise impact. We will do this by working collaboratively with public and private sectors to identify and drive investment in green recovery actions. These will deliver across our priorities and challenge us to consider new and inspiring ways to engage people with nature.

The table overleaf shows how our outcomes, priorities and core offer link together to achieve our ambition to enrich biodiversity and lead nature-based solutions to climate change in order to deliver our long-term vision of a nature-rich future for Scotland.

Enriching biodiversity and leading nature-based solutions to climate change

Vision – A nature-rich future

We all need nature. Nature needs us. NatureScot brings us together.

Join us and make an impact.

Our strategic priorities

- Enriching biodiversity
- Leading nature-based solutions to climate change

NatureScot's purpose

We connect people with nature, through inspiring action to address the emergency in our natural world, because our future, and that of following generations, depends on it.

Our offer:

- Advancing nature-based solutions to promote a thriving environment for all;
- Tackling the climate emergency by leading net zero natural resource management on land and sea;
- Redefining economic value by embedding the benefits of natural capital.

We will do this by:

- Releasing our expertise to support nature recovery;
- Caring for nature so that it is there for future generations;
- Connecting people and nature so that everyone takes action to address the emergency in our natural world.

For whom

The people of Scotland

Our 2021/22 Priorities

NatureScot will invest in action to reverse biodiversity loss and jointly lead the Scottish Biodiversity Programme
NatureScot will help to transform use of land and sea so that it contributes even more to the future wellbeing economy

NatureScot will support a step-change in use of Nature-based Solutions to climate change and other problems
NatureScot will focus effort on mainstreaming natural capital approaches/accounting in decision-making
NatureScot will help to grow and diversify environmental green finance

NatureScot will invest in skills for a nature-rich future, especially in youth employment

NatureScot will facilitate the role of nature in transforming places where people live

NatureScot will support and encourage access to and enjoyment of nature

NatureScot will accelerate peatland restoration through our Peatland Action Programme and collaboration with others

NatureScot will transform as an organisation to meet the demands of the future, including accelerating its transition to a net zero emissions organisation

Outcomes we deliver

More people from across Scotland are enjoying and benefiting from nature

The health and resilience of Scotland's nature is improved

More investment in the management of Scotland's natural capital to improve prosperity and wellbeing

We have transformed how we work

Driving a Green Recovery

Global assessments have highlighted the scale and urgency of action needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and to halt the loss of the Earth's biodiversity. Last year's State of Nature Scotland Report highlighted the pressures on nature in our own country.

The Dasgupta review of *The Economics of Biodiversity* argues that solutions start by recognising our economies are embedded within Nature. We all manage these assets through our spending and investment decisions and need to be more literate on climate-nature.

NatureScot provide vital leadership capacity in Scotland in response to environmental crises and challenges. The Scottish Government was the first government in the world to declare a climate emergency in 2019, and announced an ambitious plan to become carbon neutral by 2045. We responded to this target by committing to net zero direct emissions by 2040, with a stretch target of 2035 for zero direct emissions and recognise we will need to undergo significant transformation over the next 15 years to achieve this.

Through our leadership by example, interventions in carbon sequestration such as leading peatland restoration and the advice we provide to ministers and Government through the expertise of our staff, we will ensure that Scotland's reputation as a global climate leader is enhanced as Glasgow prepares to host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021. The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The 2019 report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identified the main drivers behind global biodiversity loss. Our response to this is to put in

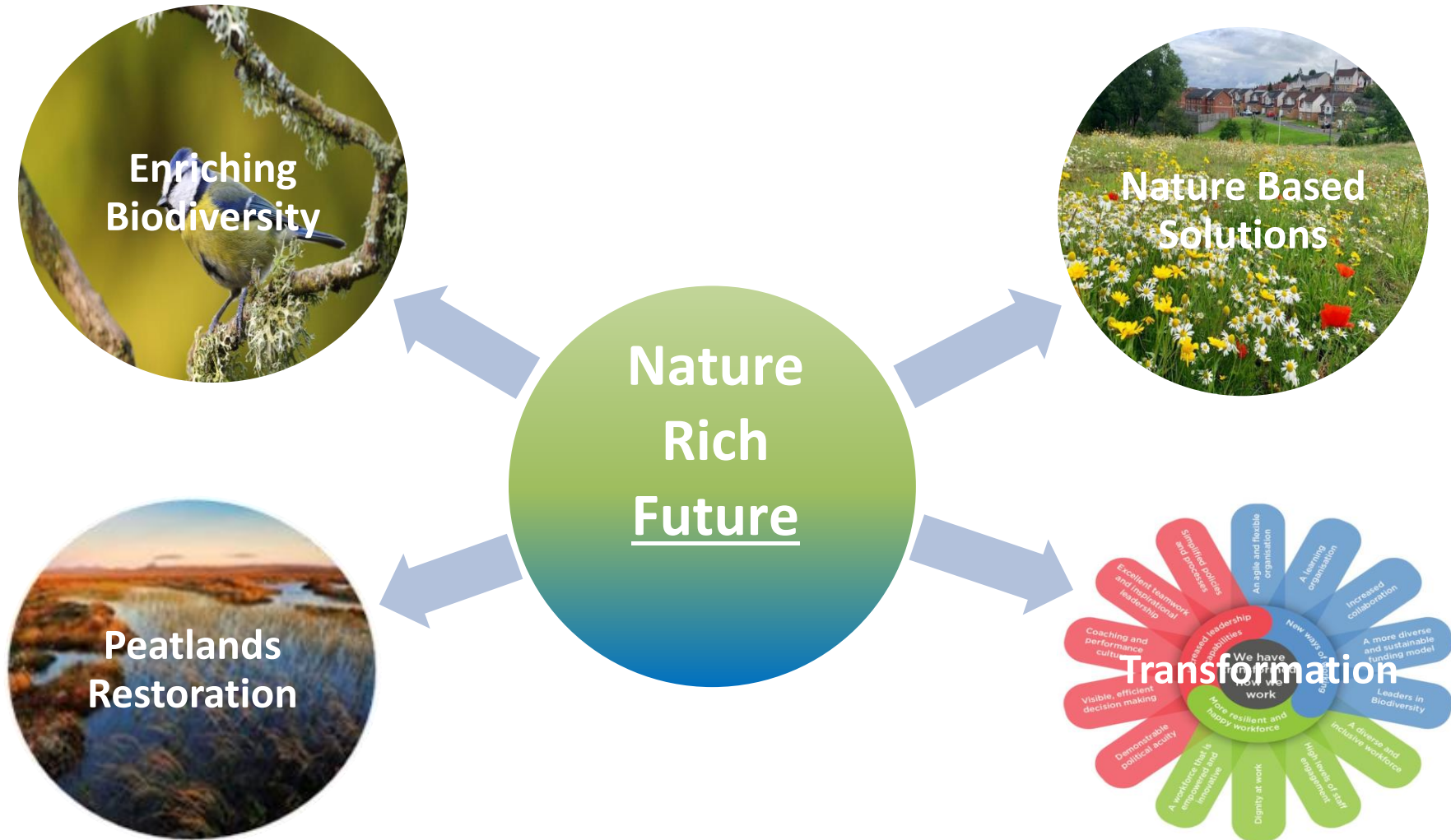
place a programme of work that addresses these drivers and moves us towards our vision that by 2030, Scotland is recognised as a world leader in looking after and improving nature.

NatureScot co-leads The Scottish Biodiversity Programme (SBP) with Scottish Government. The programme oversees and coordinates all current and planned activity on biodiversity, to secure a common understanding of priorities and an agreed approach to delivering them. This allows us to manage the volume of work and the high level of co-ordination required across the various organisations and delivery partners, ensuring that we are focused on achieving the most important deliverables.

Through our expertise and evidence we will support the Scottish Government's contribution to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, China in October 2021. The COP will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also anticipated that the final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be taken, together with decisions on related topics including capacity building and resource mobilization. We stand ready to lead on the delivery of commitments Scotland makes.

Scotland's Environment Strategy, developed collaboratively with Scottish Government, provides an overarching framework to bring together strategies and plans and to identify new strategic priorities and opportunities. It guides us in the work we do to restore and enhance Scotland's nature and to inspire people to care about it. Together with the Programme for Government it recognises the importance of nature as part of a Green Recovery as we look towards a future beyond Covid-19. In doing this, we will support the wellbeing of people in Scotland and strengthen our economy.

Click 'Nature Rich [Future](#)' below to hear from some of our staff each talking about how what they do will deliver a nature rich future and the ambitions they have for nature.



These priorities will deliver our key drivers of enriching biodiversity and leading nature-based solutions to climate change

NatureScot Priorities	Scope	How we will track and measure progress against our priorities
<p>NatureScot will invest in action to reverse biodiversity loss and jointly lead the Scottish Biodiversity Programme</p> <p>NatureScot will help to transform use of land and sea so that it contributes even more to the future wellbeing economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with Scottish Government to a) develop the 2030 Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and b) support implementation of the Scottish Biodiversity Programme. Our work on protected areas will guide our better understanding of the state of nature, how and why it is changing and necessary responses. We will promote measures to improve biodiversity and mitigate and adapt to climate change across all rural support mechanisms. We will use planned approaches, supported by high quality evidence and relevant guidance to ensure the right development in the right place to support developers, planners and regulators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will develop a suite of draft biodiversity targets for Scotland following Global Biodiversity Monitoring Framework (for COP15) We will fund at least £1m of Biodiversity Challenge Fund grants through Phase 3 during 2021/22 Advise Government on options to achieve 30x30 protected area targets Take forward Protected Area Committee recommendations for enhancing our special nature sites Implement priority recommendations in the surveillance and monitoring strategy to better inform management Develop a new approach to delivering the Scottish Marine Protected Area monitoring strategy We will help to deliver Agri-Environment and Climate Scheme We will advise SG on Biodiversity and Climate outcomes across all future farm support schemes We will deliver Phase 3 of Piloting Outcomes Based Approaches in Scotland (POBAS) We will secure strengthened policy and spatial direction in the Fourth NPF that delivers positive effects for biodiversity We will support Marine Scotland in developing and implementing a Blue Economy Action Plan We will develop and deliver actions arising from the Scottish Government responses to the Werrity and Deer Working Group reports. The number of Marine Protected Areas with management measures will be increased

NatureScot will support a step-change in use of Nature-based Solutions to climate change and other problems

NatureScot will focus effort on mainstreaming natural capital approaches/accounting in decision-making

NatureScot will help to grow and diversify environmental green finance

NatureScot will invest in skills for a nature-rich future, especially in youth employment

NatureScot will facilitate the role of nature in transforming places where people live

NatureScot will support and encourage access to and enjoyment of nature

- We will champion nature-based solutions to Scotland's net zero targets. This will be achieved by embedding nature-based solutions across our priorities to support land, marine and wildlife management and create a framework for our work to maximise the multiple benefits for nature and people.
- We will support SG in work to embed natural capital in policy and investment decisions. In parallel, we will continue to test natural capital and outcomes-based approaches to inform Scottish Government's future rural policy. This will be underpinned by an update of the Natural Capital Asset Index for government.
- We will help to develop the enabling environment to drive more private finance into nature and nature-based solutions. The Peatland Code will be promoted by us as a means of attracting private investment in Peatland Restorations.
- We will accelerate our youth employment this year by focussing on diversifying our own youth employment opportunities including apprenticeships, graduate and student placements and traineeships. This will include leading the development of an employment programme.
- We will deliver Green Infrastructure investment, advice and good practice to improve Scotland's urban environment including spatial or locational planning in natural infrastructure to create nature rich places. We will support building community skills and capacities.
- We will contribute to better visitor management planning, strengthen the resilience of natural and cultural heritage assets and the resilience of our NNRs
- Implement phase 2 of the National Coastal Change Assessment to support Local Authorities planning
- We will be part of developing and delivering a strong new vision and work plan for the Scottish Blue Carbon Forum.
- We will provide evidence to support SG to embed applying a natural capital approach in policy and investment
- We will provide evidence and tools to enable the uptake of natural capital assessment of the public estate
- We will develop new approaches to grow private investment in natural capital
- We will develop a new approach to blend private investment through the Peatland Code with Peatland Action.
- We will develop and launch the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (to support recovery and resilience of our coasts and seas)
- We will employ up to 37 posts through the Programme for Youth Employment
- We will develop and secure funding for a training and employment programme for nature-based skills.
- We will fund up to £3.4m of Green Infrastructure projects using ERDF funding.
- We will support up to 300 communities across Scotland to improve local green and blue spaces for people and nature as part of our Making Space for Nature campaign
- Fund up to £3m of new paths through the AECS – Improving public access scheme

for visitors, and help grow sustainable nature-based tourism in Scotland.

NatureScot will accelerate peatland restoration through our Peatland Action Programme and collaboration with others

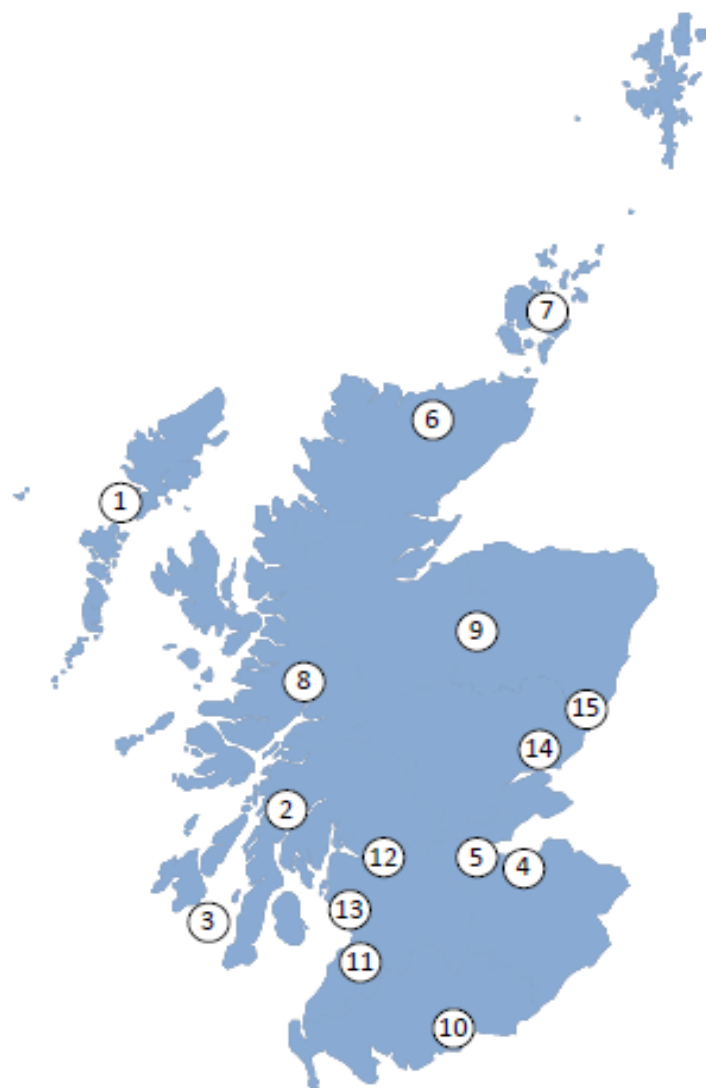
NatureScot will transform as an organisation to meet the demands of the future, including accelerating its transition to a net zero emissions organisation

- We will deliver Peatland Action to restore peatlands to store carbon, benefit nature and play a leading role in supporting Scottish Government's wider peatland restoration programme.
- We will transform how we work through our Organisational Development Framework developing a new operating model, leveraging digital technology and an estates strategy which will change how we operate as an organisation in order to meet the challenges of the future. In parallel, the development of a net zero plan will help us achieve our Net Zero ambitions by 2040 with a stretch target of 2035.

- We will co-ordinate delivery and amplify responsible access communication as our contribution to the national visitor management strategy
- We will implement a resilience strategy on our NNRs
- We will increase Peatland Action's delivery of restored peatland by 40%
- We will deliver the Organisation Framework actions
- We will deliver the NatureScot Net Zero plan which will aim to deliver a 7% carbon saving in line with our stretch target (or 63.3 tonnes of CO2).

Place-based delivery

- 1 Outer Hebrides CPP Climate Change Group**
Developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Outer Hebrides. We will champion the importance of nature-based solutions as part of this group.
- 2 Atlantic Rainforest**
Working with Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust to find innovative funding mechanisms to expand and connect our rainforest fragments.
- 3 MarPAMM project**
Delivering the development of the Regional Marine Protected Areas management plans by engaging with local communities and stakeholders.
- 4 Edinburgh West and Waterfront**
Aiming to re-connect people and nature with a focus on the protection and enhancement of key natural assets of the areas.
- 5 Upper Forth Region**
Working with others to enhance biodiversity, habitat connectivity and ecosystem resilience.
- 6 The Flow Country**
Of international importance as a carbon store this provides a nature-based defence against and solution to climate change.
- 7 Okney Native Wildlife Project**
Working collaboratively with RSPB and Orkney Islands Council to protect and enhance Orkney's native wildlife and reduce biodiversity loss.



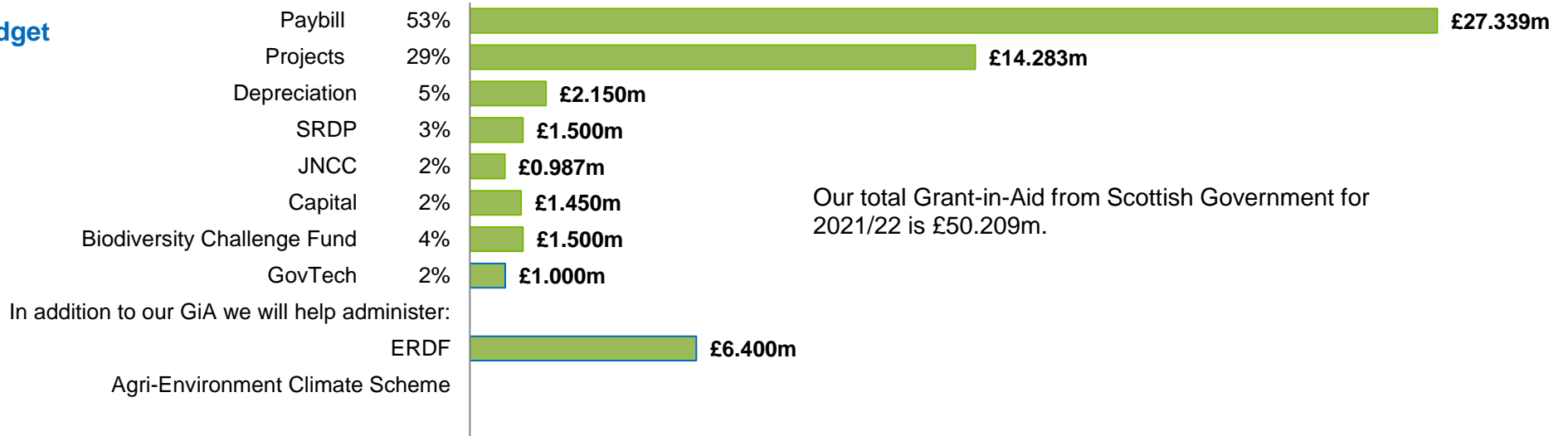
- 8 Nevis Landscape Partnership**
Supporting local partnerships inspiring people to love nature, reversing biodiversity loss, and improving resilience to climate change.
- 9 Cairngorms Connect**
Working in partnership to deliver the UK's largest landscape-scale habitat restoration project.
- 10 Caerlaverock Experience**
Collaboration to realise the potential of the wider Caerlaverock area as a visitor and tourist destination.
- 11 Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere**
Supporting the development and delivery of the business plan focussing on outcomes for business, communities and the environment.
- 12 Clyde Mission**
Working collaboratively to re-connect people to the River Clyde and invest in the regeneration and renewal of local places.
- 13 Ayrshire Coast**
Working with others in North and South Ayrshire Councils to improve the coastal path network and add value through environmental interpretation.
- 14 Tay strategic green network**
Facilitate cross Local Authority working and delivery of strategic green network, active travel and recreational access to Tay between Perth and Dundee and Dundee and Tentsmuir NNR.
- 15 Dynamic Coast**
Engaging with partners to address erosion at Montrose and demonstrate adaptation measures at St Cyrus.

Our Resources

Our funding comprises our Grant-in-Aid of £50.209m plus additional funding that we receive or administer to support and deliver our strategic priorities. Together this provides us with £57.109m to invest in nature.

This investment will contribute to a range of Government priorities, and deliver across all our Outcomes. Through our role in supporting the Scottish Rural Development Programme, and administering the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in 2021/22, we facilitate the distribution of a one-year commitment of around £1.5m to SRDP in agriculture and rural development, and around £6.4m ERDF funding, providing investment in green infrastructure and tourism.

Our budget



Resource Allocation

Each year we set out to deliver the 4 Outcomes from our Corporate Plan. To do this our resources are allocated through the activities we undertake. These activities provide an emphasis on flexible working across the organisation by focussing on our 10 priorities which in turn will deliver our Outcomes. The tables below show the budget and resource allocation by these activities and also spread across the priorities for 2021/22.

Our Activities delivering our Outcomes	Budget £m	FTE
People and Places	1.434	49
Protected Areas & National Nature Reserves	1.629	110
Total	3.063	159
Biodiversity & Geodiversity	1.288	53
Marine Ecosystems	0.832	24
Total	2.120	77
Wildlife Management	2.705	60
Supporting Good Development	0.227	61
Natural Resource Management	1.115	83
Sustainable Coasts and Seas	0.278	23
Total	4.325	227
Workplace Facilities and Services	2.204	24
People and Organisational Development	0.397	25
Finance, Planning and Performance	0.036	36
Information and Cyber Security	0.205	15
Technology and Digital Services	1.515	39
Communications	0.315	26
Executive Governance	0.103	9
Total	4.775	174
Grand Total	14.283	637



Priority	Focus %
NatureScot will invest in action to reverse biodiversity loss and jointly lead the Scottish Biodiversity Programme	19
NatureScot will help to transform use of land and sea so that it contributes even more to the future wellbeing economy	20
NatureScot will support a step-change in use of Nature-based Solutions to climate change and other problems	12
NatureScot will focus effort on mainstreaming natural capital approaches/accounting in decision-making	4
NatureScot will help to grow and diversify environmental green finance	4
NatureScot will invest in skills for a nature-rich future, especially in youth employment	8
NatureScot will facilitate the role of nature in transforming places where people live	7
NatureScot will support and encourage access to and enjoyment of nature	11
NatureScot will accelerate peatland restoration through our Peatland Action Programme and collaboration with others	7
NatureScot will transform as an organisation to meet the demands of the future, including accelerating its transition to a net zero emissions organisation	8
	100.0

Our Activities are grouped by Outcome listed on page 3.