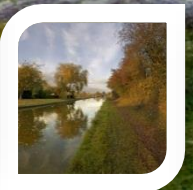


# The Business Case for Investing in Our Natural Assets

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Chair, VNP Business Interest Group





# The Business Case for Investing in Our Natural Assets

**This presentation will**

- **Set the scene – recent business and government context**
- **An example of future investment options**

***Then we will discuss five themes:***

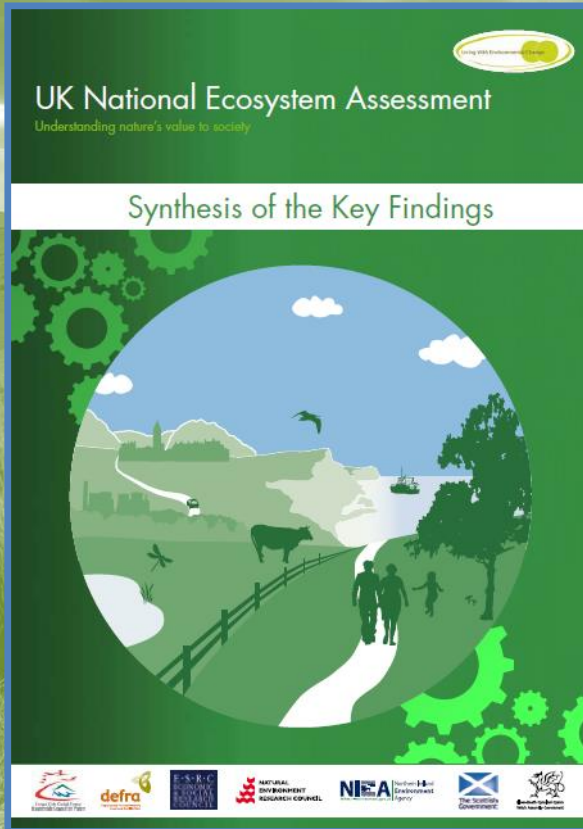
- 1. The business case for ambitious natural capital policy**
- 2. Improving natural capital through better policy integration**
- 3. A natural capital investment strategy**
- 4. Policy and corporate decision making**
- 5. What next for institutional arrangements?**





# Recent government policy context

## National Ecosystem Assessment (UK-NEA)



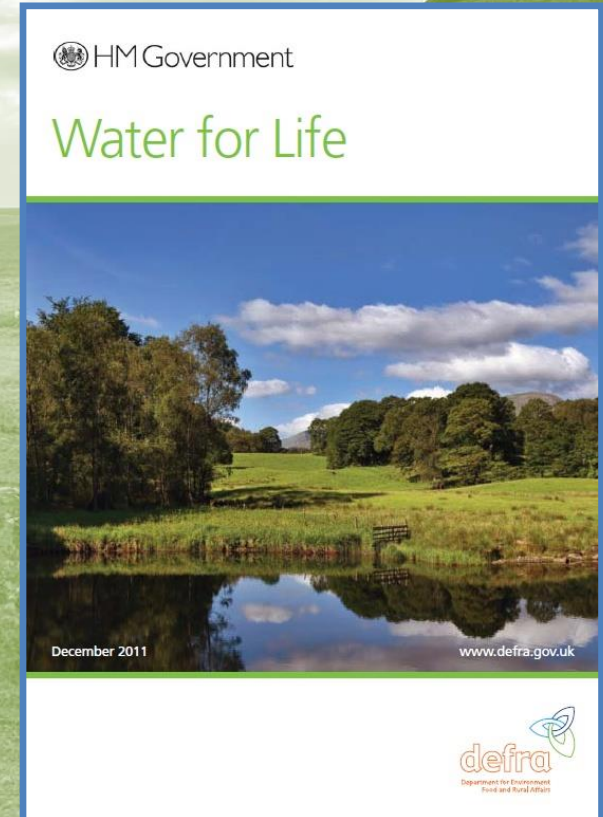
“Applying ecosystem service valuation across the UK”

## Natural Environment White Paper



“Aims to mainstream the value of nature across our society”

## Water White Paper



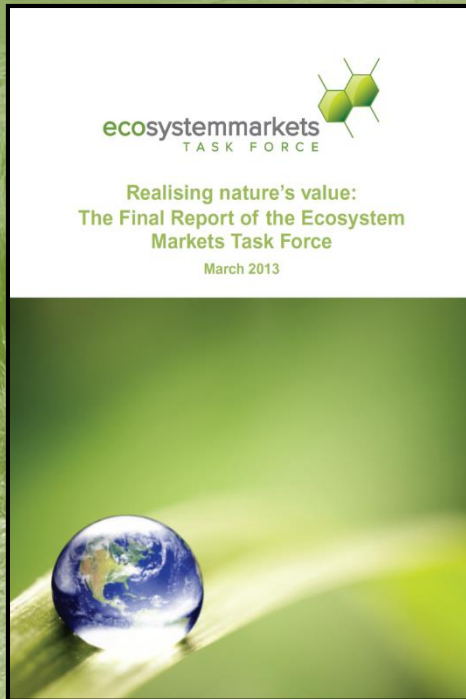
“A vision for future water management in which water is valued as the precious and finite resource it is”



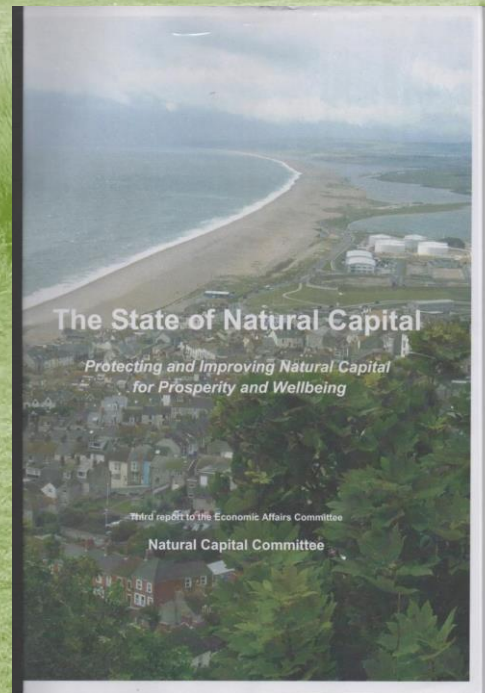
# Recent business and government context

- The Natural Environment White Paper set up two important fora:

**EMTF – Business Led  
Reported 2013**



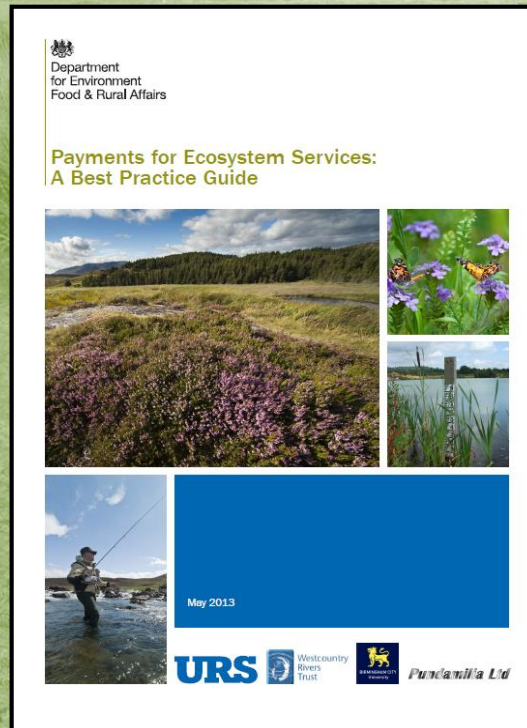
**Natural Capital Committee  
Reports 2013 – 2015**





# Current business and government initiatives

- Defra – 25 year environment plan
- Defra – 25 year food and farming plan
- New Natural Capital Committee 2016-2020
- Corporate Natural Capital Accounting
- Natural Capital Protocol
- Emerging PES Schemes





# Current State of Business and Natural Capital (NC)

- All companies have a dependency and reliance on NC.
- Businesses increasingly aware of risks - poorly managed natural systems & unmitigated shocks. They need:
  - An accessible knowledge base underpinned by high quality research; and
  - An incentivising government framework to adopt more sustainable business practices.
- Some businesses engaged but many find it too complex.
- Smart regulation and new markets in ecosystem services would better reflect natural assets in prices and decisions.
- An enabling policy framework will facilitate action to improve the UK's NC, which will enhance prospects for long-term sustainable economic growth.





# So how might this change investment decisions?

- “Nearly two thirds of the services provided to humankind are found to be in decline worldwide” - Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005
- The benefits we derive from NC are at risk – WWF 2014
- “By not managing our NC assets well, we are essentially eroding their performance capabilities” – NCC 2013
- Looking at all decisions across development, health and business the risk of progressive and serious depletion of natural systems and biodiversity continues to increase.
- Cost of soil degradation is £1.2bn/year (Eng&Wales)
- The NEA showed how big the changes in investment might be.....





# Why ecosystem service valuation matters

## Best option

### World Markets Scenario

Increased intensification of natural resource use to maximise market values



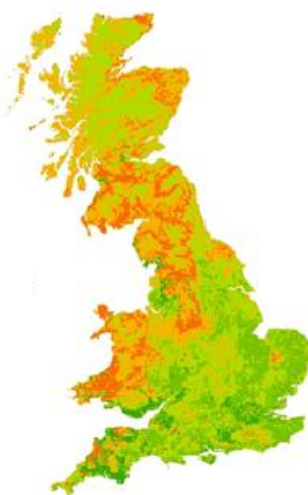
**Market value gain**  
+ £420 million per annum  
relative to the current baseline

Change in agricultural values (FGM £/ha/yr)



### Nature at Work Scenario

Sustainable use of natural resources to maximise net ecosystem service values



**Market value loss**  
- £510 million per annum  
relative to the current baseline



# Why ecosystem service valuation matters

## Best option



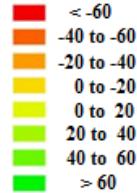
**World Markets Scenario**  
 eased intensification of  
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 maximise market values

**Market value gain**  
 + £420 million per annum  
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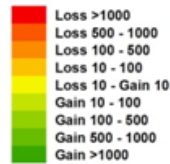
Change in agricultural values (FGM £/ha/yr)



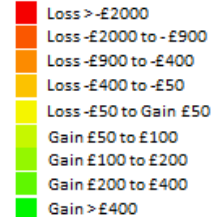
Change in GHG emission values (£/ha/yr)



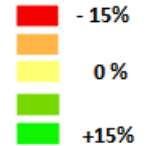
Change in recreation value (£'000/5km cell/yr)



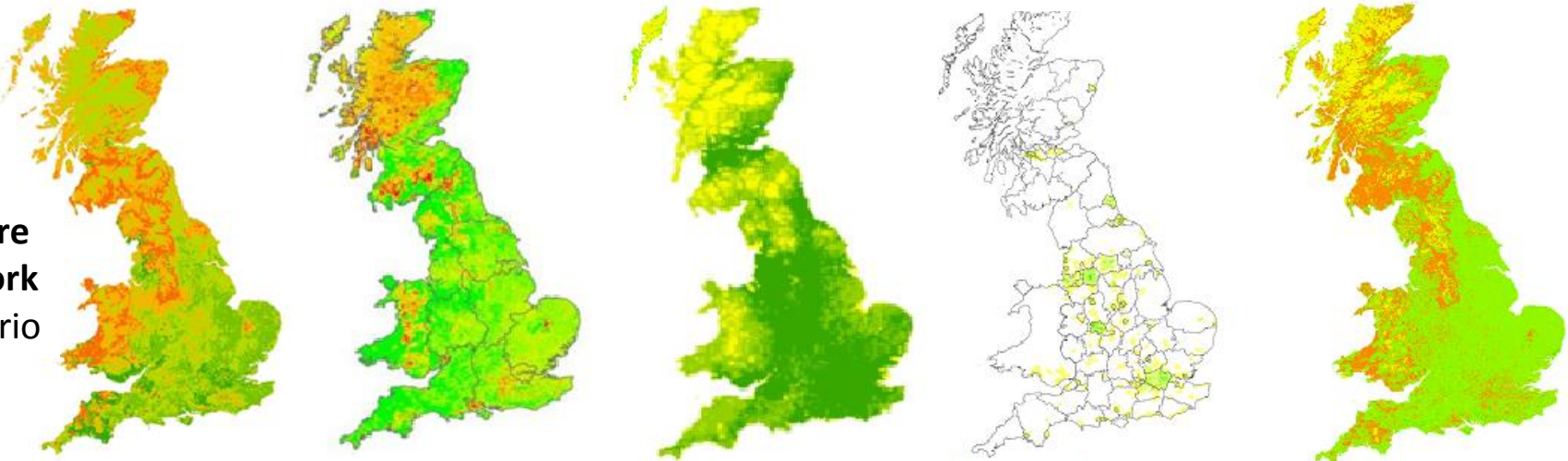
Change in urban greenspace values (£/household/yr)



Biodiversity index: Change in general bird diversity (%)



**Nature at Work Scenario**





# Why ecosystem service valuation matters

**World Markets Scenario**

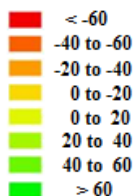
**Net value loss**  
 - £20,600 million per annum  
 relative to the current baseline



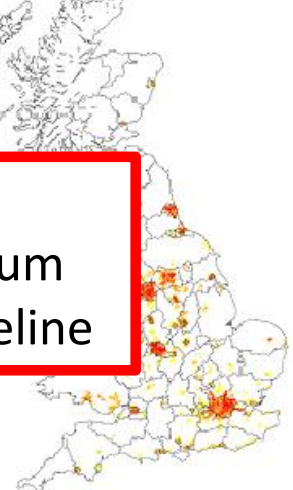
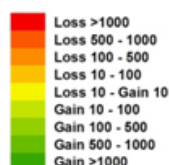
Change in agricultural values (FGM £/ha/yr)



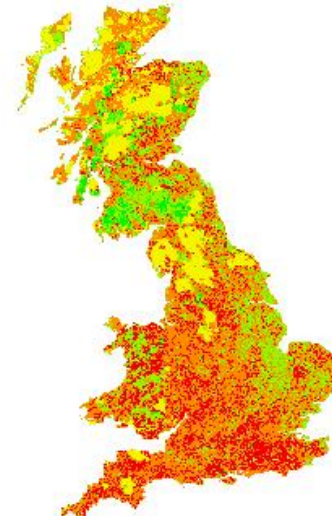
Change in GHG emission values (£/ha/yr)



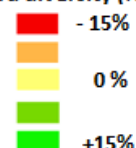
Change in recreation value (£'000/5km cell/yr)



Change in urban greenspace values (£/household/yr)

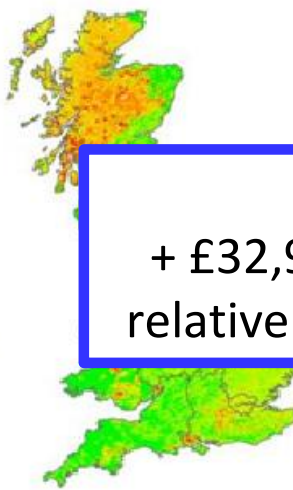


Biodiversity index: Change in general bird diversity (%)



**Nature at Work Scenario**

**Net value gain**  
 + £32,900 million per annum  
 relative to the current baseline





# The business case for an ambitious NC policy (1)

- **NC improvements will strengthen the UK's resilience and wellbeing, improving business competitiveness and risk management.**

**Businesses use NC to describe all natural resources that provide goods and services of value. These goods and services benefits include the provision of healthy air, clean water, food, timber and opportunities for recreation as well as the regulation of flood risk and climate. Any business case for NC improvements starts with assessing the benefits of these goods and services. But some reasons for protecting and restoring the natural environment are not captured in NC arguments, and businesses may choose to act for more altruistic or reputational reasons.**





# The business case for an ambitious NC policy (2)

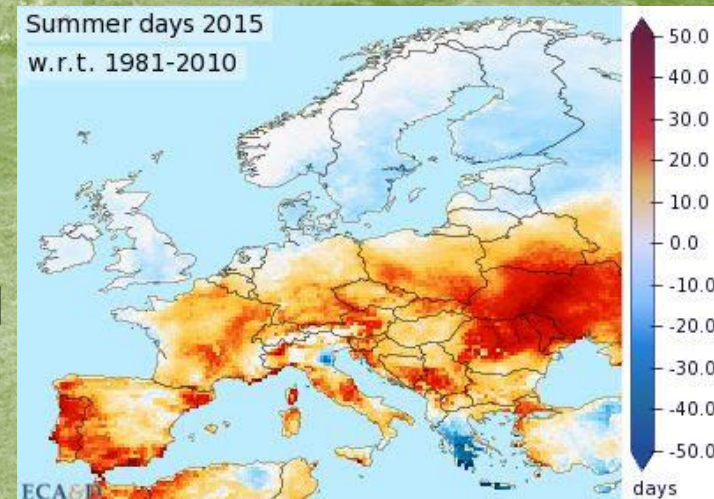
- **Understanding NC reveals deep business reliance on goods and services that nature provides: for products and supply chains; from profits to health.**
- **The interdependency of economic and urban development, job creation and the natural world means NC policy has broad economic, security and social implications.**
- **The UK will derive significant economic benefits from maintaining and improving its natural assets:**
  - **English green space access, £2.1bn averted health costs**
  - **Natural coastal defences - £1.5bn/year**
  - **Optimise public woodland planting c £550m/year**
- **NC projects can also provide excellent investment opportunities.**
- **Business can manage risk more effectively using NC and will benefit in terms of resilience and competitiveness – in long term.**





# Improving NC through better policy integration (1)

- A joined up NC approach offers a route to greater efficiencies and cost savings for both government and business.
- Better integration between different policy areas could help improve NC and other connected objectives in a more cost-effective way eg agriculture, water supply and flood risk reduction:
  - £100bn from taxes and bills will be spent in next 15 years on water supply, flood protection and in agriculture;
  - Procuring integrated solutions will deliver more value; and
  - Avoid current antagonistic spending of individual budgets.
- Similar opportunities exist in health and social care, major infrastructure development and coastal defences.
- Integrate with climate change adaptation.
- Climate change is a key business risk and will exacerbate natural environment pressures and dependencies.





# Improving NC through better policy integration (2)

## WALLASEA ISLAND WILD COAST PROJECT

A unique collaboration between the RSPB and Crossrail, more than three million tonnes of earth tunnelled from beneath London's streets is transforming Wallasea Island into the largest habitat creation project of its type in Europe. Once complete, Wallasea will provide a wetland haven for thousands of migratory birds and become one of the UK's most innovative flood defence systems.

### Benefits:

- Reduced flood risk management costs
- Employment creation
- Avoided disruption to navigation
- Additional carbon sink of 4 t/ha/year.
- Tourism and leisure industry growth
- Biodiversity enhancement
- New protected species habitats





# A pathway to a NC investment strategy

- Funding NC projects with long-term returns is a key barrier
- Success often depends on quality of Government regulations
- Tools are taxes, regulation, procurement and developer compensation
- Embed maintaining/repairing NC in licences
- Use opportunity of Brexit for reform of support to the farming and fishing communities, reward activities that improve land and marine natural assets – public money for public good
- Nurture new markets for ecosystem services and biodiversity – EMTF identified >£1bn in biodiversity offsetting/habitat banking alone
- Use Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES):
  - Beneficiaries of an environmental service pay those who maintain the ecosystem that provides it
  - PES schemes outside water sector struggling without any regulatory support
- Need new sources of capital to invest eg:
  - Privatised Green Investment Bank?
  - National Infrastructure Commission?
  - Green bonds
- Business needs reduced policy risk especially post Brexit





# Incorporating NC in policy & corporate decision making

- **Measuring reliance on natural resources enables better public policy and business decision making and supports economic growth**
- **Providing measurement tools to assess the value of nature helps:**
  - **ensure that the benefits and services are counted;**
  - **develop business cases for investment;**
  - **allocate resources for maintenance of existing services; and**
  - **reduce risks of NC depletion.**
- **Measurement, valuation and accounting of nature are all urgent needs to measure business reliance on natural resources and the efficiency with which they use them.**
- **Also urgent to formulate replacements for CAP and CFP**
- **Government National Accounts (2020) & ONS role**
- **Key developments to be discussed further are:**
  - ***Corporate Natural Capital Accounting***
  - ***The Natural Capital Protocol***





# What next for institutional arrangements?

- **Strengthening institutions such as the Natural Capital Committee (NCC) will safeguard the UK's NC strategy and signal to business that policies will be consistent in delivering NC enhancement.**
- **Business needs the NCC to monitor the state of our NC, oversee integration of NC metrics in the national accounts by 2020, and help development of markets for ecosystem services.**
- **The 25-year environment and food and farming plan(s) need clear milestones to reverse decline of their respective natural assets. Must state that the UK's NC must be enhanced for the benefit of the economy, business resilience and competitiveness, as well as for wider society and the environment.**
- **Restoration of our NC should underpin new national policies post Brexit and new trade deals**





# For more information

See your Aldersgate Group report:  
“Investing in Our Natural Assets: How  
Government Can Support Business Action”  
Also contains eight case studies

[www.aldersgategroup.org.uk](http://www.aldersgategroup.org.uk)

## Thank you

