



LINK TCV Scotland joint Report:
A green recovery for Scotland: 2
Jobs and training in a greener future



Scottish
Environment
LINK

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There are 4 parts of this document:

Part 1: A National Nature Service – what is one?

Part 2: What would a Nature Restoration and Training Programme deliver for Scotland?

Part 3: What is needed to make it work?

Part 4: What would its impact be?

Executive summary:

Scotland as a country and a society is highly dependent on its environment, landscapes and wildlife. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the fundamental importance of nature and the outdoors to Scotland's economic prosperity, equality of access and the impact on the nation's physical and mental health. Moving towards a green recovery should be based around building an economic and social recovery in a clean and healthy environment. Building the potential for nature based jobs and increasing the skills for those jobs amongst all sectors of society, but particularly younger generations who will be hardest hit by the economic impact and the ongoing environmental crises, is vital.

This paper considers a proposed approach in England, called the National Nature Service, and the potential value of a similar approach for Scotland, designed around Scotland's needs and opportunities. This would provide a basis of a green recovery that provides nature based jobs across Scotland geographically and socially and delivers real progress towards decreasing carbon emissions and halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity.

This is the second in a series of LINK's green recovery reports.

Part 1: A National Nature Service – what is one?

- Jobs programme
- Transferable skills
- Improve greenspaces in deprived communities
- Deliver programmes for climate and for nature

A National Nature Service has been proposed in England as a jobs programme that will enable unemployed people to find paid work and training in nature conservation, at the same time as rebuilding depleted natural resources¹. The idea is based on the successful 'Citizen Conservation Corps' work programme enacted by Franklin D. Roosevelt following the Great Depression, which put 3 million people to work in the US and planted 3 billion trees.

The vision of the NNS is, with investment, to:

¹ <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/NNS%20August%20letter%20-%202020.08.20.pdf>



- Rapidly provide a wide range of entry-level jobs across the country.
- Give National Nature Service employees transferable skills to prepare them for on-going jobs in nature conservation, in the growing green economy and beyond.
- Create green spaces in deprived communities to improve health and mental wellbeing.
- Contribute to achieving a number of Government initiatives.

In Scotland, these Government initiatives include:

1. Scotland's Environment Strategy (Feb 2020)² aims to: *By 2045: By restoring nature and ending Scotland's contribution to climate change, our country is transformed for the better - helping to secure the wellbeing of our people and planet for generations to come.*
2. Climate Change Action Plan updated December 2020³: sets out the Scottish Government's pathway to the targets set by the Climate Change Act 2019 and towards the green recovery from COVID-19 by capturing the opportunities of our just transition to net zero. That means creating green jobs, developing sustainable skills and nurturing wellbeing
3. Biodiversity Statement of Intent ⁴(Dec 2020): *to step up global ambition for biodiversity, by endorsing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature... committing, now, to increasing protected areas for nature to at least 30% of our terrestrial area by 2030 [and] to develop ambitious new proposals which will deliver positive effects for biodiversity through development*
4. Economic Recovery Implementation Plan (August 2020): refocusing skills strategy to improve access to reskilling and retraining to meet future skills needs in a green economy
5. Delivery of nature-based solutions to support Scotland's climate change adaptation plan⁵ and to address other local issues such as air quality⁶

A similar approach could work in Scotland, designed to fit with Scotland's very different policy aims and ambitions on tackling climate change, halting the loss of biodiversity and building a green recovery, with sufficient investment and as a partnership project between government and civic society. This would fit with the Scottish Government's commitment to support those impacted by the Pandemic, particularly young people, back into work across Scotland. A training programme designed to deliver skills and a better environment, would meet Scotland's immediate and urgent needs.

The risk is that without repairing our damaged natural infrastructure, the ongoing decline in species including pollinators, soil damage, fisheries depletion, flood risk and climate risk will all conspire to undermine any long-term economic recovery from Covid⁷.

A National Nature Service: does Scotland need one?

In Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, we face 2 problems.

Problem 1: Nature needs urgent investment

Scotland is renowned world wide for its landscapes and nature, which is all the more reason why investment in nature to support thousands of people with jobs and which will pay dividends for

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/environment-strategy-scotland-vision-outcomes/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-post-2020-statement-intent/>

⁵ [Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation programme 2019-2024 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-ready-scotland-climate-change-adaptation-programme-2019-2024-gov.scot/)

⁶ [Scottish air quality Scotland Cleaner Air](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-air-quality-scotland-cleaner-air/)

⁷ <https://www.wcl.org.uk/more-haste-less-project-speed-one-week-for-a-green-recovery-recovery.asp>



generations to come by giving nature a helping hand should be a central part of the Scottish Government's green recovery strategy.

In Scotland, the State of Nature Scotland 2019 report⁸ showed that 1 in 9 species in Scotland is at risk of extinction.

State of Nature Scotland 2019: what is driving these changes?

1. How we farm and manage our land
2. Climate change
3. How we manage our freshwater systems
4. Development and urbanisation
5. How we manage our woodlands
6. Pollution
7. The impact of non native invasive species
8. Ocean acidification
9. How we fish

These drivers of change operate everywhere – on land, at sea and on the coast. If we are to halt the loss of nature, respond to climate change and protect what we have today for future generations, we all need to work together to tackle them. Government cannot do this alone and neither can business or civic society. We all need to work together, invest our time and money together.

One example of an approach that delivers for all of this is to continue to develop and build nature networks. You can find out what these are and why we need them through LINK's short film [here](#).

Problem 2: Unemployment is rising

The unemployment rate in Scotland (prior to the current lockdown) was 4.5%. This equates to 126,000 people looking for work. Young people have been hard hit by this. Estimates suggest that youth unemployment in Scotland could reach 100,000 over the winter (youth unemployment in April 2018 was 25,000)⁹

UK unemployment is likely to reach 2.6 million¹⁰ in the middle of 2021, according to the government's economic watchdog, or 7.5%

Young people have been hard hit by this. 14.6% of young people unemployed in the UK, compared to 4.8% of the general population. The Alliance for Full Employment estimating that youth unemployment in Scotland could reach 100,000 over the winter.

➤ Solution: Nature Restoration and Training Programme

A scheme like a National Nature Service would provide a way for us all to get involved, to help rebuild nature, tackle the impact of climate change and build a greener recovery to COVID-19 through jobs for all ages in the countryside and urban areas and skills that we need in this greener future.

A year's employment in this scheme would train people up to access a range of jobs within the nature and environment sector, as well as providing transferable skills to equip graduates to find employment across all sectors.

⁸ [State of Nature Scotland 2019 report](#)

⁹ <https://www.ippr.org/blog/what-does-covid-19-mean-for-the-labour-market-prospects-of-young-people-in-scotland>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55072987>



Part 2: What would a Nature Restoration and Training Programme deliver for Scotland?

- Jobs
- Training relevant to range of sectors plus transferable skills
- Improved mental and physical health
- Benefits for nature and society

Jobs

The proposal submitted to the UK Government was for 15,000 Living Wage jobs in England. We would need to work up the detail in Scotland, but in broad terms if we applied a 10% principle this could be 1500 high quality jobs, with training attached. These jobs could be the length and breadth of Scotland (both urban and rural).

Government aspirations to mitigate Climate change and tackle biodiversity loss will require jobs and careers in new sectors and in new ways of working. A recent report¹¹, commissioned by Nature Scot, aimed to provide an initial assessment of future employment opportunities related to investment in natural capital and the skills required. However, this used sectoral jobs numbers based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), which, in considering jobs dependent on the environment, does not distinguish easily between those in environment exploitation and those that contribute to its sustainable management. SIC codes only allow public sector and charitable sector jobs to be quantified broadly, so many of the jobs in NGOs and government that are at the core of natural capital management are excluded. More work needs to be done on this topic.

Training

A key part of the initiative would be provision of training. There would be broad environmental training and project specific. This could be supplemented by relevant industry-recognised qualifications such as LANTRA. This training will support the employability of participants long-after the programme has ended.

Core transferable skills will include effective communications, digital and IT skills, data analysis, team working, accountability, problem solving and project management. These skills will support participants to be equipped for jobs not just in the environment or green economy. They are valuable skills sought by a range of employers.

Environmental skills will include general understanding of ecosystems, climate change and the green economy, as well as the project specific skills, like tree planting and care, tool and in some cases heavy equipment use, basic wetland management, environmental monitoring / data collection and flood protection.

The on-the-job skills could be supplemented by relevant LANTRA qualifications (e.g. Conservation on the Farm or Safe Use of Pesticides Practical Horticulture, Fire Safety Awareness, First Aid, John Muir Awards) which are industry recognised and have 'currency' within other sectors)

Employability and entrepreneurship skills would come at the end of the year long programme and in addition to CV writing skills and research skills, will also include leadership (including in some cases management of volunteers) and entrepreneurship skills so that the graduates of the programme are able to adapt to the new green economy and a changing world.

Environment benefits

¹¹ <https://www.nature.scot/naturescot-research-report-1257-supporting-green-recovery-initial-assessment-nature-based-jobs-and>



A national nature training programme would contribute to action needed for the climate and nature emergencies and would meet many Scottish Government ambitions, including tree planting, peatland restoration and nature protection. Funding for this initiative could restart/boost programmes that, in turn, deliver on Government ambitions and environmental needs. Scottish Government targets and ambitions 2020 onwards include:

- Contributing to the Government target to plant 36 million trees a year
- Restore 230,000 ha peatland by 2030
- Green spaces delivery towards Infrastructure Commission recommendations to address critical natural and built infrastructure climate resilience and adaptation needs.
- Flood protection through investing in Scotland's natural infrastructure to meet Government targets to protect homes and businesses¹²
- Supporting farmers to deliver on nature and climate targets and contribute to rural communities
- Extending the area protected for nature in Scotland to at least 30% of our land area by 2030,¹³

Environmental NGOs across Scotland have a range of projects that they have been planning for over the last few years that have now hit the buffers because of the pandemic. However, these projects could, if funded, deliver towards the ambitions above as well as provide direct action for nature and climate as well as skills and jobs right across Scotland¹⁴. Examples include:

The Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest (ASR) aims to work collaboratively to restore one of Scotland's most important habitats – coastal temperate rainforest, of which Scotland has some of the best examples. **Saving Morvern's Rainforest**, led by RSPB Scotland, is an ambitious £4 million project to clear Morvern peninsula of rhododendron, expand native forest, control deer - working closely with the local community, landowners, partners. As well as restoring habitat, this project will also deliver rural jobs, training, and opportunities for vols and tourism, skills development.

Joining the Dots for Nature: Soil Association, Buglife, Plantlife: building bigger, better well-connected habitats across Scotland's farmed landscapes. The project will facilitate practical management work and nature and climate friendly farming practices to build healthier and bigger well-connected habitats (joining the dots for nature) across farmed landscapes benefitting wildlife (especially priority species), protecting ecosystems services and providing opportunities for more people to connect with nature. It would provide training and work opportunities through the proposed nature training initiative.

Community Food Hubs: Nourish and Soil Association: this is an ambitious Scotland-wide proposal, delivered at local authority level, with the focus will be on creating shorter, greener and ethical supply chains which connect local food producers (farms, urban growers, social and community enterprises etc.) with local consumers; and using the power of public procurement to catalyse development of local supply chain networks across different geographies.

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-draft-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-202122-202526/pages/7/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-post-2020-statement-intent/>

¹⁴ <https://www.scotlink.org/publication/green-recovery-1-people-land-and-sea/>



We also need to think of the knock-on benefits of these improvements for people and for nature. For example, improved urban greenspaces will have many health and wellbeing benefits for communities who most need them and who have been most adversely affected by the pandemic.

LINK have commissioned a report, updating Delivering the Goods (2008)¹⁵ that assess how projects like these deliver for nature, landscapes and Scotland's people. This will be published in February 2021.

Part 3: What is needed to make it work?

Funding

The funding ask for the England proposals in 2021 for 15,000 jobs (and numerous nature and environmental outcomes) was **£741 million**. This consisted of:

- £426 million for the National Nature Service (NNS), which would provide the people power to deliver a core range of conservation projects.
- A further £315 million to deliver 300 'shovel ready' nature projects that would form the balance of employment for the NNS

Funding the 'shovel ready' projects would optimise meaningful nature outcomes as well as significantly increasing the types of works the rangers could be involved in.

The costs accounts for every participant being paid the National Living Wage. It also includes the cost of supervisor salaries at a ratio of one supervisor to every 6-7 NNS rangers as well as one training development staff member for every 25 rangers. The calculations also include a 30% contribution to delivery partner overheads such as insurance, human resources, senior leadership and planning.

If we applied the loose 10% rule based on population estimates then Scotland could have such a programme for £74million (£42m on wages and £32m on nature projects). There may be budgets already available that could support some of these costs such as Kickstart for the wages and Biodiversity Challenge Fund for nature projects. Neither of these exactly fits the bill, the BCF is time limited to a single year for example. If a portion of Kickstart could be ring-fenced for nature jobs, the nature sector could promote a coordinated offer to young people under the banner of a National Nature Service. However, this would require extra flexibility in the Kickstart system to enable placements to last a year – this is how long it takes to support the skills young people need to deliver the projects that need to happen.

£74 million is a lot of money. To give you a picture of how this compares to other costs – a mile of dual carriageway on a regular motorway (no tunnels or flyovers) costs on average £30m, according to the Highways Agency¹⁶. So this programme equates to 2.5 miles of new motorway.

Budgets already committed that can contribute towards this, but there will be a gap. Some examples of these include:

Kickstart UK fund: £2 billion across the UK from July 2020 - December 2021.

Biodiversity Challenge Fund: £3 million in 2021 – total since 2019 = £7 million

¹⁵ <https://www.scotlink.org/publication/delivering-the-goods/>

¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13924687>



2020 – 2025 commitments; £150 million by 2025 on tree planting; £250 million to 2030 on peatland restoration¹⁷. Green Jobs Fund: £100 million. Referenced in the updated climate change plan as an additional £500 million of investment in our natural economy, with peatland restoration and woodland creation helping to enhance biodiversity and create good, green jobs whilst tackling climate change.¹⁸

Better places Green Recovery Fund¹⁹ Scotland £200,000. This compares to Green Challenge Fund, England £40 million

Infrastructure

This initiative would need infrastructure and coordination support to ensure consistent implementation. The voluntary sector in Scotland already has good working relationships, which is being developed with further engagement with NatureScot, SG, Skills Development Scotland and funders such as NLHF, and through which this initiative could be delivered.

Part 4: What would its impact be?

These are all words and it is real people that bring these things to life. Meet Stacey, a TCV trainee, and let her tell you about the possible impact of a programme like this [here](#).

Bringing more people into nature restoration and equipping them with skills to help bring environmental as well as social benefits. Find out more about one of them, nature networks, [here](#).

This briefing has been produced by members of LINK's [Green Recovery Group](#) and [TCV Scotland](#)

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Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with 40 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

TCV, The Conservation Volunteers, works across the UK to create healthier and happier communities for everyone. We do this by connecting people and green spaces to deliver lasting outcomes for both. For over sixty years we have adapted our work with volunteers to reflect the changing needs of communities in the UK and, by giving people a sense of purpose and belonging, we have empowered them to take control of their lives and outdoor spaces for the benefit of all.



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment



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¹⁷ <https://www.nature.scot/nature-fund-open-new-applications>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/news/steering-scotlands-pathway-to-net-zero/>

¹⁹ <https://www.nature.scot/new-green-recovery-fund-help-manage-visitors-nature-hotspots>