

# Together for Nature

2023 – 2030



Thriving nature for a sustainable future



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# Message from the Chair and Chief Executive

Nature is in crisis around the world with species and habitats declining, ecosystem processes failing rapidly and people becoming disconnected from the natural world on which they depend. The intertwined crises of ecological collapse and climate breakdown, alongside continuing pollution, are already having a significant impact on people's prosperity and wellbeing in many countries. We are only at the beginning of the most profound change to nature seen in our lifetimes.

There is an urgent need to understand the changes we are seeing and to use this knowledge to help nature recover. Action is still possible and this decade is a key period for nature conservation and recovery: achieving the new global 2030 targets agreed by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework), and tackling the impact of climate on nature will be key to our future wellbeing.

## Nature conservation and recovery in the UK and globally

We have a long tradition of nature conservation in the UK based on a range of species protection measures, habitat conservation, and protected area designations and management. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) has been at the heart of this work over the past thirty years and continues to play a key role at the UK and international levels. These approaches are the bedrock of how we can meet future challenges and enable nature recovery in terrestrial (rural and urban environments) and marine ecosystems, along with the development of greater public awareness and involvement in looking after the environment.



Alongside these ‘traditional’ approaches to nature conservation, developing concepts such as ecosystem services and natural capital, which are explicitly informed by social science and economic analyses, can begin to reveal the true value of nature and how we depend on it for our collective prosperity and wellbeing.

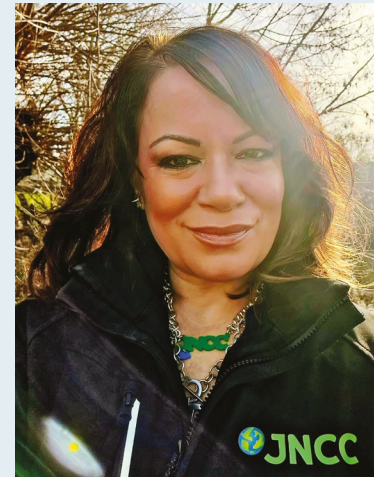
## JNCC's vision

‘Together for Nature’ outlines the areas of work that JNCC will undertake, focusing on our role in terrestrial and marine nature conservation and recovery, at the UK level, working with the UK Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies and inputting evidence and advice to global nature issues.

Our core approach, as a UK statutory body, is to work with the country nature conservation bodies (the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (Northern Ireland), Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot) to advise governments across the UK on nature conservation and recovery.

JNCC’s role is to help understand cross-UK impacts, advise on how they can be managed, and to enable the sharing of experience across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We are a science-based organisation, using robust evidence, data and information to inform our analysis, judgement and advice.

The strategy presented here includes the development of new partnerships and the strengthening of JNCC’s facilitation and convening role to help ensure that our work is based on the best available science and has greater impact and profile in the years ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Gemma'.

**Dr Gemma Harper OBE FAcSS**  
Chief Executive, JNCC



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Colin'.

**Professor Colin Galbraith FRSE**  
Chair, JNCC

# Who we are



The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the only statutory nature advisor to all four countries of the UK. We provide robust scientific evidence and advice to help decision makers turn science into action for nature to guide the UK on a sustainable path. We work across land and sea with partners throughout the UK, the UK Overseas Territories, the Crown Dependencies and around the world. For over 30 years our trusted expertise, dedication and skills have underpinned nature conservation and recovery. We know that a thriving natural world is essential for humanity's prosperity and wellbeing. We use our convening power to bring stakeholders together to drive innovative action in the interests of local and global nature conservation and recovery.



## Our Scope

Our work covers the four countries of the UK, UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and is global, building connected communities for nature at multiple scales (further details of JNCC's statutory duties are available in Annex A). We provide a shared evidence base, fostering collective effort and collaboration amongst the countries and territories in pursuit of common environmental goals. We work around the world to support the implementation and development of international nature agreements, to build an inclusive global community where expertise is shared.

## Our Structure

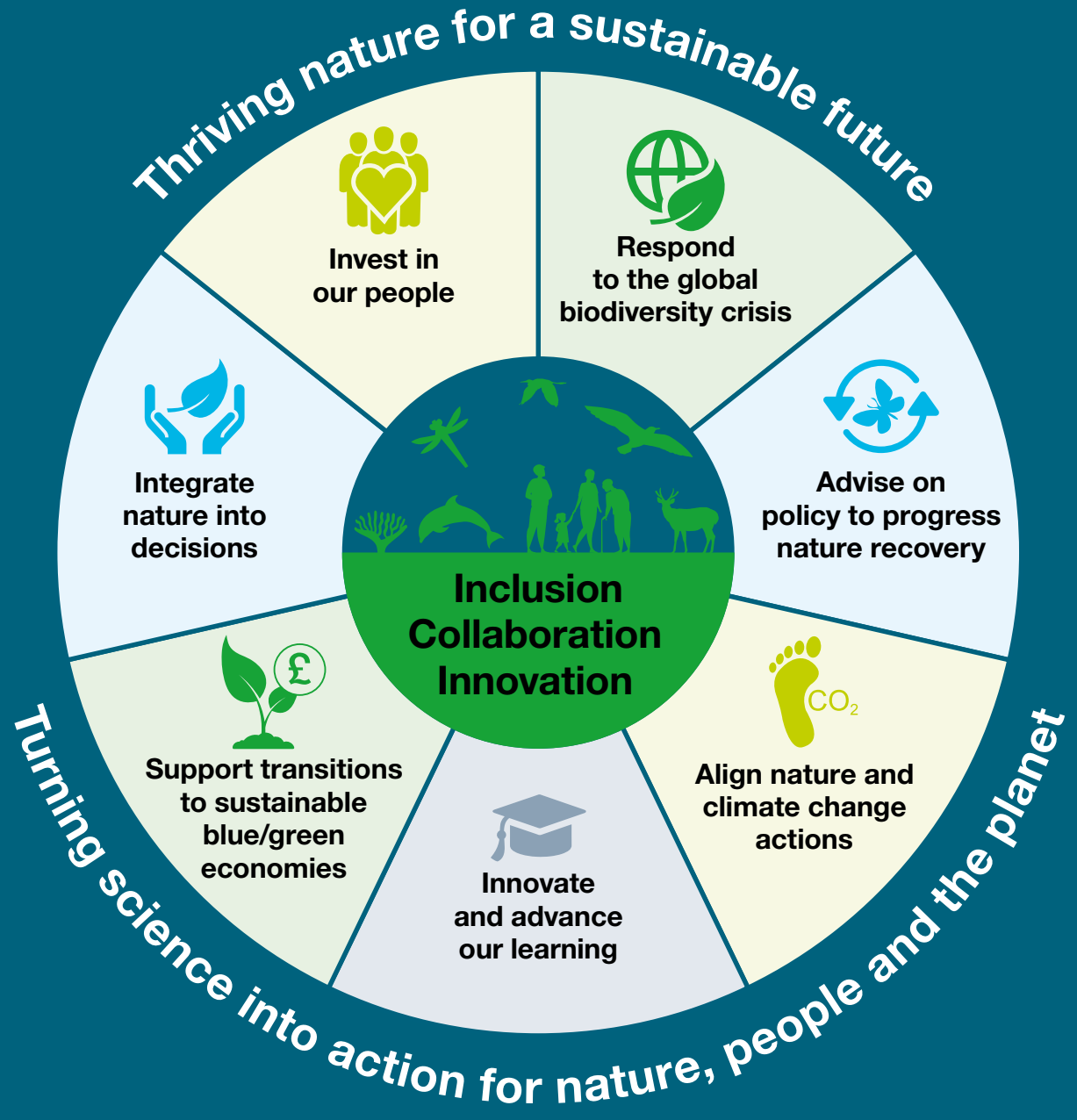
We are led and governed by the Joint Committee, which brings together members from the country nature conservation bodies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and independent members appointed by the UK Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under an independent Chair. The work of JNCC is led by the Executive Leadership Team, supported by teams of scientific experts, data analysts and corporate services professionals.

## Vision

Thriving nature for a sustainable future.

## Mission

Turning science into action for nature, people and the planet.





# Our Strategic Priorities

We will:



Use our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.



Use our trusted expertise and judgement to evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and advise on the design of new policies and action to progress nature recovery.



Lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.



Continue to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery so that science, technology and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.



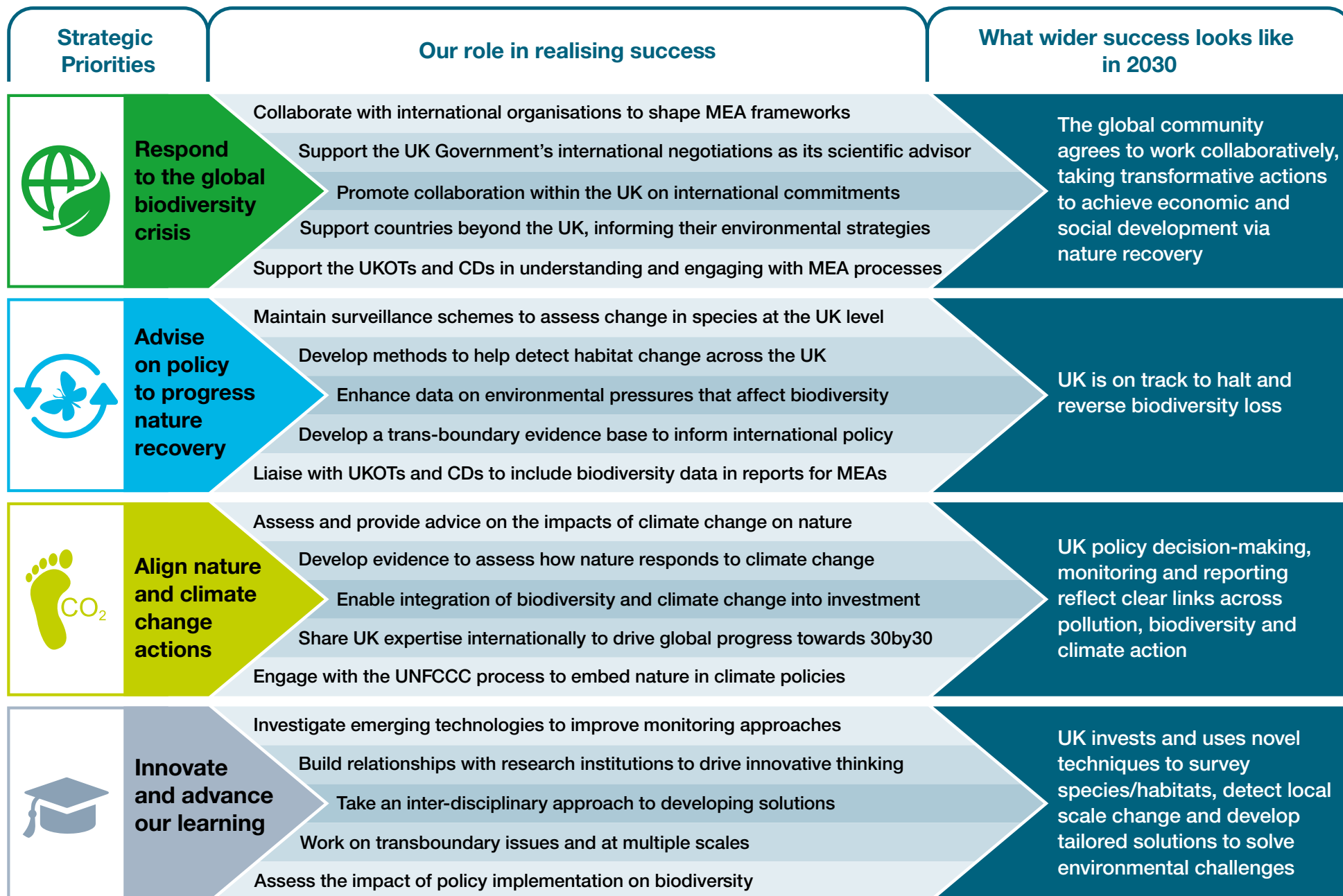
Work collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.



Seek opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.



Invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative and innovative learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised and our partners are engaged and respected.







**Note:** Further information on our strategic priorities and JNCC's role in delivering these are provided in Annex B

**Key abbreviation list:** 30by30 – Effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of the Earth's land and of the ocean by 2030 through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, CDs – Crown Dependencies, MEA – Multilateral Environmental Agreement, ODA – Official Development Assistance, UKOTs – UK Overseas Territories, UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



# Our Values

Our values guide our strategic priorities into action, driving results, outcomes and impact. As a statutory body, the Nolan Principles are embedded in our culture. We adhere to our three core values – inclusion, collaboration and innovation.

“ I am proud to be part of an inclusive organisation that is committed to nature recovery and values its people. A workplace with a remarkable culture where personal growth is nurtured and encouraged, voices are heard and innovative ideas are welcomed and curiosity can be explored. ”

**Rachael Howlett, JNCC**





# Values



## Inclusion

We embrace, respect and accept difference, recognising its importance to our culture and our success in delivering our mission. We will address systemic and structural barriers to enable all our people to thrive.



## Collaboration

We convene governments, academia, industry and civil society to address problems and to develop solutions, supporting and strengthening the resilience of natural systems, which are the foundation for resource security, economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.



## Innovation

We adapt cutting-edge techniques and unique solutions and employ them to help nature recover. We strive for excellence; our agile ways of working allow us to play a courageous role in nature conservation and recovery.



“ JNCC works across the Overseas Territories providing specialist support and expertise on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Territories. By working collaboratively and in partnership with Overseas Territory governments JNCC is able to tailor its work to the priorities of individual Territories, thereby ensuring real and lasting benefits on the ground. ”

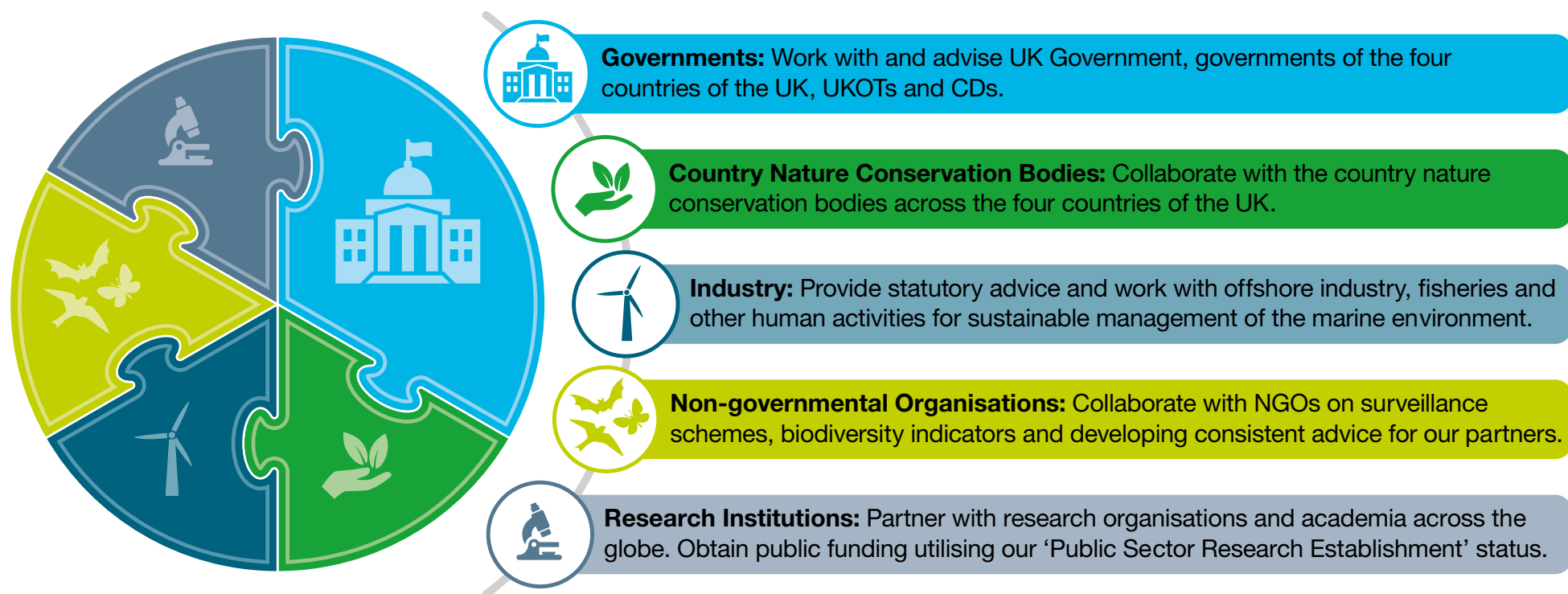
**Tracy Knight**, former Chair of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) and Turks and Caicos Islands Government Representative to the UK





# Our Partnerships

We will strengthen our partnerships and welcome further opportunities through the diversification of our funding base. This will increase JNCC's resilience and enable us to provide a high-quality service to governments and other customers. By working together, we can share knowledge, expertise and experience, promoting innovation and providing robust and cost-effective ways of developing evidence and advice.



“ BTO is delighted to be part of a valuable and rewarding partnership with JNCC. Our collaboration enables thousands of volunteer observers to play an active role in securing a better future for UK's biodiversity by contributing to long-term, large-scale surveys of breeding and wintering birds. ”

**Juliet Vickery**, Chief Executive Officer, British Trust for Ornithology





# Measuring our Impact

We will realise our vision through a set of delivery plans across JNCC's business areas, and operational cross-cutting support functions. These plans will be guiding maps for the organisation, setting out key outputs, outcomes and metrics to help us measure our impact. We will set bold targets against our objectives and hold ourselves publicly accountable. We will adapt our work to maximise our impact and will respond to change in a flexible and timely way.





# Our Commitment to Sustainable Working

We make the following commitments relating to financial, environmental and social sustainability.

## Financial

We can only achieve the ambitions set out in this strategy if the organisation is financially secure over the short, medium and long-term. To attain this, we will:

- Work with existing funders and potential partners across UK governments and other bodies to ensure we are delivering their needs in a way which secures value and demonstrates our impact.
- Collaborate with research institutions and other organisations to secure a diverse pipeline of public sector and commercial income streams.

## Environmental

We are passionate about the environment and know we can do more to reduce our impact on the planet. We will:

- Audit JNCC's environmental impact and develop a comprehensive set of policies and actions to minimise impacts.
- Achieve the ISO14001 standard for environmental management and develop, maintain and report on sustainable operations across all parts of the business.

## Social

We believe in our core values of inclusion, collaboration and innovation and will embed these in the way we work to develop the social capital within the organisation, with our partners and with the communities we serve. We will:

- Be good neighbours to the communities in and around our key locations, reaching out through schools and community groups to communicate the challenges facing our natural world and to build support for action for nature conservation and recovery.
- Listen and learn from our partners at home and abroad to understand their needs and to build capacity and capability through sharing knowledge and skills on an equal footing.



# Celebrating our Success

## Advising conservation policy: Developing the UK MPA network

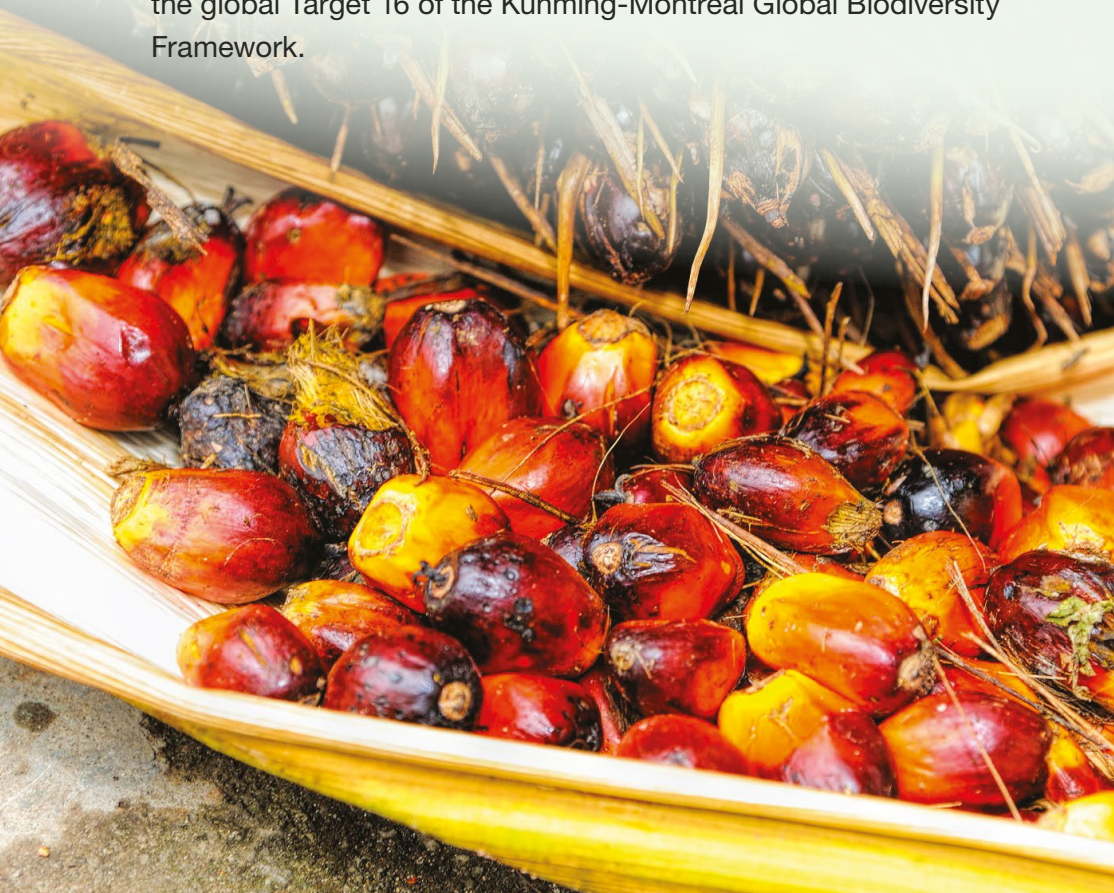
JNCC experts have provided scientific advice to help identify and designate marine protected areas (MPAs) in the UK's offshore waters, extending from the edge of territorial waters (12 nm from the coast) out to the UK Continental Shelf. The first offshore sites were designated in 2008. As of 2022, there were 76 MPAs with a total extent of over 260,000 km<sup>2</sup> in UK offshore waters, larger than the land area of the UK. These sites provide vital protection to conserve and recover marine biodiversity.





## Integrating the value of nature into decision making: Assessing the UK's global environmental footprint

Acknowledging the UK's environmental impact overseas has become increasingly important. For over 15 years, JNCC has been undertaking work aimed at understanding the complexities of measuring the environmental impacts of UK consumption globally and the accompanying trade-offs. For example, what effects do UK consumer choices have on other countries? We have led the development of the first ever indicator exploring this topic that allows for a detailed breakdown of impact by commodity and country. This has been included as a component indicator for measuring progress towards the global Target 16 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.



## Assessing and measuring changes in nature: Surveillance and monitoring of the UK's terrestrial habitats

For over 30 years volunteer-based species recording schemes have been at the heart of what JNCC does. They are now complemented by the use of satellite technology, which has revolutionised environmental monitoring in ways that could barely have been imagined. Combining satellite data with other data sources and undertaking sophisticated modelling have moved us beyond basic habitat mapping and monitoring to detecting change both in the UK and overseas. Recently, new schemes have been developed, such as the National Plant Monitoring Scheme and the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. Existing schemes have evolved to keep up with the fast-paced world we live in. These innovative schemes help to sharpen the picture of how nature is faring, allow us to measure progress and target action to help nature recover.





# Annex A

JNCC's statutory duties are enshrined in the NERC Act 2006

JNCC was established under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and reconstituted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Its principal statutory remit is set out in Part 2 of that Act, section 34 of which states “**34. Functions of national or international significance**”

(1) The UK conservation bodies have the functions described in subsection (2), but those functions may be discharged only through the joint committee.

(2) The functions are

(a) providing advice to the appropriate authorities on the development and implementation of policies for or affecting any nature conservation matter which

- (i) arises throughout the United Kingdom and raises issues common to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland,
- (ii) arises in one or more (but not all) of those places and affects the interests of the United Kingdom as a whole, or
- (iii) arises outside the United Kingdom;

(b) providing advice to any persons and disseminating knowledge about any matter falling within paragraph (a)(i), (ii) or (iii);

(c) establishing common standards throughout the United Kingdom for the monitoring of nature conservation and for research into nature conservation and the analysis of the resulting information;

(d) commissioning or supporting (whether by financial means or otherwise) research which the joint committee thinks is relevant to any matter mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c).

(3) “The appropriate authorities” means—

- (a) the Secretary of State (or any other Minister of the Crown),
- (b) the National Assembly for Wales,
- (c) the Scottish Ministers, and
- (d) the relevant Northern Ireland department

## Statutory duties and other responsibilities

JNCC is the only statutory nature advisor to the four countries of the UK.

JNCC has been engaged by government to fulfil statutory duties and other responsibilities across a wide range of legislation relating to nature conservation, environmental protection, planning and economic development across land, sea and air.

JNCC complies with the wide range of legislation governing the operations of an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored jointly by Defra and the devolved administrations.




JNCC operates through a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee; the JNCC Support Co. is required to comply with company legislation such as the Companies Act 2006.



# Annex B

Our strategic priorities, which encapsulate the delivery plans for how we will deliver our vision, are summarised below:

Our Strategic Priorities	What wider success will look like in 2030	Our role in realising success
<b>1. Facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis</b> 	<p>Global community agrees to work collaboratively, taking transformative actions to achieve economic and social development through nature conservation and recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JNCC collaborates with international governments and UN bodies to shape multilateral environmental agreement frameworks.</li> <li>JNCC supports the UK Government's international negotiations, representing the UK as a scientific advisor in international meetings.</li> <li>JNCC promotes collaboration within the UK on how the UK's international commitments will be delivered and reported.</li> <li>JNCC supports countries beyond the UK by sharing its UK science expertise to help inform their domestic environmental strategies.</li> <li>JNCC supports the UKOTs and CDs in understanding and engaging with multinational environmental agreement processes.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Advise on policy to progress nature recovery</b> 	<p>UK is on track to achieving Good Environmental Status/Favourable Condition across marine, freshwater and terrestrial habitats; benchmarking progress against other countries/territories. UKOTs and CDs contribute significantly to the UK's overall biodiversity and are working towards delivering national biodiversity plans and evidence to support implementation of UK international obligations, where extended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JNCC maintains and enhances a suite of species surveillance schemes to assess change in a wide range of species groups at UK and country level.</li> <li>JNCC develops a range of methods and supports cost-effective deployment for detection of change across habitats in UK.</li> <li>JNCC maintains and enhances data on key environmental pressures which impact biodiversity.</li> <li>JNCC develops a robust transboundary evidence base for informing international policy and trade decisions.</li> <li>JNCC supports the development of ecosystem monitoring schemes and metrics for biodiversity in the UKOTs.</li> <li>JNCC liaises with relevant UKOTs and CDs concerning data on biodiversity and nature conservation and recovery for inclusion in UK National Reports for several multilateral environmental agreements.</li> </ul>



Our Strategic Priorities	What wider success will look like in 2030	Our role in realising success
<b>3. Align action for nature and climate change</b> 	<p>UK policy decision-making, monitoring and reporting reflect clear links on action across pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. The four countries take a coherent approach to designation and management of protected areas as a cost-effective way to maintain resilience to the broader climate breakdown. The value of nature conservation and recovery is integrated within UK's climate response plans and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JNCC assesses and provides advice on the impacts of climate change on nature, including adapting the protected areas network to be more resilient.</li> <li>• JNCC develops the evidence base to assess how the natural environment helps adapt to, or mitigate the impacts of, climate change.</li> <li>• JNCC develops methods and uses data that enable integration of biodiversity alongside climate change into investment across public and private sectors.</li> <li>• JNCC shares our domestic expertise internationally and drives global progress towards 30by30.</li> <li>• JNCC engages with the UNFCCC process to ensure the role of nature in climate policies.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery</b> 	<p>UK invests in and uses novel technology and techniques to survey species and habitats and assess change of species groups and ecosystems across land and sea. We have greater ability to detect local scale change in biodiversity (and ecosystem services). UK learns from innovative Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and conservation techniques applied abroad to solve domestic challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JNCC evolves its rich evidence base by continuously investigating emerging technologies for monitoring and harnessing the power of technologies to reduce costs and increase scope of monitoring.</li> <li>• JNCC builds relationships with research institutions enabling assimilation of new concepts, methods and tools.</li> <li>• JNCC embraces new methods to problem solving, noting the interlinkages across terrestrial and marine systems, while taking a inter-disciplinary approach to developing solutions.</li> <li>• JNCC works on transboundary issues where conservation measures applied on a local/national scale can be transferred to multiple countries.</li> <li>• JNCC assesses the impact of policy implementation on biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Support the transition to a sustainable blue/green economy</b> 	<p>Spatial prioritisation of land and sea integrates nature conservation and recovery with demands from economic activities, to achieve sustainable economies. Industries objectively assess impacts from their activities, driving sustainable growth whilst minimising impacts on biodiversity. UK and international partners understand and value nature's role in improving related challenges, such as economic development, public health, wellbeing, food and energy security and disaster resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JNCC advises UK competent authorities on plans and projects in the UK offshore marine area that could affect biodiversity and nature recovery.</li> <li>• JNCC works with UK governments and other sectors to identify and develop innovative financing mechanisms for nature-positive projects and strengthen green finance/markets to increase flow of private investment into nature.</li> <li>• JNCC supports UKOTs and ODA countries with evidence, advice, and adoption of natural capital approaches, enabling implementation of innovative demonstration projects to build sustainable livelihoods and businesses.</li> <li>• JNCC provides policy and operational advice on international trade in endangered species and illegal wildlife trade, ensuring ongoing compliance and reductions in pressures on biodiversity from illegal and unsustainable trade.</li> <li>• JNCC supports the development of an evidence base that enables targeting of investment to deliver ecosystem services through enhancing biodiversity or reducing the pressures upon it.</li> </ul>

Our Strategic Priorities	What wider success will look like in 2030	Our role in realising success
<p><b>6. Integrate the value of nature into decision-making</b></p> 	<p>Local and national governments in the UK, UKOTs and CDs, are embedding nature's value in strategic decisions. Key national priorities (e.g., net zero, food security and energy security) are met without compromising the marine, freshwater and terrestrial environment. UK international commitments and policies, such as trade, ODA spending decisions, subsidies, climate plans (UNFCCC NDCs), and others, incorporate nature-positive messages and goals. Land managers integrate biodiversity into their land management decisions to ensure a sustainable food system, businesses integrate nature in their strategic investment and operational decisions, consumers are more aware of their choices and chemicals are used sustainably across the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JNCC provides an enhanced evidence base that enables greater certainty for decision makers across the terrestrial, freshwater and marine policy landscapes.</li> <li>• JNCC facilitates better communication across the science-industry-policy sectors to maximise the impact of efforts each sector is making to develop science-led and evidence-based policy and decision-making.</li> <li>• JNCC synthesises and communicates complex information to external stakeholders, such as UK governments, country nature conservation bodies (CNCBs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the international community, to build a shared understanding of the risks from biodiversity loss and opportunities from nature recovery.</li> <li>• JNCC shares information and experience across the four countries to promote application of consistent methods or standards across the four countries of the UK, help inform management actions and to facilitate information exchange on common goals and overcome shared challenges.</li> <li>• JNCC provides evidence on the value nature can provide for achieving international trade, ODA spending, agriculture, climate implementation plans, security (including food, water, and energy security) targets both at home and abroad, emphasising the links between nature, economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative and innovative learning organisation</b></p> 	<p>JNCC's workplace is diverse and inclusive in its culture, reflected at every level of the organisation. Every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and thrive. We will be a safe working environment, with a culture where we promote each other's health, all decision making prioritises wellbeing, personal growth is encouraged, and learning happens continuously, expanding our capabilities to achieve desired outcomes. We will move away from working in siloes and build strong partnerships. Our mission for nature recovery extends into every aspect of our operations, where JNCC becomes a courageous leader for environmental sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JNCC nurtures inclusive, engaged, inspiring and people-focused leaders at all levels who can coach and empower our people to be the best they can be.</li> <li>• JNCC builds a culture of respect and wellbeing, where performance is recognised and rewarded, that leads to motivated and resilient people, breaking away from siloed working and building strong partnerships, driving continuous improvement with fierce self-compassion and effective problem solving.</li> <li>• JNCC becomes a learning organisation that promotes personal development and growth of its people, building our emotional resources to respond to disruption with hope.</li> <li>• JNCC builds an effective workforce of the right size and shape, with the adaptive leadership skills to enable others to achieve our shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty.</li> <li>• JNCC achieves the ISO14001 standard for environmental management and develops, maintains and reports on sustainable operations across all parts of the business.</li> </ul>



## Photo credits

Page 2 – Seabird surveillance © Dannj Thompson

Page 4 – White-tailed bumblebees © Maddy Long

Page 6 – UK's Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies event © JNCC

Page 7 – Ferns © Helen Baker

Page 12 – Beech tree with exposed roots, Avebury, Wiltshire © Gemma Harper

Page 14 – Participants from JNCC, Defra, St Helena Government and St Helena National Trust at a collaborative workshop, in St Helena, to develop sustainable management plans for the island's 14 National Conservation Areas, a project funded by Darwin Plus © Sarah Valenti

Page 16 – Contains modified © Copernicus data. Sentinel-2 analysis-ready data processed by JNCC and supplied under the Open Government Licence v3 via the CEDA Archive [archive.ceda.ac.uk]. The image is of Belfast, the Solway Firth, and the Lake District displayed in false colour where vegetated areas appear red. The more productive the vegetation the brighter the red colour.

Page 19 (left to right) – JNCC staff beside the MRV Scotia © JNCC / Palm oil fruit © TK Tan from Pixabay / Volunteer monitoring plants © Paul Crompton

Page 24 – Porthgwarra Cove, Cornwall © Natasha Hunt

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