



NorthWest2045 Regional Land Use Partnership

Natural Capital baseline assessment: an explanation for partners and stakeholders

The Scottish Government has tasked the Regional Land Use Partnerships with taking a **Natural Capital Approach** to creating their Regional Land Use Frameworks. Put simply, a Natural Capital Approach **values the environment as a set of assets** which provide benefits to society, ie – through **Ecosystem Services** such as carbon sequestration, pollination, clean air, flood risk reduction, and human mental and physical well-being.

Therefore, an important step in developing our Regional Land Use Framework is to carry out a baseline assessment of the Natural Capital in the NorthWest2045 area; we have commissioned consultants SLR to conduct such a Natural Capital Assessment (NCA).

The NCA will be a remotely-conducted exercise based on available digital data (including the [Scotland Habitat and Land Cover Map](#), other open source data, and information we provide – see email request and [submission form](#)). Geographic Information System tools will analyse the data to produce maps and other outputs which answer the following questions:

1. **Where and what** are our natural capital assets?
2. What **condition** are these natural capital assets in?
3. What **ecosystem services** are the natural capital assets providing for society?
4. What are the **priority ecosystem services** for our communities?
5. What are the **threats** to these assets and ecosystem services?
6. What **opportunities** do we have to improve the assets, or benefit more from the ecosystem services?

The consultants will **communicate the process and findings ensuring** we can all understand them and make use of them. We will invite partners and wider stakeholders to be involved in various ways throughout the process.

The results can be used to **help inform decisions about land management and** support the development of the Regional Land Use Framework.

It is also important that the **partners learn from this process**, which has been requested by the Scottish Government. We can then decide whether and how the process is repeated in the future. Because we are a Pilot RLUP, we will **share our lessons** with other RLUPs across Scotland.

The work is funded by the CALLP Scheme, National Heritage Lottery Fund and Highland Council. At this initial stage, SLR will not interrogate fully every element of our Natural Capital to produce a full 'Natural Capital Account' and we anticipate the baseline knowledge generated will help inform the need and more detailed researched.

We look forward to working with you on this important piece of work.