



South of Scotland Regional Peatland Action Plan (2026-2031)

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**The Crichton Carbon Centre
Tweed Forum**



A report to the Regional Land Use Partnership
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Executive Summary

The South of Scotland has an extensive peatland resource, with approximately 39% of the region underlain by peat soils. However, most of the region's peatland is in a degraded condition due to drainage, afforestation, management pressures and erosion. As a result, many peatlands are currently a net source of greenhouse gas emissions and losing their natural capital value. The Regional Land Use Framework identified the need for a Regional Peatland Action Plan to accelerate restoration, improve long-term management and ensure peatlands contribute to wider land-use, environmental and socio-economic goals across the region.

The Action Plan has been developed through consultation with practitioners, agencies, land managers, communities and delivery organisations already active in peatland restoration. It aligns closely with national policy, including the Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan (2025–2030) and Scotland's Draft Climate Change Plan (2026–2040), which sets an enhanced national peatland restoration target of 400,000 ha by 2040, and the actions identified by the Regional Economic Partnership. The Action Plan sets out what is necessary to upscale delivery, overcome barriers identified in the 2024/25 Scoping Review and ensure restoration is strategically targeted to achieve the greatest benefit.

The Action Plan sets out six themes for action: Strategic Collaboration, Data and Evidence, Regional Priorities, Direct Delivery, Workforce Development and Engagement.

Central to the Action Plan is the **creation of a South of Scotland Peatland Partnership**, recommended as a subgroup of the Regional Land Use Partnership, to coordinate regional priorities, support cross-sector collaboration and oversee delivery of the Action Plan.

Summary of Actions

Theme	Action	Timescale
Theme 1: Strategic Collaboration	Action 1: Establish a South of Scotland Peatland Partnership	Autumn of 2026
Theme 2: Data and Evidence	Action 2a: Co-ordinate data and evidence on peatlands in the region	2026/2027
	Action 2b: Undertake a data and evidence review	2026/2027
	Action 2c: Develop a project scale assessment tool	2026/2027
	Action 2d: Develop a methodology for considering hydrological connectivity	2026/2027
	Action 2e: Research undertaken to understand the impact of grazing regimes on peatland condition	2027/2028
Theme 3: Regional Priorities	Action 3a: Agree regional priorities for peatland restoration and management	End of 2026
	Action 3b: Identify pathways to deliver actions for regional priorities	Throughout
	Action 3c: Regional priorities targeted through public and private finance mechanisms	Throughout
	Action 3d: Support improvements and streamlining of procedural processes within the region	Throughout
Theme 4: Direct Delivery	Action 4a: Establish a direct delivery mechanism for inclusion in the NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme	2026/2027
	Action 4b: Identify match funding opportunities	Throughout
Theme 5: National Alignment	Action 5a: Peatland ACTION continues supporting restoration in the South of Scotland both through capital grants and Peatland ACTION project Officers	Throughout
	Action 5b: The Peatland Standard is developed with input from practitioners in the South of Scotland	2026/2027

	Action 5c: The Regional Peatland Action plan aligns with national Peatland ACTION five-year partnership plan 2025 – 2030 and Climate Change Plan	Throughout
	Action 5d: Support the implementation of the national monitoring strategy in the region	Throughout
Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement	Action 6a: Work with Peatland ACTION to deliver the National Skills Plan	Throughout
	Action 6b: Organise a series of site visits to peatland in the regions	2026/2027
	Action 6c: Train contractors and designers in regional restoration priorities and approaches	2027 onwards
	Action 6d: Provide a capital grant for contractors to help modify machinery for peatland restoration	2026/2027 onwards
	Action 6e: Establish regional education and training pathways	2026/2027 onwards

1. Background

1.1. Peatlands in the South of Scotland

Peat soils cover approximately 39% of the South of Scotland¹. However, the majority of peatland in the region is in a degraded state, primarily due to drainage, with a significant area of peatland soil recorded as having no peatland habitat, reflecting the significant area of peatland planted for forestry². Furthermore, due to their compromised hydrogeological state it is estimated that peatlands are a net source of greenhouse gas emissions in the region³.

Peatland restoration is already underway in the south. Primarily funded by the Scottish Government through the [Peatland ACTION programme](#), restoration is being carried out on both public and private land and supported by organisations such as the Crichton Carbon Centre, the Tweed Forum, Forestry and Land Scotland, NatureScot, Scottish Water and the Galloway Fisheries Trust. Scotland has ambitious targets for peatland restoration, and the south of Scotland can deliver more if existing barriers to restoration are addressed⁴.

1.2. Regional Land Use Partnership

A [Regional Land Use Partnership](#) pilot has been established in the [South of Scotland](#) (Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders Council areas) in recognition of the climate and biodiversity crisis and facilitate collaboration between local and national government, communities, land owners and managers and wider stakeholders. A [Regional Land Use Framework](#), setting out the vision and objectives for land use in the region, was published in 2024 following a period of consultation co-ordinated by the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (SOSE) in partnership with the two local authorities and overseen by the Regional Economic Partnership.

Peatlands are recognised as a significant part of the region's natural environment and important to both climate and biodiversity but compromised due to drainage, forestry and erosion with implications for the region's natural capital. The Regional Land Use Framework sees the need to consider improving the condition of peatlands in the region and increase restoration dramatically. This will enable alignment with the then Scottish Government target to restore 250,000ha of peatland by 2023. The latest Draft Climate Change Plan, published in November 2025, extends the target to 400,000ha by 2040.

The Regional Economic Partnership Delivery Plan sets out actions to make the region fairer, greener and flourishing. The Regional Land Use Framework links to the current Action 5 (c) of the Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan: Develop proposals to increase opportunities and benefits arising from the region's natural capital assets including support for sustainable agriculture, woodlands and forests, restoring peatlands, water management and increasing biodiversity. Regional Economic

¹ Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders council areas.

² [Based on Carbon and Peatland 2016 V2 classifications](#)

³ [Nickerson et al., \(2025\). Mapping greenhouse gas emissions and removals for the land-use, land-use change and forestry sector. A report of the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory 1990-2023.](#)

⁴ An Action Plan for Peatland Restoration and Management in the South of Scotland: A Scoping Review 2025. Report to the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership by the Crichton Carbon Centre and the Tweed Forum.

Partnerships are seen as a key mechanism to meet Net Zero ambitions in Scotland, with indications that their powers could be strengthened to expand their regional capacities and role.

The Regional Land Use Framework identified the following specific action for peatlands under the priority of climate change adaptation and mitigation: **Develop a Peatland Action Plan to guide the peatland restoration in the region.** This was intended to build on the Peatland ACTION Programme and Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) initiatives in the region including work led by Tweed Forum, Crichton Carbon Centre and other partners.

Now in the delivery phase the Regional Land Use Partnership, which is considered a strategic group of the Regional Economic Partnership, will oversee the implementation of the Regional Land Use Framework.

2. Regional Peatland Action Plan

2.1. Development of the Action Plan

The development of the Regional Peatland Action Plan, hereafter referred to as the Action Plan, was informed by the Scoping Review undertaken by the Crichton Carbon Centre and the Tweed Forum in 2024/2025. This should be referred to as a supporting document.

Since the publication of the Scoping Review the Scottish Government has published the [Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025-2030](#) to guide work on peatlands for the next four years. The Regional Action Plan has been directly linked to the national Peatland ACTION Partnership plan to ensure clear alignment with national objectives. In addition, the Scottish Government published [Scotland's Draft Climate Change Plan 2026-2040](#) in November 2025. This includes a suggested new target for peatland restoration of 400,000ha delivered by 2040 to deliver climate and biodiversity benefits and it further strengthens the need for the Action Plan for the South of Scotland to increase delivery of restoration in the region and ensure peatlands do not deteriorate in condition.

The actions identified in the Action Plan have been developed to address the issues and opportunities identified in the Scoping Review. These have been informed by the practical experience of those already working on peatlands and delivering peatland restoration in the region. Organisations consulted are given in Annex 1.

It is suggested the Action Plan be used to guide peatland restoration and management in the region to 2031. This recognises the timeframe of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy which sets out a vision for the South of Scotland to be Green, Fair and Flourishing by 2031. It also aligns with the timescales of the draft Climate Change Plan and Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan.

Thereafter, it should be reviewed and amended where necessary to support delivery of longer-term peatland restoration targets.

2.2. Structure of the Action Plan

The Actions have been grouped into the following themes:

Theme 1: Strategic Collaboration

Theme 2: Data and Evidence

Theme 3: Regional Priorities

Theme 4: Direct Delivery

Theme 5: National Alignment

Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement

There are one or more actions for each of the themes with each action described in terms of what is required, why the action is needed and how it links to other actions set out in the Action Plan. The most important actions have been highlighted as priority to be delivered within the first year of the plan. However, there are actions which are interdependent and require steering by the Regional Peatland Partnership (Action 1) so not all actions have delivery mechanisms or timeframes identified.

Annex 2 summarises how each theme of the Action Plan delivers the objectives of the Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025-2030, the Regional Land Use Partnership, the Regional Land Use Framework and the Regional Economic Partnership.

2.3. Priority Actions

The priority action is **Action 1a: Establish a South of Scotland Regional Peatland Partnership (Theme 1; Strategic Collaboration)**. This is seen as the critical first step in ensuring delivery of many of the actions identified. It will be instrumental in agreeing the regional priorities as set out in Theme 3 as well as co-ordinate delivery of actions for Data and Evidence (Theme 2) and ensure national links are retained (Theme 5).

It is recommended that the Regional Peatland Partnership be established as a sub-group of the Regional Land Use Partnership by the autumn of 2026.

3. Actions

Theme 1: Strategic Collaboration

Objectives

- ✓ To support more effective peatland restoration and management across the South of Scotland by collectively addressing barriers to delivery, supporting regional priorities and reporting on the progress of the Action Plan.

Action 1: Establish a South of Scotland Peatland Partnership

A South of Scotland Regional Peatland Partnership (hereafter referred to as the Partnership) would build on the success of steering groups which have already been established in the region to identify catchment priorities for restoration to improve water quality (eg. Bladnoch SAC, Fleet catchment). These groups have brought together organisations such as Galloway Fisheries Trust, the Crichton Carbon Centre, Forestry and Land Scotland, SEPA and NatureScot to consider not only where to prioritise but how to support restoration delivery. Restoration is now being actively undertaken by Forestry and Land Scotland in the Bladnoch catchment and with restoration planned by Forestry and Land Scotland in the Fleet catchment. A regional Partnership would more formally establish this proven approach to supporting restoration region wide and, if set up as a subgroup of the Regional Land Use Partnership, would be an effective way of monitoring progress on the Action Plan.

The region benefits from peatland restoration already being well established, with significant expertise and experience already within existing organisations and the land owning/managing community. Restoration to date has been possible predominantly due to the national [Peatland ACTION programme](#) through capital grants for restoration and provision of Project Officer support. Although there is a national approach to funding, project development has remained “bottom-up”, delivered through strong working relationships between landowners, managers, experienced third sector organisations and government agencies. This approach has helped projects suit local needs and land management requirements and has ensured restoration is practically deliverable yet impactful. It is essential this is not lost and that the Partnership supports not only those new to peatland restoration but those already undertaking activities in the region by providing a more co-ordinated approach to problem solving, financing and resourcing peatland restoration and management in the region. It should support the cross-sector collaboration required to tackle the range of barriers to the delivery of peatland restoration identified in the Scoping Review and further consultation for this Action Plan. It should also be the first step in identifying opportunities to better integrate peatland restoration and management in forestry and farming; focusing on the practical mechanisms and processes required to ensure peatlands and the Action Plan are not considered in isolation.

The Partnership is ultimately considered vital for agreeing priorities and timelines for the actions identified as well as overseeing delivery implementation and reporting back to the Regional Land Use Partnership. It should also help ensure the Action Plan aligns with other relevant national and regional strategies such as:

- [NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme](#)

- [Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030](#)
- [Regional Economic Strategy](#)
- [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- [River Basin Management Plans](#)
- [Net Zero Route Map for South of Scotland](#)
- [Nature Networks](#)
- Local Development Plans
- Woodland Strategies
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans
- Natural capital and private finance objectives of SOSE and the Borderland Natural Capital Innovation Zone

It has also been suggested that the Partnership could offer support to the regions planning authorities by providing more specialist and technical advice on peatlands, potential impacts of proposed developments and regional peatland priorities. How this advisory role would work, and the resource required, would have to be considered by the Partnership and Regional Land Use Partnership in conversation with the local authorities.

Suggested members of the Peatland Partnership are those **actively involved** in delivering peatland restoration in the region such as the Crichton Carbon Centre, Galloway Fisheries Trust, Forestry and Land Scotland, Tweed Forum, Tarras Valley Nature Reserve, NatureScot, SEPA, Scottish Forestry, Scottish Land and Estates/estate representative, NFUS/farming representative, community representative. Organisations looking to undertake peatland restoration and management work in the region should also be included such as the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and the Tweed Foundation. A connection to the Regional Land Use Partnership would be very beneficial as it would support engagement with the partner members such as the local authorities. Due to the direct links to the Regional Economic Partnership and the Natural Capital Innovation Zone, as well as potential to help resource some of the actions identified in the plan, SOSE should be seen as a key member of the Partnership.

Regional needs Theme 1 actions should address:

- A co-ordinated approach to establishing regional peatland priorities. Regional priorities and needs are identified collectively, and organisations work together in taking practical steps in delivering the Action Plan.
- Opportunities to build upon the work already underway which has started to establish working partnerships, address barriers and identify opportunities to delivering restoration and management projects with multiple objectives.
- Identifying regional priority areas for forest to bog restoration so activities could be spatially targeted and linked to enhanced funding support.

- Peatland restoration and management is better integrated in farming and forestry.
- Potential for better alignment and integration of peatland restoration and management with other support schemes (eg. Agri-Environment), sectors (forestry and farming) and strategies (eg. Biodiversity Strategy).
- There is an established mechanism to identify regional priorities for research and monitoring to inform decision making.
- There is a regional mechanism to report on progress being made in the region in relation to the themes identified in the Action Plan.
- Delivery of the Action Plan is aligned with other initiatives and plans eg. NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, River Basin Management Plans, Net Zero Route Map for South of Scotland, Nature Networks.
- Landscape strategies for peatland restoration and management are supported, identified as particularly important at the catchment/sub-catchment scale.
- To have a mechanism to help identify different funding mechanisms to deliver the Action Plan.
- Improving regional governance and decision making.
- Improved access to support for those involved in peatland restoration; particularly statutory bodies responsible for ensuring peatlands are safeguarded and restoration is supported.
- Linking peatland restoration and management to regional priorities for environment, communities and rural economy provides a way to justify and deliver projects with wider benefits.
- Signposting to local and national support for those interested in peatland restoration.

Theme 2: Data and Evidence

Objectives:

- ✓ The region's peatlands are monitored; condition change and priorities recorded, assessed and reported.
- ✓ Extent and condition of the region's peatlands are better understood and information available to inform decision making.
- ✓ Hydrological extent of peatlands is understood and considered in decision making.

Action 2a: Co-ordinate data and evidence on peatlands in the region

A co-ordinated approach to collating data and evidence from across the region is required to improve dissemination of information useful for decision making, reporting and delivering regional priorities. Identifying data and evidence needs and ensuring the flow of information between organisations and those wishing to undertake activities on peatlands should be improved through the establishment of the Partnership (Action 1) and a more strategic approach to peatlands in the region in general.

A regional focus on data needs, how data is used and a process to collate evidence of peatland condition change, including restoration activities, is essential for both implementing and reporting the Action Plan. It is also important that information on restoration and management activities undertaken in the region, but out with the current Peatland ACTION Programme and EnFor Partnership (Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Water), be recorded and reported back to Government.

Establishing a South of Scotland "data and research hub" to facilitate the co-ordination and dissemination of information on the region's peatlands could be seen as a standalone requirement. However, where possible, seeing it as a component of developing initiatives in the region would avoid duplication of effort and resource, provide more longevity and likely have higher impact. The BRICHT Pilot (Borderlands Regional Investment and Natural Capital Hub for Transition) would be a potential way to deliver this action.

The BRICHT project aims to develop a publicly available data visualisation platform to:

- support landowners in early discussions with investors,
- allow investors to quickly evaluate new sites,
- allow communities to understand and contribute to proposed changes within their area,
- enable better targeting of public investment to meet policy objectives.

In addition to a focus on natural capital investment into the region the BRICHT project also aims to align on the ground action with policy objectives through information provision. This would be an important way for the aims and objections of this Action Plan to be highlighted to those undertaking and investing in peatland restoration and management in the region.

The Partnership will be essential for supporting effective information sharing and can help highlight who needs to have access to data and evidence on the region's peatlands. It should ensure the BRICHT project and other projects and platforms supplying information on peatlands work with those who have information, have information requirements and are gathering data in the region. This would include those organisations on the Partnership as well as government agencies, local authorities and local environmental records centres ([South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre - SWSEIC](#), [The Wildlife Information Centre - TWIC](#)). The local environmental record centres should also be considered as a potential mechanism for collating and sharing peatland data.

Action 2b: Undertake a data and evidence review

A data review is essential to establish the location and quality of existing peatland data and identify data gaps which impact decision making and the implementation of the Action Plan. There are many datasets and spatial data tools already developed or in development that are used to host and disseminate information on peatlands eg. the [NatureScot Natural Capital Tool](#), BRICHT. There are also internal spatial data tools and datasets used by the local authorities, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

Access to data and information on the region's peatlands should also be understood; do the right people have access to the right data in the right format for decision making and reporting? Where data is available, but not easily accessible, this should be prioritised for Action 2a.

Where data gaps exist, this should inform research and evidence gathering. There is already a clear need to have a co-ordinated approach to research and evidence gathering to inform peatland restoration and management activities. This should build on work already underway in the region, such as water quality monitoring undertaken by Galloway Fisheries Trust to help target peatland [restoration for water quality benefits](#). Collectively agreeing research priorities for the region will help ensure we increase our understanding of regional restoration needs to ensure resource is used for maximum benefits. This targeted approach has been highlighted as key to delivering forest to bog restoration in particular. Having a cohesive research and monitoring plan, meeting more targeted regional needs, should also strengthen funding proposals and should inform potential funders such as NatureScot and SOSE. Limited and "piecemeal" funding for research to inform targeting of peatland restoration and management for maximum benefits has been highlighted by many consulted for the Scoping Review and the Action Plan as a pressing issue.

Action 2c: Develop a project scale assessment tool

A simple tool needs to be developed so land managers can "self-assess" their peatlands and the potential for peatland restoration and management to improve peatland condition and meet regional priorities. The existing national and regional datasets used to construct spatial data tools are often inaccurate at the local project level to usefully inform project development and required restoration and management plans. This tool should be a simple tick list and sign post the user to existing available information on designations, drinking water catchments, water quality, connectivity to important habitats or water environments, historic environment features as well as highlight where potential projects meet specific regional priorities.

The tool should be developed and refined in line with the data review (Action 2b) and as more regional data is compiled and made available through Actions 2a and 2b.

Action 2d: Develop a methodology for considering hydrological connectivity

An approach for assessing the impact of activities (eg. developments, afforestation, restoration) should be developed to consider potential impacts on hydrologically connected areas of peatland, with restored sites seen as particularly vulnerable to disturbance. This should be developed through co-ordinated evidence and data gathering supported by Actions 2a, 2b and 2c.

The potential for developments to impact areas of peatland that may be considered for restoration, or have already been restored, has been identified as a particular concern, and it is recommended that developers are asked to provide evidence that they have identified completed or planned peatland restoration projects which could be hydrologically connected to their development areas and mitigate any risk the development may pose. This should be discussed with both local authorities and NatureScot.

Furthermore, developing a methodology which considers hydrological connectivity would help inform a strategy for restoring whole hydrological units. This has been identified as particularly important when considering forest to bog restoration, as it would improve spatial targeting of restoration and replanting activities and help plan restoration phases if several coupes, particularly if subject to different felling schedules, need restored to complete restoration over a complete hydrological unit. This strategy could be particularly important for Scottish Forestry when reviewing plans.

Action 2e: Research undertaken to understand the impact of grazing regimes on peatland condition

A lack of knowledge and understanding of the impact of different grazing regimes on different types of peatlands in the south of Scotland has been highlighted as a significant knowledge gap and a potential barrier to supporting farmers in undertaking peatland restoration and management. It is recommended that this be addressed through a targeted research project and highlighted by the Partnership to the Scottish Government and Peatland ACTION as a priority.

Regional needs Theme 2 actions should address:

- More co-ordinated and consistent funding to support longer term monitoring.
- More regionally specific data and evidence to inform relevant peatland restoration and management. This could also be used nationally to improve reporting, targeting of public and private funding and finance and knowledge and understanding of peatlands.
- It is recognised that restoration in future may not just be supported by Peatland ACTION, so regional reporting processes need to be put in place to capture all restoration and management activities.
- National datasets are made more useful at the regional level and can be used to support restoration design and delivery and wider land use policies and practices.

- Peatland restoration can be confidently targeted for maximum benefits, recognising that not all peatland areas will be available for restoration due to other land management objectives.
- More data and evidence is available to inform sound decision making (eg. to spatially target restoration activities).
- Good quality data presented in the right way, at the right time, to the right people for good decision making.
- Better understanding of peatland condition and strategic opportunities for restoration to meet regional priorities and inform a pipeline of projects making the South of Scotland more attractive for public funding and private finance.

Theme 3: Regional Priorities

Objectives:

- ✓ Peatland restoration and management is targeted for maximum benefit for the region's environment and communities.
- ✓ The South of Scotland is an exemplar area for integrated peatland restoration and management.

Action 3a: Agree regional priorities for peatland restoration and management

The consultation undertaken for the Scoping Review and the Action Plan has shown that there are both established and emerging priorities for peatlands in the South of Scotland. There is a clear need to spatially target restoration and management to ensure maximum benefits and tackle some of the known environmental issues faced in the region. In addition, a significant priority centres around integration; developing and supporting approaches which embed peatland restoration and management in wider land management. There is a strong desire to ensure peatlands are not considered in isolation and there are opportunities to better integrate peatland restoration with forestry and farming practices. There is also a desire to see peatland restoration and management integrated with wider nature conservation and ecosystem restoration projects such as native woodland creation and river restoration. Projects which attempt to do this are already underway in the region and, with the support of the Regional Land Use Partnership and the establishment of the Partnership, could be built upon to not only develop blueprints for how to prioritise projects but establish the practical mechanisms to ensure these priority projects can be delivered effectively.

In terms of spatial targeting the following have been highlighted as a priority:

- Peatland restoration where there is a need to improve water quality.
- Peatland restoration to improve habitat networks and climate resilience and meet the objectives of [Habitat Networks](#) initiative locally and nationally.
- Small scale sites, currently underfunded, which have wider environment impact, are connected to communities or can offer training opportunities.
- Peatland sites, particularly those designated, which are suffering from self-seeding conifer encroachment.
- Peatland areas in drinking water catchments.
- Forest to bog restoration.
- Sites which are actively eroding and/or showing signs of rapid deterioration.
- Peatland sites which are part of wider restoration/habitat enhancement projects.
- Peatland sites which can be made accessible to the public and those which can be used for demonstration.
- Sites which offer the opportunity to trial new restoration and management approaches and techniques.

- Peatland areas which support protected species.
- Restored sites, particularly those which were more experimental or using older restoration techniques, where monitoring has highlighted a need for further intervention.
- Areas which may benefit from peatland restoration activities to reduce wildfire risk and improve climate resilience (eg. *Molinia* dominated areas). Areas of focus identified as within the Galloway Forest Park, core areas of the GSA Biosphere and designated sites.

Priorities for improving integration of peatlands with wider land use:

- Requiring developers to assess for completed or planned restoration in and around areas scoped for development.
- Requiring developers and forest planners to consider, and mitigate any impacts to, areas of peatland (shallow and deep peat soils) hydrologically connected to areas of peatland disturbed by schemes, harvesting and restocking.
- Spatially targeting forest to bog restoration to support restoration and long term changes in forest management where most appropriate for soil, water and biodiversity to allow forest operations to continue where appropriate.
- Recognising cumulative importance of small areas of peatland at a sub catchment/landscape scale and co-ordinating a range of management and support systems to deliver improvements across the area. This may be particularly important for [Habitat Networks](#).
- Better integration of agri-environment schemes with peatland restoration funding (eg. Peatland ACTION) and more consideration given to grazing management as a way of improving peatland condition.

Although these actions have been identified through consultation for both the Scoping Review and the Action Plan it is recommended that reviewing and refining these priorities be the first task undertaken by the Partnership to ensure consensus and links to objectives of the Regional Land Use Partnership, Regional Land Use Framework and wider regional and national strategies.

Action 3b: Identify pathways to deliver actions for regional priorities

Each of the regional priorities agreed will require different pathways for action and delivery which will need further assessment and consideration. For example, regional priorities could be recognised by the Peatland ACTION Programme and peatland priorities considered in Woodland Strategies and for Nature Networks.

The most obvious direct route to action would be to ensure any direct delivery model developed (Theme 4) recognises the set of agreed regional priorities.

The regional priorities should also be used to target research and monitoring in the region (Actions 2a and 2b).

Action 3c: Regional priorities targeted through public and private finance mechanisms

There could be several routes to securing funding to deliver regional priorities and all should be explored by the Partnership. There are obvious and direct ways peatland restoration should be supported by public funding to meet regional priorities such as being reflected in Peatland ACTION scoring criteria. Furthermore, a direct delivery model, supported by Peatland ACTION and potentially through other funds, could be established which delivers against regional priorities and offers an opportunity for private investment to support programme delivery rather than just individual projects (see Theme 4).

The regional priorities identified, overseen by the Partnership, would help give more confidence to private investors seeking to support projects which are of high environment and social value, strongly justified, and meet the principles of the Scottish Governments Natural Capital Market Framework with the following principles:

Principle 1: investment that delivers integrated land use;

Principle 2: investment that demonstrates engagement and collaboration;

Principle 3: investment that delivers public, private and community benefit;

Principle 4: investment that is ethical and values led;

Principle 5: investment that is of high environmental integrity;

Principle 6: investment that supports diverse and productive land ownership

However, the Scoping Review undertaken in preparation for the Action Plan highlighted the current limitations of the Peatland Code, the primary mechanism for attracting private finance into peatland restoration. Work would be required to establish if other mechanisms could be used or developed to better support Peatland Code projects to deliver regional priorities (eg. by looking at Scottish Government Carbon Contracts pilot) or widen the opportunities for private finance to support restoration away from focusing on carbon benefits alone. The latter would have strong links to the action identified under the Data and Evidence theme (particularly Action 2a).

Action 3d: Support improvements and streamlining of procedural processes within the region

Peatland restoration projects are required to demonstrate that they meet certain requirements. These include:

- Compliance with [The Environmental Authorisation \(Scotland\) Regulations 2018 \(EASR\)](#).
- Consideration of Scottish Water Drinking Water Catchments and Private Water Supplies.
- Risk assessing for peat stability.
- Undertaking restoration only where wildlife and stocking densities are conducive to restoration.

- Considering the use of muirburn and implementation of the [Muirburn Code](#).
- Protected areas; consent from NatureScot, assessment as per Habitats Regulations (Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA)).
- Protected species and breeding bird season; ensuring restoration activities do not occur in sensitive areas or times.
- Permitted development rights and Prior Notification to local authorities.
- Assessment of impacts on scheduled monuments or archaeological remains for both known finds and sites, as well as for their potential as new-to-the-records as finds, sites and/or landscapes of all archaeological and historic periods, both of which might be located over, in and below peat levels.
- Consideration of utilities and potential for unexploded ordnance.
- Health and Safety; all projects must comply with Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 or equivalent health and safety framework if working in a forestry context.
- Promoting best practice relating to the protection of heritage and the historic environment when planning and delivering peatland restoration project & increasing awareness of current guidance and resources including the [ALGAO Guidance for Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment in Scotland](#), , as well as considering what regional and thematic research⁵ questions this work may have the potential to help answer.

In the future, it is anticipated that restoration projects and any activities on peatlands will also have to comply with the Peatland Standard (expected publication date late 2026) which will be the framework to support the protection, management, and restoration of peatlands. The Peatland Standard will likely support and strengthen the level of consideration required for peatlands by existing frameworks and guidance (eg. Cross Compliance, UK Forestry Standard).

A Partnership would help bring more consistency to the guidance given to those wishing to deliver activities on peatlands in the region. There are several procedural requirements which would benefit from the actions set out in the Action Plan and by having a more strategic approach to consenting activities on peatlands. The actions for Data and Evidence (Actions 2a to 2e) would provide more access to the necessary data and information required for decision making; particularly in relation to potential impact on wider soil and hydrological areas, and potential cumulative impact of activities over wider spatial scales (eg. sub-catchment/catchment).

The establishment of the Regional Peatland Partnership could also support the regions local authorities, their archaeological advisors and Historic Environment Scotland regional casework team, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, SEPA and NatureScot by providing peatland specific technical advice and support (eg. as part of the Prior Notification process or when considering new woodland planting schemes or developments on and around peatland areas). The ability, resource and mechanisms required to do this would have to be carefully considered by the Regional Peatland

⁵ See SESARF and SWSARF links generally (respectively [South East Scotland Archaeological Research Framework \(SESARF\) | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework](#) and [South West Scotland Archaeological Research Framework \(SWSARF\) | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework](#)), [2. Landscape and Environment | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework](#), [SWSARF Chapters | The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework](#)).

Partnership and Regional Land Use Partnership; it could be seen as a core function of the Partnership and meeting the aims of the Regional Land Use Partnership but would potentially require more significant time commitment by partners.

Regional needs Theme 3 actions should address:

- Public and private mechanisms recognise projects which deliver for regional priorities.
- The barriers identified in the Scoping Review being addressed at the regional level where specific mechanisms respectful of the land management context need to be identified and developed to maximise delivery in the region.
- The need to have a more strategic approach to prioritising actions and resource in the region.
- The need to target peatland restoration and management; particularly recognising needs and objectives of competing land use and management systems.
- Regional priorities which shape research and monitoring.
- Earlier consultation with archaeologists/local authority when planning a project in considering finds, sites and landscapes already recorded and new-to-the-records, with recognition of what changes the peatland restoration may mean (for example covering exposed surfaces and sections or changing groundwater levels) and consider existing (and creating new) research framework questions of peatland areas. More robust and proportional systems in place during project delivery that consider archaeological remains over, in and below peat.

Theme 4: Direct Delivery

Objectives:

- ✓ To establish a direct delivery model, steered by the Peatland Partnership, to target NatureScot Peatland ACTION spending for maximum regional benefits.

Action 4a: Establish a direct delivery mechanism for inclusion in the NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme

Peatland restoration has been identified as a key activity in the Scottish Government's [draft Climate Change Plan](#). The suggested target is for 400,000ha of restoration to be delivered by 2040. To achieve this, restoration will not only have to be upscaled in all areas but as set out in the Peatland ACTION 5-year Peatland Partnership Plan, coupled with objectives to ensure wider environmental benefits from peatland restoration beyond hectares delivered and carbon saved. In response, new peatland restoration support and delivery mechanisms are being scoped.

With the publication of an Action Plan for the South of Scotland, the establishment of a Regional Peatland Partnership and the identification of regional priorities, the South of Scotland will be well placed to establish a direct delivery model to achieve more, both in terms of scale and scope of peatland restoration undertaken in the region. The Partnership providing oversight to a regional delivery mechanism would also ensure strong alignment to the other actions and priorities identified in the Action Plan and the Regional Land Use Framework.

A direct delivery model is already being discussed between the Crichton Carbon Centre, Tweed Forum and the NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme. Both organisations have been delivering the role of Peatland ACTION Project Officer in the southwest and southeast of the region respectively since the programme begun. Currently both organisations support applicants to apply to Peatland ACTION and then through the delivery and reporting phases of those individual projects. This requires significant time and resource to meet application and procedural requirements on a project-by-project basis. A direct delivery model could mean the south could apply to Peatland ACTION for a multi-year *programme* of projects that meet regional priorities. More autonomy given to the south region would not only reduce resource requirements from NatureScot Peatland ACTION team but simplify the funding process for landowners and managers, target priority areas, co-ordinate resources and funding across the region and give confidence to the sector which is seen as vital to building skills and expertise in the workforce. The establishment of a South of Scotland direct delivery programme could also provide more opportunities for match funding and attracting private finance for peatland restoration.

It is not suggested that a direct delivery model replaces the existing funding for Peatland ACTION Project Officer roles delivered in the region. It is recognised that they would still play a vital role in supporting landowners and managers undertaking restoration and support the wider NatureScot Peatland ACTION team and EnFor Partnership (see Action 5a). It should also not rule out the development of landscape scale peatland restoration projects, of which there are a number in the pipeline in the region, which could in themselves be seen as standalone projects to submit to NatureScot Peatland ACTION, NatureScot or Scottish Government.

The Regional Land Use Partnership, and the Partnership, should support these organisations in scoping this proposal as very careful consideration will be required to understand their roles, responsibilities, financial management requirements and governance of any direct delivery model.

Action 4b: Identify match funding opportunities for a direct delivery model

It is understood that there is currently not enough public funding to meet the Scottish Government's ambitious restoration targets. Therefore, the opportunity to look at finance opportunities to enhance any public funding secured would be essential.

With a restoration programme steered by the Partnership, particularly if connected to the Regional Land Use Partnership, targeting regional priorities there is an opportunity to consider support from Peatland ACTION as match funding and seek other investment. This offers an opportunity to spread risk as investors could support the programme, rather than individual projects, which would mitigate some of the practical problems encountered when trying to deliver projects to determined timescales and financial years (eg. weather conditions, lack of contractor capacity, restoration tied to very short delivery windows).

The Regional Land Use Partnership and SOSE could play a pivotal role in helping scope and secure additional funding for a regional delivery programme. This could be through initiatives like the BRICHT project.

Regional needs these actions should address:

- Public funding supports regional priorities for peatlands.
- Projects are delivered that consider wider soil, hydrological and habitat connectivity and specific needs and land management in the region.
- Small scale projects are valued for delivery against regional environmental priorities and benefits to communities and rural businesses (eg. access, education and training and skills).
- Public funding is guided by the Regional Land Use Partnership and supported by the Partnership.
- Longer term commitment to funding through a multi-year regional programme gives confidence to the sector, particularly contractors.
- The processes for applying for funding needs streamlined and efficiencies made for the NatureScot Peatland ACTION programme and those wishing to deliver activities on peatlands.

Theme 5: National Alignment

Objectives:

- ✓ The Regional Peatland Action Plan aligns with and enhances national strategies and initiatives.
- ✓ Data, evidence, progress and opportunities are fed back to Peatland ACTION and the Scottish Government so approaches developed in the South of Scotland can help inform national strategies, best practice and support mechanisms.
- ✓ Peatland ACTION continues in the region; recognising the pivotal role it has played in supporting peatland restoration, training and workforce development and guidance in the region to date.

Action 5a: Peatland ACTION continues supporting restoration in the South of Scotland both through capital grants and Peatland ACTION project Officers

The Tweed Forum and Crichton Carbon Centre continue to deliver the Peatland ACTION project officer role in the region. New funding for large scale project or direct delivery does not displace this key role.

Action 5b: Peatland Standard developed with input from practitioners in the South of Scotland

The Tweed Forum and Crichton Carbon Centre continue to engage in the development of the Peatland Standard, and the Partnership responds to the public consultation in 2026.

Action 5c: Regional Action plan aligns with national Peatland ACTION five-year partnership plan 2025 – 2030 and Climate Change Plan

The Action Plan is already strongly linked to the Peatland ACTION five-year partnership plan 2025 – 2030, which delivers against the Scottish Governments Climate Change Plan. The Action Plan should be seen as a clear delivery mechanism for both plans.

Action 5d: Support implementation of national monitoring strategy in the South of Scotland

The Partnership and the two organisations working as part of the Peatland ACTION programme (Crichton Carbon Centre and Tweed Forum) should maintain strong links with the Peatland ACTION Programme and support the implementation of their monitoring strategy in the South of Scotland.

Regional needs Theme 5 actions should address:

- Data and evidence from the South of Scotland is used to inform best practice and the Peatland Standard.
- EnFor Partnership organisations are supported to deliver peatland restoration and management in the region.

Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement

Objectives:

- ✓ There is a knowledgeable, confident and skilled cross-sectoral workforce in the South of Scotland able to deliver peatland restoration and management activities.
- ✓ Peatlands are seen as an opportunity for community wealth building, with landowners, managers and communities supported to help deliver and benefit from the Action Plan and Regional Land Use Partnership.

Action 6a: Work with Peatland ACTION to deliver the National Skills Plan

There are defined objectives for building workforce capacity in the Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030. This is informing a national skills plan which will be published in 2026. The implementation of this plan should be supported at the regional level, by the Partnership and organisations in the region delivering training with Peatland ACTION support (Crichton Carbon Centre, SRUC, Tweed Forum).

For illustration, the Crichton Carbon Centre has recently trained 301 delegates through 6 x [Peatland Restoration Theory and Principles events](#) held at the Eskdalemuir Community Hub. The Crichton Carbon Centre also supports the SRUC in delivering their [peatland assessment and restoration course](#) using South of Scotland sites and the Barony campus. Peatland ACTION have delivered specialist sessions, for example, on health and safety in forest to bog restoration and requirements for water environments. Pilot events have also been delivered in the region, with more in the planning, such as a bare peat restoration course in the Lowther Hills (Crichton Carbon Centre and Buccleuch Estates), drone use for peatland mapping and restoration planning (Tweed Forum), and peatland design mentoring courses (Crichton Carbon Centre).

There are however several initiatives that have been harder to deliver in the region such as the [Peatland ACTION Internship](#) scheme. This was largely due to short notice and capacity issues in host organisations. These types of barriers to the implementation of the national skills plan should be identified and fed back to Peatland ACTION to ensure the region can fully utilise potential support on offer.

A significant concern is the lack of experienced trainers in Scotland; those with the knowledge and experience of the principles of restoration, best practice and project management and delivery. Consequently, making “train the trainer” training opportunities a particular priority.

Action 6b: Organise a series of visits to peatlands in the region

It is important we learn from all the work carried out to date on peatlands in the region. There are a wide variety of peatland sites where restoration has been delivered which should be used for demonstration and knowledge exchange. Moreover, there are several projects being planned which already aim to deliver some of the actions in the Action Plan. These sites should be used, particularly by the Partnership, to understand progress to date and to inform delivery of actions. The Regional

Land Use Partnership should be resourced to co-ordinate these visits as a way of supporting the wider Regional Land Use Partnership members in engaging with the Partnership and the Action Plan.

It is suggested that as work progresses on delivering the Action Plan site visits are organised for a wide range of audiences to ensure we are learning by doing; demonstrating the approaches to delivering peatland restoration and management in the region.

Action 6c: Train contractors and designers in regional restoration priorities and approaches

There will be a need to provide additional training beyond that facilitated through the national skills plan (Action 6a) to train contractors and designers in restoration and management to meet regional requirements. For example, it has been identified that there is a lack of contractors delivering forest to bog restoration in the region. There should be focus given to supporting existing contractors already working in the forestry sector to diversify into peatland restoration. This would also help towards delivering Action 4b and help integrate peatland restoration with forestry operations.

On the publication of the Peatland Standard (anticipated 2026/2027) there will likely be a requirement to help guide those involved in peatland restoration in the region, most importantly those involved in decision making (Local authorities, Government Agencies) as well as the Partnership in how the Standard should be implemented in the region. Training sessions on this should be organised using local sites as worked through examples.

It will also be necessary to provide training on the site assessment tool developed under Action 2c.

Action 6d: Provide a capital grant for contractors to help them modify machinery for peatland restoration

Highlands and Islands Enterprise have established a grant scheme for contractors looking for a one-off capital grant to help them modify their existing machinery for peatland restoration. Contractors require specialist machines (eg. low ground pressure excavators) to deliver [best practice restoration](#). Modification of existing machinery can cost a significant amount of money, and it has been identified that this is a barrier to contractors moving into peatland restoration. SOSE should replicate the grant scheme for contractors based in the South of Scotland. A capital grant scheme should support those looking to move into peatland restoration and actively engaged with the Peatland ACTION training programme and any training initiatives delivered in the region to support the Action Plan.

Action 6e: Establish regional education and training pathways

Peatlands are being taught in schools, and the Crichton Carbon Centre, funded by Peatland ACTION has developed an SQA accredited [Peatland Mini Module](#). Having established the structure of the SQA accredited module the Crichton Carbon Centre and Peatland ACTION are looking to use this as a framework on which to build “learning pathways” from primary and secondary schools through to higher education and into relevant professions such as ecological consultancy, machine operation, and land management. This is a national objective; however, it has been recognised that a learning pathway may need to be developed regionally which takes into consideration education providers, peatland types and career opportunities. For example, it would be important to explore how peatland

restoration and management could be taught by a wide range of providers in different contexts (eg. Forestry Training Service UK).

Regional needs Theme 6 actions should address:

- Ensure a strong workforce can support best practice peatland restoration in the region; from design to delivery.
- All stakeholders have a good understanding of peatland restoration and best practice.
- Support for local job creation, skills development and training.
- Regional support scheme for contractors (capital grant).
- Need for alignment with national strategies and initiatives; recognising the workforce may work across the country.

Annex 1: Consultees

The actions set out in the Action Plan have been discussed with the following organisations:

NatureScot

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Forestry and Land Scotland

Scottish Forestry

Galloway Fisheries Trust

Southern Uplands Partnership

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Scottish Borders Council

Tarras Valley Nature Reserve

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)

Wemyss & March Estate

Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID)

Leadburn Community Woodland

Upper Urr Environment Trust

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Tweed Forum

Crichton Carbon Centre

Annex 2: Links to National and Regional Objectives

Theme 1: Strategic Collaboration	
Actions:	Action 1: Establish a South of Scotland Peatland Partnership
Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions:	Specific to peatlands the Peatland Partnership, particularly if set up as a subgroup of the Regional Land Use Partnership, would deliver the aims of the regional pilots and: • further establish a partnership structure able to deliver a collaborative approach to land use change decision making involving national and local government, landowners and managers, communities and stakeholders, • use a natural capital approach to identify and agree upon current and potential land use changes across the region that support the delivery of Scottish Government's climate change targets and other environmental objectives, including improving biodiversity, • signpost public and private funding opportunities for landowners and managers, or community groups to assist with land use changes based on Regional Land Use Framework priorities, oversee, support and deliver the Action Plan, identified as a key action in the Regional Land Use Framework.
Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:	1.2 Responsible Private Investment and other sources of finance 1.2 Larger projects to increase scale, efficiency and value for money 1.3 Strengthening evidence of climate, nature and social benefits for just transition 1.3 Supporting projects on public land 1.3 Connecting peatland restoration with wider nature and climate projects 1.3 Aligning projects with Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 1.3 Explore broader range of finance and funding mechanisms 1.3 Maximising local benefits through inclusive economic opportunities 1.4 Establish a complete picture of restoration efforts in Scotland (beyond Peatland ACTION) 3.5 Carry out targeted research to gain a comprehensive understanding of peatland restoration costs across Scotland 3.2 Defining funding criteria beyond September 2026

Theme 1: Strategic Collaboration	
	3.8 Strengthen approach to evaluating and monitoring benefits for climate, nature and people
Regional Economic Partnership:	Action 5: Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships. • Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action. • Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide (BRICHT). Action 6: Create pathways for a Just Transition to Net Zero for key sectors and parts of our regional economy • Developing co-ordinated Net Zero plans with key parts of our economy in the South of Scotland, building on evidence from the recent regional emission baselines for our region and aligning with national Just Transition Plans and the national Climate Intelligence Service. • Collaborating with partners in key sectors to begin implementing, accelerating and attracting investment in these pathways.

Theme 2: Data and Evidence	
Actions:	Action 2a: Establish a Regional Peatland Data and Research Hub Action 2b: Undertake a data review and enhance spatial data tools with regional data Action 2c: Develop a project scale assessment tool Action 2d: Develop a methodology for considering hydrological connectivity Action 2e: Undertake research to understand the impact of grazing regimes on peatland condition
Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions:	Establish and maintain natural capital baseline data and develop natural capital assessment and valuation tools and decision support tools. Alignment with State of Nature Report (addressing potential data gaps).

Theme 2: Data and Evidence	
	Develop innovative approaches for responsible natural capital investment in the region from private financial investment, infrastructure and development, including landscape scale restoration projects. Develop the Borderlands Natural Capital Innovation Zone to facilitate responsible private investment in natural capital that is evidence –based and continue to develop the region as a living laboratory building on robust partnerships including with SRUC, GSA Biosphere, Tweed Forum, the Southern Uplands Partnership and other organisations.
Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:	1.2 Responsible Private Investment and others sources of finance 1.3 Increasing proportion of highly degraded and emitting peatlands that are restored 1.4 Establish a complete picture of restoration efforts in Scotland (beyond Peatland ACTION) 2.4 Work with Scottish Governments Environment, Natural Resources and Agricultural Strategic Research programme 3.2 Defining funding criteria beyond September 2026 3.5 Carry out targeted research to gain a comprehensive understanding of peatland restoration costs across Scotland 3.8 Strengthen approach to evaluating and monitoring benefits for climate, nature and people 3.10 Scottish Government’s Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) to stimulate regular statistics
Regional Economic Partnership:	Action 5: Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships. • Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action. • Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide (BRICHT) .

Theme 3: Regional Priorities	
Actions:	Action 3a: Agree regional priorities for peatland restoration and management Action 3b: Identify pathways to deliver actions for regional priorities Action 3c: Target regional priorities through public and private finance mechanisms Action 3d: Support improvements and streamlining of procedural processes within the region
Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions:	Meeting the core aim of Regional Land Use Partnership's "to facilitate inclusive and democratic partnership working between all land users, including local and national government, communities, landowners, land managers and wider stakeholders". Cross cutting; delivering against all priorities and particularly actions and priorities for: • Biodiversity protection and enhancement • Climate change adaptation and mitigation
Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:	Focusing public funds on delivering for climate, nature and people 1.3 Supporting projects on public land 1.3 Connecting peatland restoration with wider nature and climate projects 1.3 Aligning projects with Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 1.3 Maximising local benefits through inclusive economic opportunities 3.2 Defining funding criteria beyond September 2022 3.8 Strengthen approach to evaluating and monitoring benefits for climate, nature and people
Regional Economic Partnership:	Action 5: Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships. • Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action. • Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our

Theme 3: Regional Priorities

growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide (BRICHT)

Theme 4: Direct Delivery

Actions: Action 4a: Establish a Direct Delivery mechanism for inclusion in the NatureScot Peatland ACTION Programme

Action 4b: Identify match funding opportunities

Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions: Establish and maintain natural capital baseline data and develop natural capital assessment and valuation tools and decision support tools.

Develop innovative approaches for responsible natural capital investment in the region from private financial investment, infrastructure and development, including landscape scale restoration projects.

Develop the Borderlands Natural Capital Innovation Zone to facilitate responsible private investment in natural capital that is evidence based and continue to develop the region as a living laboratory building on robust partnerships.

Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:

- 2.7 Review the effectiveness of direct delivery in addressing financial and logistical challenges
- 1.2 Responsible Private Investment and other sources of finance
- 1.2 Larger projects to increase scale, efficiency and value for money
- 1.3 Maximising local benefits through inclusive economic opportunities
- 1.3 Explore broader range of finance and funding mechanisms
- 1.3 Connecting peatland restoration with wider nature and climate projects
- 2.1 Expand and secure workforce capacity
- 3.1 Making the pipeline of restoration projects visible
- 3.2 Defining funding criteria beyond September 2026
- 3.2 Exploring ways to streamline or simplify planning processes in relation to peatland restoration

Theme 4: Direct Delivery

Regional Economic Partnership:	Action 5: Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships. • Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action. • Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide (BRICHT) Action 3: Develop proposals to expand and adapt skills provision to meet the future skills opportunities and needs of the region. • Support a range of future skills opportunities, particularly those that help our land-based sectors (by supporting training sites)
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Theme 5: National Alignment

Actions:	Action 5a: Peatland ACTION continues supporting restoration in the South of Scotland both through capital grants and Peatland ACTION project Officers Action 5b: The Peatland Standard is developed with input from practitioners in the South of Scotland Action 5c: The Regional Peatland Action plan aligns with national Peatland Partnership Plan and Climate Change Plan Action 5d: Support the implementation of the national monitoring strategy in the region
Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions:	Working with the Regional Land Use Partnership, particularly if establishing the Regional Peatland Partnership, to deliver it's aims and objectives for: • Collaborative and integrated decisions about how we use land in the South of Scotland • Identify opportunities for land use to deliver multiple benefits of value to society. • Inform the targeting of public and private investment in support of transparent, fair, sustainable investments in land use. • Encourage land-based businesses to work with nature and communities, helping to contribute more to South of Scotland's prosperity, including jobs, skills development and a just transition.

Theme 5: National Alignment	
Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:	3.2 Collaborating on and streamlining the application process across Scotland 3.2 Exploring ways to streamline or simplify planning processes in relation to peatland restoration 3.2 Collaborating with the IUCN to strengthen alignment with the Peatland Code and explore opportunities to integrate forest-to-bog restoration within its framework 3.3 Consult on and launch Scotland’s Peatland Standard 3.4 Consider need to introduce a compliance system for peatland restoration 3.7 Encourage uptake of the IUCN Peatland Code across Peatland ACTION projects and work with the sector to consider how to stimulate demand for these credits 3.9 Continue implementation of Peatland ACTION Monitoring Strategy 3.11 Continue to work with the Scottish Land LiDAR Programme 3.12 Develop the evidence necessary to identify and assess options for a carbon land tax
Regional Economic Partnership:	Action 5: Champion the Natural Capital Innovation Zone through the delivery of the Borderlands Programme, the Regional Land Use Framework and innovative partnerships. • Deliver the Regional Land Use Framework through collaborative action. • Using data analysis and opportunity mapping to develop a Natural Capital responsible inward investment prospectus, building on our growing investment profile including the Invest in South of Scotland website and Net Zero Investment Guide (BRICHT) Action 3: Develop proposals to expand and adapt skills provision to meet the future skills opportunities and needs of the region. • Support a range of future skills opportunities, particularly those that help our land-based sectors

Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement	
Actions:	Action 6a: Work with Peatland ACTION to deliver the National Skills Plan Action 6b: Deliver a series of site visits to peatland in the regions

Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement	
	Action 6c: Train contractors and designers in regional restoration priorities and approaches Action 6d: Provide a capital grant for contractors to help modify machinery for peatland restoration
Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework Actions:	Skills, employment and training: Continue to develop opportunities for green skills, training and employment that a just transition to Net Zero brings (aligned to RES Action 1(b))
Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030:	1.3 working with rural communities and land based sectors to build skill, remove barriers and support jobs 2.1 Expand and secure workforce capacity 2.2 Inspire and engage next generation; promoting career pathways, transferable skills, opportunities for young people 2.3 Embed peatland restoration into mainstream land use training programmes 2.6 Promote findings through public reports, workshops, and targeted outreach 2.7 continue supporting skills development in rural areas to strengthen local capacity and resilience 3.1 expanding the availability of support for designing and delivering projects across Scotland 3.1 further workforce development in the design sector through skills initiatives led by our PA Skills Plan
Regional Economic Partnership:	Priority Action 3: Develop proposals to expand and adapt skills provision to meet the future skills opportunities and needs of the region. - Developing proposals through a task and finish group to expand future skills provision and take up in the region, including articulating: what would be required to support a scaling up of provision; what barriers exist to support such a scaling up; and what support would be required from regional and national partners to turn such proposals into deliverable action. - Overseeing delivery of agreed actions from these proposals.

Theme 6: Workforce Development and Engagement

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging with the Scottish Government's programme of national skills reform |
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