

## Combining Forces – a call to action

There is widespread recognition of the declining state of the natural environment. However, many decision makers continue to operate in a paradigm that does not recognize the fundamental contributions of the natural world to prosperous human economies and societies.

A key challenge for decision makers is identifying what approaches they can use to understand their relationship with nature.

In order to support the shift towards more informed and inclusive decision making, frameworks have been developed to guide both governments, ([UN SEEA](#)), and businesses ([Natural Capital Protocol](#)).

While there have been crucial steps in the right direction, there is now growing acceptance that in order to ensure further collaboration and progress, broader and more active engagement is required between the proponents of the different approaches.

### Objective

The objective of this initiative is to establish and promote a common and harmonized understanding of the different natural capital approaches undertaken by businesses and governments.

This initiative brings together many of the leading players in this space to *Combine Forces*, with the greater aim of ensuring that the value of nature is included in decision-making across the board.

### What is 'Combining Forces'

'Combining Forces' provides a focal point to bring together the different strands of thinking on natural capital. It is an open, cross-cutting network of experts from all sectors including civil society, science and academia, business, finance, government and international organizations, who are working together to ensure that the value of nature is included in decision making.

Combining Forces is being led by the [IDEAA Group](#) on behalf of the [Natural Capital Coalition](#). Currently, 24 organisations are signatories to the Combining Forces Joint Statement (below) and we continue to welcome others.

## Proposed Combining Forces Activities

1. Initiate conversations and explore the challenges, for example through:
  - Webinars in March and June 2018 (topics/themes tbd)
  - Meeting in November 2018 around the CBD in Egypt
2. Seek opportunities to 'Combine Forces', for example:
  - Jointly release a one-pager introducing the Protocol and a one-pager introducing SEEA to commence the process of raising awareness and building mutual understanding
  - Undertake case studies in countries that reflect the contributions of and links between all sectors. Case studies may start from different perspectives but must be able to demonstrate how they inform decisions.

Encourage those administering public and private funding to consider supporting these types of cross-cutting activities.

3. Communications
  - a. Promote the Joint Statement launched at the World Forum on Natural Capital and the associated papers released under the Combining Forces banner
  - b. Use the Natural Capital Coalition's Natural Capital Hub as the home for the Combining Forces output.
  - c. Post UN SEEA and Natural Capital Protocol case studies and related material on all relevant knowledge hubs.

## Process

Combining Forces operates as a convening network to initiate ideas, work collaboratively and identify opportunities. It is not a standard project and it does not have a governance structure, with boards and committees. The network is open to anyone who would like to join. There is no cost to join, but donations to the Natural Capital Coalition to support Combining Forces activities are welcome.

A small budget is being sought to support this work.

# Combining Forces On Natural Capital

## **How public national level accounting and private sector assessments on natural capital connect**

On Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August, the Natural Capital Coalition and IDEEA Group convened a meeting between a number of organizations that are recognised as leading in the natural capital space.

There is an exponentially growing interest in natural capital at national, local and private sector levels. Work at these levels, while similar, differ in subtle but notable ways. These differences have led to confusion in the past, and this confusion has in turn galvanized the organizations involved to clarify the ways in which their work is aligned, the differences between them, and the ways in which they are mutually supportive and beneficial.

While it's true that businesses and governments often have different aims when it comes to natural capital approaches, and are attempting to capture different kinds of information, it's clear that the work undertaken by governments can be hugely useful to that of businesses, and vice versa.

The public sector approach applies the UN SEEA (United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting) framework, whilst the overarching framework for the private sector is the Natural Capital Protocol. These approaches use complementary valuation techniques to understand the relative importance and worth of the natural world on which we collectively depend.

One major challenge we face at both the public and private sector level is the lack of openly available data and information that is necessary in order to inform these decisions. This is an obvious area where closer collaboration could provide significant benefits for all involved parties. Data collected in national level accounts can be invaluable for private sector assessments, while data collected by the private sector can likewise ensure more comprehensive and robust national level accounts.

The organizations involved in this dialogue intend to continue to support each other's work, will work to clarify how these approaches overlap and combine, and will produce materials that continue to support the inclusion of nature in public and private decision making.

Alongside this statement a set of papers will be released to provide the history, the context, the definitions and the challenges that we are facing as we combine forces around our approaches to natural capital.



**For further information:**

Mark Gough  
Executive Director, Natural Capital  
Coalition  
[mark.gough@naturalcapitalcoalition.org](mailto:mark.gough@naturalcapitalcoalition.org)  
+44 7876 035947

Carl Obst  
Director, IDEEA Group  
[carl.obst@ideeagroup.com](mailto:carl.obst@ideeagroup.com)  
+61 418 971 268