



# WATER TASKFORCE STRATEGY 2019-2022

## A vision for responsible business

Business in the Community works to create healthy communities with successful business at their heart. We work with the responsible business agenda to support businesses to achieve purposeful leadership and responsible management across all areas of its business, in the pursuit of environmental sustainability and building healthy, fairer communities.

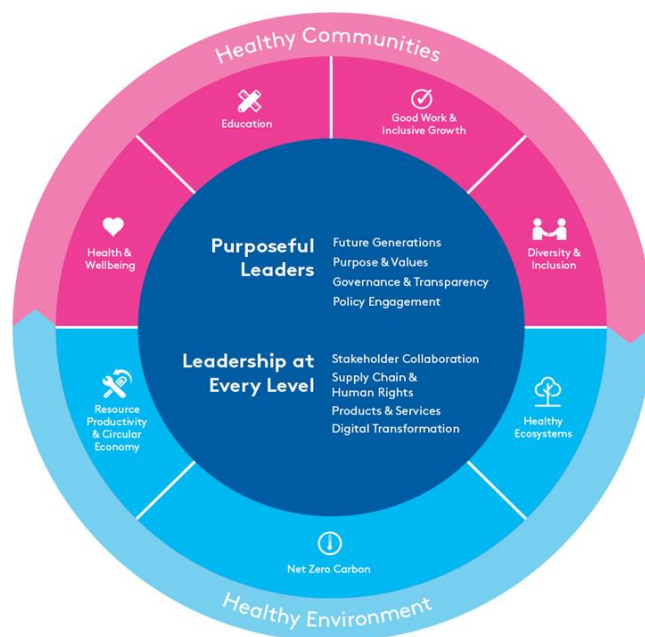
Responsible business means successfully operating without compromising the prosperity of society and within planetary boundaries. When doing this, businesses are more profitable and strengthen their competitiveness and long-term financial sustainability (contributing across the SDGs).

BITC wants business to:

- Achieve long-term financial value through enabling society and the planet to thrive;
- Innovate to offer a responsible business model that offers products and services that engage customers in responsible behaviours and manage operations in line with the construction of a restorative economy.
- Understand where the greatest impact can be made by identifying those issues that are of greatest importance to commercial success and key stakeholders.

## Responsible Business Map

A responsible business, by creating healthy communities and a healthy environment, achieves long term financial value.





## Smart Growth

### **Finding new ways to create commercial, economic and social value by tackling environmental challenges**

Our current model of prosperity is undermining the environment's ability to support businesses and communities, so BITC is changing the debate. Our mission is to move away from encouraging a 'less bad' business as usual, to working with business, Government and Civil Society to create a positive vision for 'Smart Growth.' The scale of the task is huge, which brings great opportunities. Over the next 5 years, we will support more than 5,000 organisations, through value chains, in workplaces and in towns and cities across the UK. The Responsible Business Map identifies three key 'smart growth' challenges:

- Achieving net zero carbon and building resilience to climate risks
- Maximising resource productivity in a circular economy
- Nurturing the health of the ecosystems we depend on

To achieve our mission, we bring expertise to challenge and support companies to develop innovative products, services and processes; convene businesses and key partners to learn and solve shared challenges together; and facilitate collaborative projects that harness the power of technology, new financing models and better ways of influencing policy to change the game.

## The Water Taskforce

Water Taskforce is a cross-sectoral group with members from the water, engineering, design, retail, construction, government sectors. The group

convenes to collaborate around shared problems on water and the natural environment.

By working collaboratively, the Water Taskforce can deliver increased resilience of urban and rural landscapes, that protect natural assets, support wellbeing and help climate proof community and business assets.

The Water Taskforce programme has three pillars of work: healthy ecosystems, resilient places and circular economy of water. These work areas are built on a foundation of enablers.

The Water Taskforce will help to deliver the work of the BITC environment strategy. Alongside the Circular Economy and Net Zero Carbon Taskforces, through providing leadership and insight, producing outcomes capable of making national and global impact on SDGs, and using its collaborative powers to make a difference, particularly in relation to key water and infrastructure challenges.





## Why water?

The sustainable use of water plays a key role in several of the UK's major infrastructure, growth and environmental challenges. This is highlighted in a number of UK government's key strategies:

- The [25 year environment plan](#) sets out ambitions for a net gain of water quality with new developments, reduced cost of ensuring new homes are water efficient, and reduce surface water flooding risk from both new and existing developments. It highlights the importance of increasing supply and reducing demand to help enhance the beauty of landscapes, and that long-term resilience strategies are needed to increase resilience and manage supply and demand.
- The [National Infrastructure Assessment](#) identified that conflicting incentives and short-term focus has led to a higher than acceptable risk of severe supply limitations and around 600,000 properties are at risk from surface water flooding (>1% chance per year), with little progress being made in the last decade.
- The Government's [Industrial Strategy](#) recognised the role that enhancing natural capital has on boosting long-term productivity and economic growth. Improving water efficiency and investing in environmentally sustainable infrastructure for the long-term are needed to ensure sustainable growth which exists in harmony with healthy ecosystems.
- The government's ['Fixing our broken housing market'](#) white paper sets out that planning authorities must account for water supply and demand, and mitigating and

adapting to climate change when considering new developments. Building water resilience into new housing developments is starting to emerge in new legislation, with all new developments of more than 1 dwelling or at least 100m<sup>2</sup> requiring SuDS for surface water from January 2019 in Wales.

## Looking after water can help us all...

The water cycle is an example of a natural circular economy, with used water ultimately being recycled back to the environment and for further use by people. Abstracting water from the environment, altering the surface of our planet to change the nature of water runoff, and discharging waste into water alters this natural cycle. This can lead to negative impacts on the environment, be it through increased abstraction from rivers, increasing concentration of microplastics in freshwater and marine environments (and ultimately food chains), and localized flooding. We can improve environmental outcomes and resource efficiency by changing how we use and manage our water resources, for example by limiting the volume of water that needs to be extracted from the environment and treated.

We rely on the environment to provide water. In our towns and cities, green spaces strengthen communities, enabling people to come together, improve health and wellbeing, build relationships and reverse the trend of isolation. Living close to and using green spaces can reduce mortality rates and help to cut health inequalities. Sensitive use of water from the environment, and improving the efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of wastewater is required to ensure we can respond to these challenges in a sustainable way.

Responsible and sustainable use of water is an important contributor to a number of the United





Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals provide a blueprint for peace and prosperity, now and into the future. Identifying where the use of water as a role to play in delivering the SDGs helps us to identify the actions that responsible businesses can take in helping to achieve these goals. Sustainable water use has particular potential to support the achievement of eight of the SDGs:

- 3. Good health and well-being
- 6. Clean water and sanitation
- 9. Industries, innovation and infrastructure
- 11. Sustainable cities and communities
- 12. Responsible consumption and production
- 14. Life below water
- 15. Life on land
- 17. Relationships for the goals

### What we have already achieved...

In the last 3 years, the work of the Water Taskforce has leveraged £0.5million towards collaborative campaigns such as healthy ecosystems, fats, oils and grease (FOGs) and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). These projects have addressed challenging environmental issues that impact across sectors. Through action research the Water Taskforce projects have identified that cross cutting themes such as innovative financing mechanisms, digital and skills are integral to overcoming environmental challenges that will achieve positive social change.

Some achievements of the Water Taskforce to date include:

- 1,208 business engagements in our healthy ecosystems programme
- recognition as a leading collaborative innovation in the government's 25 year

environment plan, with particular reference to the Landscape Enterprise Network and the Water Resilient Cities Programme

- local and national discussions on innovative financing for shared environmental challenges
- development in the role of digital for better decision making in places and across supply chains.

Key projects of the taskforce to date have included the Landscape Enterprise Networks, Waste to Wealth champions and water resilient cities.

**Water Resilient Cities** case study in Greater Manchester has shown how working in partnership is vital, and can work in creating environments with sustainable drainage in urban areas. This not only provides greater resilience to flooding but also has multiple further benefits for the environment, health and lower water bills.

**Waste to wealth champions** are driving the commitments to: improve productivity of resources; eliminate avoidable waste by 2030, redesign how resources are used; collaborate; and report on progress annually.

**Landscape Enterprise Networks** approach has demonstrated how businesses with a shared interest in certain landscapes can work together to influence their local environmental assets. This has already started being used in Cumbria and East Anglia.





## What we will do

### Integrated Planning

The sustainable use of water is key to tackling many of the UK's future challenges. The Water Taskforce has identified that by putting water at the heart of integrated planning, we can support the UK's sustainable growth in a way which respects the natural environment and supports growth to bring about significant lasting change.

Integrated planning takes a broader approach to design outcomes than traditional approaches which have planned infrastructure with a single purpose in mind. For example, by bringing flood alleviation, ecosystem benefits, the impact on health and wellbeing into consideration in when designing infrastructure.

This approach will build on the Water and Cities report by Arup, which identified that the following principles could be applied to an integrated planning approach in the UK.

1. Putting people first (a water-wise approach to planning and design of water in cities will create more sustainable supplies).
2. Basin-sensitive cities (consider the natural river basin processes in designing cities)
3. Integrated design (Designing urban infrastructure with more than a single function in mind e.g. incorporating flood risk management, water harvesting, community and habitat benefits)
4. City regeneration (Building blue and green environments into city regeneration can maximise flood and drought resilience and provision of ecosystem services).
5. Transcending barriers (Integration and joint working across government, education, industry and communities to gain city-wide benefits).

An integrated planning approach can help to ensure that development takes place in harmony with local, healthy ecosystems. By considering:

- how sustainable water use can be embedded in new developments (including new garden towns);
- how water management can improved in the infrastructure that connects these cities and towns (including road infrastructure) and;
- how natural catchment solutions can be developed for both rural and urban water issues.

The Water Taskforce is well positioned to support a transition to a greener economy, and to ensure that the business model this entails is embedded across society. A key means by which we can do this is through connecting strategic infrastructure and new and existing communities to the natural environment. This will help businesses to manage collective risks to their long term commercial success, ultimately strengthening their long-term prosperity and financial sustainability.

Working in partnership with developers, local authorities, and infrastructure providers will help us to deliver the three workstreams of the Water Taskforce in a sustainable and integrated way which embeds sustainable water use into long-term planning. Through building new, and maximising existing partnerships we can ensure sustainable water measures, such as rainwater harvesting becomes a 'business as usual' part of new developments. By taking actions that work towards this goal today, we can create an environment where successful businesses and communities exist in harmony with their surrounding environment, and develop in a way which delivers net environmental benefit.



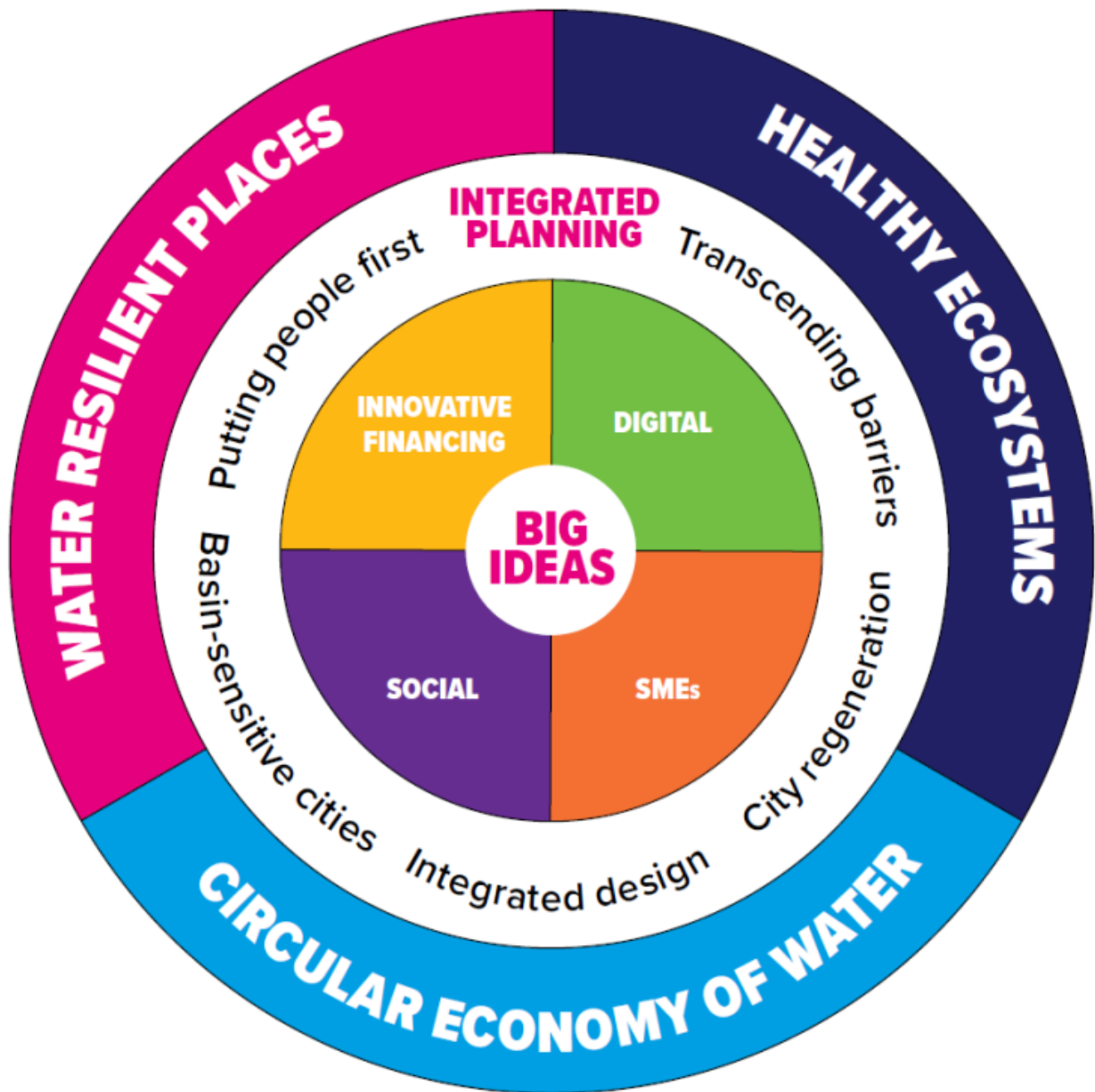


Figure 1 The Water Taskforce Conceptual Framework. The integrated planning principles sit at the heart of our strategy, using the big ideas to deliver the three Water Taskforce programmes.



## Our Programmes

### Healthy Ecosystems

**Lead Company:** Anglian Water

**Supporting companies:** Nestle, Sainsburys, Thames Water, Southern Water, Yorkshire Water, United Utilities and Northumbrian Water

*Working with businesses to improve the health of water, soil and habitats by working through their supply chains.*

Our Healthy Ecosystems project has worked with food supply chains, water companies and other businesses to look at how farmers can be better supported by a stewardship approach to land. This will improve the health of water, soil and biodiversity and in turn the prosperity of their businesses and the local community.

We have tested the “Landscape Enterprise Network” model in [Cumbria](#) and [East Anglia](#) to identify how multiple stakeholders with an interest in an area can come together to support farmers. We will work to scale up business engagement with catchment-based approaches, linking with our business connectors programme.

The Catchment Leaders Network has been established to bring together cross-sector businesses to tackle the collective challenge of water stresses through catchment management. It forms a key part of our approach to reconnect people with the water cycle, and embed a recognition in future plans of their impact on, and of, their wider natural catchment.

#### In the next three years we will:

- Liaise with government to work towards a viable post-Brexit alternative to the Common Agricultural Policy.

- Work to ensure that the shared value of natural capital is recognised by multiple beneficiaries and embedded into landscape and urban planning.
- Create a digital framework for sharing data to help address common challenges and provide transparency of impacts across the agricultural value chain to enable cross sector collaboration and develop solutions
- Work to develop digital solutions to map and illustrate catchment action across the UK and how this can link to organisations along the supply chain to provide transparency and verification of action.

#### Contribution to SDGs:

##### 6. Clean water and sanitation

- By improving the health of ecosystems using sustainable, natural catchment focussed approaches we can help to deliver the SDG target to protect and restore water-related ecosystems.

##### 15. Life on land

- By reconnecting people and businesses with their natural catchments we can help ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, and integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning.
- Taking a collaborative approach through the Water Taskforce, we can also help to mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.





## Water Resilient Places

**Lead Company:** Arup, MWH, Marshalls

**Supporting companies:** Housing developers,  
Water Retailers

*Developing a new model for cities that provides green and blue spaces for people and the environment.*

Water has central importance in planning, particularly in relation to resilience of water supply, water quality and flooding. There is an opportunity to embed sustainable water into smart cities and the new developments, including garden town developments, as well as retrofitting sustainable green and blue infrastructure into existing settlements to ensure communities are rooted in places which are water resilient.

The Water Taskforce is well placed to promote engagement between research and users (planners, policy-makers, businesses, community organisations etc.) as well as in supporting the development of further research opportunities in this area.

We will work with developers to integrate resilient design into new housing development, enabling affordable resilient housing in flood risk areas and will develop financial models that can support retrofit and new build resilience across the UK.

With support from Defra and United Utilities, BITC is developing a SuDs pilot which will build two demonstration sites and develop an innovative financing tool that can support a city-wide programme.

### In the next three years we will:

- Increase focus on water in planning and addressing the need for action in garden towns, promoting integrated water management at a national level.



- Work to input water into the “City Standards Network”.
- Create champion networks for change and delivery at a regional level.
- Work with National & Local government to provide the knowledge and tools to mainstream resilience into town planning.
- Demonstrate models of good practice that can be scaled at a national level, and demonstrate that these models can become the new paradigm for collaboration in green and blue infrastructure and enable smart growth in the UK.

### Contribution to SDGs

#### 3. Good health and wellbeing

- Integrating green and blue spaces into cities and towns helps to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

#### 6. Clean water and sanitation

- Putting water at the heart of planning of resilient places can help to reduce pollution, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors, and form a key part of implementing integrated water resources management at all levels.

#### 9. Industries, innovation and infrastructure

- Building sustainable water into smart cities and new towns will help upgrade infrastructure to make them more sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency.

#### 11. Sustainable cities and communities

- Our model for resilient places with water at their heart will help to reduce the adverse per capita impact of cities and provide a step towards the provision of universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces.





## The Circular economy of water

**Lead Company:** Thames Water, Southern Water

**Supporting companies:** KTN

***Reduce, reuse and recycle water and wastewater to create new business opportunities and address shared issues.***

Increasingly waste is travelling through drains and overland to end its journey in our marine and aquatic environments. The Water Taskforce will highlight how businesses are working to address this.

The environmental threat caused by waste plastics is still being understood. Microfibres from clothing and items such as wet wipes and sanitary products, are not filtered out by traditional treatment methods and readily make their way into freshwater and marine environments. The Water Taskforce will support efforts to remove microplastics from wastewater and reducing the prevalence of single-use plastics by encouraging businesses to adopt a more sustainable approach to plastic use..

We will build further partnerships looking at how the water cycle is impacted by connecting infrastructure. By taking an integrated planning approach to developing new road networks, we can consider the role that this infrastructure has, not just in getting people and goods from A to B, but the wider impact these developments have on human health and the natural environment.

### **In the next three years we will:**

- Take forward actions from the Waste to Wealth commitment, particularly in relation to food, chemicals and textiles;
- Investigate how water sensitive supporting infrastructure could be integrated into new road networks;

- Deliver a concordat between business and utilities to agree shared actions on addressing issues that disrupt the circular economy of water;
- Work with businesses to build an understanding of their role as leaders in creating and delivering low water-impact goods and services to customers;
- Support ongoing investigations into the sources and pathways of microplastics into the environment via the wastewater network, and identify opportunities to reuse plastic waste removed from the wastewater network – repurposing it for future use;
- Promote behaviour change in employees, customers and suppliers to harness their power to become circular economy consumer advocates, particularly through reducing the use of plastic and the production of plastic waste
- Create a markets place for SMEs to optimise innovation around circularity;

### **Contribution to SDGs:**

#### *9. Industries, innovation and infrastructure*

- The circular economy programme will help us to develop reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and upgrade infrastructure to make it sustainable, with increased resource efficiency.

#### *12. Responsible consumption and production*

- The circular economy of water programme will help us to achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources and encourage companies to adopt more sustainable practices.

#### *14. Life below water*

- By working together to reduce the concentration of microplastics, we can help to achieve a significantly reduced marine pollution from land-based activities.





## The Big Ideas

To ensure integration, the Water Taskforce has set out four big ideas that will help deliver our ambition by 2022. The four big ideas represent the key delivery arm through which the three programme areas will be delivered. The nature through which they will do this will evolve over the four years of this strategy. The matrix on the following page demonstrates some of the key avenues through which the ideas will facilitate each of the programmes.

### **Contribution to SDGs:**

#### *17. Relationships for the goals*

- By working collaboratively to support the achievement of the UN SDGs through a coherent strategy, we enhance policy coherence for sustainable development and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.

### **The Big Innovative Financing Idea**

**Lead Company:** TBC

**Supporting companies:** Arup

To achieve sustainable change, an approach must be financially viable within a market place. Innovative financing helps to value smart growth and find a market for it. By 2022 we will have a clear understanding of the multiple benefits for multiple beneficiaries supported by a stronger enabling environment from government and technology e.g. blockchain. BITC will provide insight for 2-3 models based on existing projects that are scalable across sectors and geographies. BITC will help catalyse these changes by:

- Understanding the existing context
- Identifying a number of financing models for rural and urban areas across the UK

- Identifying multiple stakeholders & beneficiaries and convening them around integrated problems.

To achieve this, we will use this understanding to build on our existing pilots looking back on the experiences of others (both in the UK and internationally) and look forward to opportunities growing from our changing political, economic and technological contexts.

### **The Big Digital idea**

**Lead Company:** Anglian Water

**Supporting companies:** TBC

As BITC set out in the 'Brave new World?' report, skills and digital are the themes that will shape responsible business in the future. By 2022 we will have a framework for sharing data to achieve common good and shared value. It will be a proven concept that has been rolled out in a test catchment, pride of place and others.

The big digital idea is key to taking forward the Water Taskforce's integrated planning idea approach. For example, there is further potential for digital platforms to be used to reinvigorate Water Cycle Studies across the UK, creating a streamlined approach to the understanding of water in key development areas.

This framework will support the working for the common good, address climate change and optimise solutions. The success of this framework will be captured in examples from across the market and in BITC's other projects. BITC will deliver this framework by:

- Working with digital experts in a focused hack of 2-3 questions which can be answered by data sharing
- Focusing on one place first
- Learning from other projects
- Identifying suitable local authorities to pilot through e.g. Peterborough City Council





- Mainstreaming the ideas that come out of the big digital idea to make them widely accessible.

To achieve our objectives we will need:

- access to data, and data expertise that can meet defined business questions.
- a data store that can aggregate data and anonymising tools,
- data analysis tools in a data lab to trial and learn from.

### The Big Social Idea

**Lead Company: TBC**

**Supporting companies: Marshalls**

The Water Taskforce will deliver community centred projects and interventions that deliver social and environmental benefits. This is closely linked to the 'putting people first' element of the integrated planning approach.

In 2021 we will no longer be talking about social or environmental benefits; it will be implicit that what is good for the planet is good for people. We will be able to demonstrate these benefits through both our project KPIs that demonstrate social and environmental goods. This integration will be visible internally and externally, across BITC's members and programmes. To achieve this we will:

- Develop a roadmap of how companies can achieve integrated social and environmental good through the responsible business agenda, supported by case studies and demonstrated through a pilot.
- Each new project will develop its own 'pizza' wheel of ideas that are important to that community
- Identify barriers e.g. regulations

To achieve this we will need to strengthen BITC's internal linkages and leverage the strengths of our social programmes. We reach out to communities

who are not usually engaged, connecting with the 'pride of place agenda. We will model ways of working that will allow businesses to do it for themselves.

### The Big SME idea

**Lead Company: TBC**

**Supporting companies: KTN**

BITC will develop an SME Hub that will support a vibrant, engaged SME membership of BITC with clear relevant messages on environment good practice and guidance. To make this work:

- We will develop a well-researched targeted model with SMEs and trial it in a pilot location
- We will engage existing BITC members to work with SMEs through their supply chains
- We will partner with SME membership organisations including Federation of Small Business and the Chambers of Commerce.

To achieve this goal we will need to work through established networks to engage SME's. This will include BITCs members & their supply chains and small business institutions. We will need to develop messaging and communications that is targeted at SME's and appeals to their capacity. To strengthen our ability to do this as a Water Taskforce we should target a water retailer to join the Taskforce and engaged in this project.





	The big ideas				
	Innovative financing	Digital	Social	SME	
<b>Our programmes</b>	<b>Healthy ecosystems</b>	<p>Ensuring that the shared value of natural capital is reflected in innovative financing mechanisms.</p> <p>Piloting innovative financing approaches to supporting healthy ecosystems in a number of catchments.</p>	<p>A digital framework for sharing data to provide transparency of impacts across the agricultural value chain.</p> <p>Develop digital solutions to map and illustrate catchment action across the UK</p>	<p>Natural capital is embedded into landscape and urban planning.</p> <p>An alternative to the common agricultural policy which encourages the enhancement of the natural environment.</p>	<p>Shared value of natural capital is recognised by multiple beneficiaries through the SME hub.</p>
	<b>Water resilient places</b>	<p>Innovative financing models become the new paradigm for collaboration in green and blue infrastructure and enable smart growth in the UK.</p>	<p>Use digital platforms to create knowledge and data sharing networks that help to integrate water into smart cities.</p> <p>Digital platforms are used to help reinvigorate Water Cycle studies across the UK</p>	<p>Greater focus on water in planning and addressing the need for action in garden towns</p> <p>National &amp; Local government have the knowledge and tools to mainstream resilience into town planning.</p> <p>Water input into the "City Standards Network".</p>	<p>SME hub is utilised to create champion networks for change and delivery at a regional and local level.</p>
	<b>A circular economy of water</b>	<p>Working with businesses to consider how retrofitting of water re-use systems can be cost effective.</p>	<p>Digital platforms help provide access to data and data analysis tools which support a more circular economy of water.</p>	<p>Employees, customers and suppliers are circular economy consumer advocates, particularly through reducing the use of plastic and the production of plastic waste.</p> <p>Water sensitive supporting infrastructure could be integrated into new road network design.</p> <p>Waste to Wealth commitment, particularly in relation to food, chemicals and textiles is taken forward.</p>	<p>Businesses understand their impact on water quality &amp; quantity.</p> <p>An innovation markets place helps business and SMEs to optimise innovation around circularity.</p> <p>Business and utilities to agree shared actions on addressing issues that disrupt the circular economy of water</p>

