

UK Blue Carbon Forum | Statement to COP26 Delegates

The ability of marine habitats to sequester and store carbon is widely acknowledged by science, and the conservation and restoration of marine habitats can bring rich benefits for biodiversity, communities, and climate resilience. However, this powerful opportunity for climate mitigation and adaptation is yet to be properly incorporated into carbon accounting and international policy. In particular, there is a need for cross-sector cohesion to ensure the ocean is at the heart of addressing the climate crisis.

A new group has been formed to address the important role of blue carbon in mitigating the current ecological and climate emergency: the **UK Blue Carbon Forum**. The Forum will be a positive, solutions-focused group with a robust and transparent governance structure, committed to cross-sector collaboration to further the incorporation of blue carbon into the UK's climate mitigation strategy.

By convening leading experts and stakeholders from across government, academia, the charitable sector and further afield, this landmark Forum will work directly to:

- Strengthen the link between climate mitigation and ecological benefits
- Improve communications and build support for nature-based solutions
- Standardise and align methodologies to accurately assess habitats' blue carbon potential
- Support a route for a blue carbon market to give economic value to ecosystem services
- Pave the way for future opportunities to restore and conserve blue carbon habitats

Political leaders, policy officials and other decision-makers have a major role to play in the transition towards a more holistic economic and political structure that properly accounts for the value of blue carbon ecosystems. The Forum represents an excellent opportunity to access scientifically supported, consensus-based advice that would greatly enhance this role. We will be communicating these recommendations and emphasising their importance with decision-makers, and would greatly welcome your collaboration and involvement.

We, the Members of the UK Blue Carbon Forum, urge COP26 delegates to prioritise blue carbon as a key solution to the climate crisis. To this end, we strongly encourage you to engage with the Forum to ensure that blue carbon opportunities are taken as soon as possible for maximum positive impact. Please get in touch with the Forum at secretariat@ukbluecarbonforum.com.

Yours,

Members of the UK Blue Carbon Forum

