



Sustainable Growth Agreement

Venture Trust and Scottish Environment
Protection Agency

25 May 2017

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Between:

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (“SEPA”)¹

Corporate Office
Strathallan House
Castle Business Park
Stirling FK9 4TZ

and

Venture Trust (“VT”)²

Argyle House
3 Lady Lawson Street
Edinburgh EH3 9DR

(“each a “Party” and together the Parties”)

¹SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY, a body corporate established under Section 20 of, and Schedule 6 to, the Environment Act 1995

²VENTURE TRUST is a registered charity in Scotland (SC038932), and in England and Wales (285891).

The Vision and Purpose

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency's (SEPA) job is to protect and improve the Scottish environment. Understandably, in the past, most environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) around the world have focused on this role in protecting the environment without very explicitly thinking about how the environment interlinks with our social and economic systems. This made sense in the early days of EPAs when the main environmental challenge was reducing industrial pollution from factories.

But in the 21st century we, as a society, face more fundamental challenges and opportunities. We now confront a world in which systemic problems dominate the agenda. The fact that our environment underpins our entire social and economic system is increasingly understood. The fact that the best way to produce environmental success is to think of creative ways in which this will also produce social and economic success is also increasingly recognised.

These facts were reflected in the Regulatory Reform Act passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2014 which set a new, visionary, Statutory Purpose for SEPA which, in summary, tells SEPA that our job in the 21st century is to:

"Protect and improve the Scottish environment (environmental success) in ways that, as far as possible, create health and well-being benefits (social success) and generate sustainable economic growth (economic success)."

If SEPA can do this, it will contribute to creating more lasting and inclusive prosperity for Scotland. But it's a hard task. SEPA will need to retain its traditional strengths and add some new ones. In particular, it means seeking new partners. It is important that SEPA continues to work with those parts of the community that it has traditionally worked with such as communities living around industrial facilities, regulated businesses and environment NGOs. SEPA needs to build on this and reach out to parts of the community it hasn't worked with much before.

A key example is those groups that help people in our society who find themselves in difficult circumstances. This is why we have developed this Sustainable Growth Agreement with Venture Trust (VT). At this stage, we cannot devote lots of resource to this type of work, but we do want to explore how this new type of working relationship might help create environmental, social and economic success in tandem and in a new way.

We envisage that most Sustainable Growth Agreements will be with regulated businesses. But the fact that this (second) Sustainable Growth Agreement is with a third sector organisation for SEPA reflects our commitment to deliver against our Statutory Purpose by exploring new ways of working with a range of different organisations.

We are delighted that VT believes that a partnership with SEPA is worth nurturing. Together, we hope that the initiatives that we are jointly committing to will generate multiple benefits for Scotland. Above all, we hope it will provide new ways of supporting those people whom Venture Trust set out to help. We hope these people will benefit from and enjoy playing a role in improving Scotland's beautiful natural environment.

SEPA and VT look forward to working with our partners in pursuing and learning from the commitments in this Sustainable Growth Agreement.

Together SEPA and VT, working closely with other businesses and community groups, will change the lives of people for the better in a way that nurtures a strong sense of understanding of the benefits that society derives from a healthy environment. VT's goal is to inspire individuals to commit to their own development, raising confidence and aspiration. Together we will enable those who are experiencing disadvantage and struggling to engage with mainstream employability to access support to acquire the life skills, resilience and confidence to benefit from the opportunities offered by employment, education, volunteering or training in Scotland. These people are part of Scotland's future prosperity, and with the right and sustained support and development, and by being included, can contribute significantly to Scotland's well-being in terms of its social and economic future.

Venture Trust aims to change lives, supporting people who, because of their life experiences, are marginalised, vulnerable and living chaotic lifestyles to build more positive futures.

Venture Trust's innovative personal development programmes combine intensive experiences in Scotland's wilderness areas with flexible community-based services to enable individuals to unlock their personal, social and employability skills and become more resilient and realise their potential.

Venture Trust is developing employability opportunities in the form of hosting traineeships within the charity and brokered external work placements hosted by partner agencies in the public business or social enterprise sectors. In conjunction with partners, Venture Trust will enable individuals to experience work, understand the behaviours and skills required to be ready for work, and ultimately sustain employment.



Areas agreed for joint working

This joint initiative is about developing a strong, sustainable relationship between the two organisations, and potential partners, to help deliver the VT goal to increase the proportion of people achieving and sustaining meaningful employment, education, training or volunteering outcomes which are right for them.

While doing this, both SEPA and VT hope to instil a strong connection with the social and well-being benefits of a healthy environment. The journey may, in the longer term, involve developing bespoke programmes with SEPA, and potentially other partners, with a strong focus on environmental outcomes. We may also explore a longer term goal of supporting and encouraging partnerships in the development of an outdoor semi-permanent base camp. In order to begin this journey together the following areas of joint working have been agreed.



Area	Opportunities
<p>1. Creating opportunities to experience the working environment with SEPA</p> <p>SEPA will create and support opportunities for VT participants to experience the working environment within SEPA with an emphasis on, but not exclusive to, areas where the participants can make a connection with the environment. Through a range of options including day visits, job shadowing and potentially 1-2 week work placements, participants will have the opportunity to contribute to SEPA's business, bringing a new insight to SEPA that will help to broaden and shape its approach.</p>	<p>Participants may accompany staff visiting regulated facilities, and observe how businesses manage their environmental impact, such as sites designed to manage our waste, e.g. recycling facilities, waste water treatment plants, landfill sites, etc.</p> <p>Participants may join staff on environmental sampling and investigation to understand how society's activities impact on the environment, and how the environment supports society and the economy.</p> <p>SEPA will offer job shadowing of senior staff, including the Chief Executive, to experience how SEPA engages with businesses.</p>
<p>2. Creating and fostering links with others</p> <p>SEPA will aim to facilitate opportunities for VT participants to gain work experience with businesses, partner agencies and other organisations that SEPA engage with, specifically looking to find opportunities for engagement close to the participants' local communities. This will help the participant to strengthen the links with their community and may in turn help to grow links between the businesses and the community.</p>	<p>SEPA will work with businesses to help explore working with VT and its participants, increasing understanding of how businesses benefit from their environment and how they respond to environmental challenges in a way that benefits their business.</p> <p>SEPA will encourage businesses and other organisations that are exploring Sustainable Growth Agreements to consider creating a long term relationship with Venture Trust, supporting their participants to get work experience, trainee opportunities and, potentially, employment, or to develop employee engagement and sponsorship agreements.</p>

Area	Opportunities
3. Encourage staff volunteering to support VT participants SEPA staff have the opportunity to participate in an employee supported volunteering scheme. SEPA will aim to promote volunteering opportunities to staff to support the work of Venture Trust, which will benefit VT, its participants, but also SEPA staff and the business.	<p>SEPA will support and encourage staff to participate in employability skills sessions, using the skills of staff to help support participants at VT to feel ready for employment.</p> <p>VT will support SEPA staff to participate through raising awareness and understanding of VT's purpose and training if required.</p> <p>SEPA and VT will explore possible participation in the VT wilderness sessions delivering particular activities that will help to support the participants' wilderness journey and development. This could include simple environmental investigation sessions.</p> <p>SEPA and VT will explore other opportunities for deeper engagement through supporting bespoke programmes and projects either led by SEPA, or by others supported by SEPA.</p>
4. Helping VT consider and reduce their environmental impact SEPA, through its knowledge and understanding of environmental impacts of activities, will help Venture Trust Staff and their participants to understand their environmental impact and discover how they can take account of this in their activities as part of a programme of learning and education, e.g. energy efficiency, waste management and recycling, etc. It can also help participants explore the benefits businesses derive from using their environment sustainably.	<p>SEPA and VT will explore ways to incorporate environmental awareness and understanding into the activities as part of the wilderness experience and employability skills training. SEPA will involve its Green Network to develop and support the programmes, and explore themed work packages, e.g. the journey of materials in the environment.</p>
5. Support through training and other learning SEPA will help Venture Trust staff in developing as individuals and support to the business through opening up aspects of SEPA staff training to their staff and possibly to Venture Trust participants.	<p>SEPA will offer unfilled spaces on training courses to VT for suitable courses linked to their business needs.</p> <p>VT will aim to increase understanding of Venture Trust for SEPA staff through a 'lunch and learn,' and 'out on the ground' visits for SEPA staff, to support and encourage staff in volunteering and engaging with participants.</p> <p>Encouraging potential job-shadowing for SEPA staff to learn through work experience at Venture Trust.</p>

Sustainable Growth Agreement Management

- All applicable laws continue to apply to VT and nothing in this Sustainable Growth Agreement is intended to, or shall be deemed to:-
 - establish any partnership or joint venture between the parties constitute any Party as the agent of the other Party, nor authorise any of the Parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other Party; and
 - adversely affect or prejudice the ability of SEPA to act in its capacity as a regulator.
- The Parties have agreed that this Sustainable Growth Agreement will remain in place for three years from the date of signing this Sustainable Growth Agreement.
- This Sustainable Growth Agreement is not legally binding and creates no legal rights or legal obligations between the Parties. Both Parties are accountable and responsible for honouring their commitments in this Sustainable Growth Agreement.
- This Agreement will be made available to the public by both Parties (e.g. on SEPA and Venture Trust websites).
- VT and SEPA agree to develop a delivery and reporting process to track progress. The Chief Executives of SEPA and VT will meet every 6 months to review. Opportunities to promote the Sustainable Growth Agreement and its outcomes will be included in the review.
- An annual update of progress will be carried out to identify areas of focus for the following year, possible amendments to the Sustainable Growth Agreement and opportunities to promote the Sustainable Growth Agreement.
- Both Parties reserve the right to withdraw from this Sustainable Growth Agreement if they believe it is no longer effectively promoting their aspirations.
- If a Party is considering withdrawing they will notify the Chief Executive of the other party of their intention. Both Parties agree to work together to seek a resolution wherever possible.

In the review of success the following areas will be measured:

- Creating opportunities to experience the work environment in SEPA each year for participants. *(In the first year, between 10 and 20 opportunities.)*
- Increasing staff engagement through volunteering to support individuals in work experience or requiring support in the work place, or through volunteering in employability skills training. *(Encourage up to 10 volunteering days in the first year.)*
- Helping to translate work experience into longer term volunteering, paid traineeships, education opportunities or sustained employment. *(Numbers to be developed in year 2.)*
- Promoting the innovation and socio-economic impacts achieved through partnership by developing case studies and reporting on evidence of impact through the SGA and by working closely with businesses to share with their staff and more widely externally. *(Publish at least three shared stories of success in the first year.)*

Signed For and On behalf of Venture Trust

Signed For and On behalf of SEPA

**Further Information**

**Venture Trust**
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SEPA
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SEPA's Regulatory Strategy: One Planet Prosperity

