

# Sustainable Growth Agreement

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Robertson



# Sustainable Growth Agreement

## Between:

### **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)**

Strathallan House  
Castle Business Park  
Stirling  
FK9 4TZ

## And

### **Robertson**

Robertson House  
Castle Business Park  
Stirling  
FK9 4TZ

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

The Parties agree to work collaboratively to deliver the commitments set out in this Sustainable Growth Agreement (“this SGA” / “this Agreement”).

Date:

## Alternative languages and formats

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language please contact SEPA by email to [equalities@sepa.org.uk](mailto:equalities@sepa.org.uk)

If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling you to communicate with us using sign language.



## What are Sustainable Growth Agreements?

Sustainable Growth Agreements (SGAs) are voluntary, non-legally binding, formal agreements between an organisation(s) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) that focus on practical action to deliver environmental outcomes and help achieve One Planet Prosperity. Through a SGA, SEPA can help organisations collaborate with experts, innovators and stakeholders on different approaches that could improve environmental performance and create environmental, social and economic success.

## Who we are

### Robertson

#### Our purpose

**Robertson is one of the largest family-owned construction, infrastructure and support services businesses in the UK. Our purpose is to assure a sustainable future.**

We achieve this by working in partnership and through sustainable growth, which enables us to invest in our business, the future of our people and communities, and to deliver a wide range of projects for customers nationally.

Ultimately, everything we do is about making progress safely towards a sustainable future for our people, communities and our business. It's the Robertson way.



*We are a carbon neutral business*



## Responsible Business

Our Robertson Responsible Business Policy is structured in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, giving focus to areas where we can contribute meaningfully through our activities by implementing effective governance and fostering a responsible business culture.

Being socially, economically and environmentally responsible in all that we do is absolutely crucial to the success we've achieved to date, and to the continued sustainability of our business. We believe that Robertson has a dual responsibility to not only deliver our own projects, services and operations as responsibly as possible, but also to empower and support our customers and supply chain to do the same.

The key outcomes of our Policy, each of which are quantified through a range of asset, project, regional and group wide key performance indicators, will help us to assure a sustainable future.

These are:

### ⦿ Our people:

- Ensuring Team Robertson is safe, healthy and happy
- Cultivating a diverse and inclusive work force which is treated with respect
- Empowering our people by providing them with the best learning opportunities and resources

### ⦿ Our partners:

- Engaging communities we work in, creating social value and enabling inclusive growth
- Developing and supporting a responsible supply chain
- Delivering quality projects, satisfying and supporting our customers and clients

### ⦿ Our planet:

- Minimising our transport emissions and supporting active and sustainable travel options
- Driving down our raw resource consumption and maximising reuse and recycling
- Minimising our carbon footprint, utilities consumption and environmental impact



# SEPA

## Our vision

**To make Scotland stronger by encouraging and supporting businesses who seek to find innovative and efficient ways to go beyond standard levels of compliance while operating within earth's capacity to support us.**

SEPA's Regulatory Strategy, One Planet Prosperity, describes the 21st century environmental challenges that Scotland and other countries across the world face, including over-use of natural resources and climate change.



According to the ecological footprint measure, Scotland needs approximately three planets to sustain its current way of living. There is only one planet, and most nations around the world face the dilemma of significantly over-using the planet's capacity to support human activity.

All parts of our communities, businesses and government will have key roles to play to enable Scotland to successfully tackle the 21st century challenge of creating social and economic success within planetary constraints. In every sector we regulate, this means SEPA needs to:

- ensure all businesses fully meet their environmental compliance obligations;
- help as many businesses as possible move beyond their environmental compliance obligations.

Sustainable Growth Agreements are one way of helping achieve this, recognising that the most successful businesses in the 21st century are those that see environmental and social success as an opportunity for business success.

## Our partnership aspirations

The Sustainable Growth Agreement (SGA) will be a long-term partnership that has potential for far reaching impact. It will primarily focus on interventions to improve the environmental and sustainability performance of the supply chain during the construction phase of the building lifecycle for both public and private sector projects.

**Our joint aspiration is for all elements in the supply chain to achieve high environmental performance by using resources efficiently to effect lower demands on water, energy and materials. Working together to create places where businesses, communities and nature can prosper within the resources of one planet.**

The success of our partnership will help achieve the following outcomes:

- **Businesses prosper from high environmental performance** - they understand and are supported to exceed their environmental compliance obligations on construction sites.
- **Water, energy and materials are managed efficiently** – the call on natural resources is reduced and optimised, use of secondary materials is common place, waste and pollution is designed out.
- **Carbon emissions are reduced** – energy and heat demand is minimised and zero or low carbon sources utilised.
- **People and nature benefit from a high quality environment** – working with natural systems is the norm.

To achieve this, we will work together using Robertson's market force to upskill suppliers and subcontractors to exceed their environmental obligations, support them to do more for the environment and create opportunities that link business success with environmental success.

If we get this right, the environment will be seen as an essential platform which supports economic and social success. This will help to 'assure a sustainable future' and develop a path to becoming a 'one planet' sector.

## Why are we building our partnership through this Sustainable Growth Agreement?

This Sustainable Growth Agreement is the first between SEPA and a tier 1 construction, housing, infrastructure and support services business, and the first focused on uplifting environmental performance across multiple businesses in a supply chain.

Robertson has a number of preferred suppliers and subcontractors that cover all elements of the built environment in Scotland, and the wider UK. SEPA regulates activities undertaken by a number of these businesses (e.g. construction companies, house builders, waste hauliers, industrial operators, product manufacturers / suppliers and others). While many businesses are already doing more for the environment than they are required to do by law, there are significant challenges associated with construction phase activities.

The Agreement provides a platform for positive collaboration, knowledge share and learning to support green recovery and help transform the construction of public and private sector projects in Scotland. We will work together to identify opportunities for Robertson and its preferred suppliers and subcontractors to go beyond regulatory compliance and develop new and innovative ways of working to achieve One Planet Prosperity. It is not about 'business-as-usual' but rather about pushing boundaries, providing

leadership and championing key environmental issues within the construction, house building and support services processes. The parties agree to work collaboratively to deliver the commitments set out in this Sustainable Growth Agreement.

## How we will work together

This SGA sets out a range of activities to help achieve the partnership aspirations of SEPA and Robertson. These activities and any developed in the future will be prioritised alongside other opportunities as they arise in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the environment.

This will be supported and delivered through the following areas that have been identified initially for collaborative working over the next three years. The SGA will then be reviewed, with an opportunity to widen the scope to improve the environmental and sustainability performance of the supply chain during other phases of the building lifecycle, by engaging with customers and designers.





Theme		Commitment	Activity		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Influence and leadership	Both parties will demonstrate leadership to drive improvement across the following areas together.	Robertson will continue to champion the environment with suppliers and subcontractors within our supply chain in Scotland (and the wider UK) by setting clear benchmarks, enhancing awareness and knowledge, and increasing environmental performance.	Robertson publicly report against 'Our Planet' (environmental) requirements as part of our Responsible Business Policy and Strategy and will transparently share this information with SEPA on an on-going basis as the SGA programme develops.  Robertson will continue to embed new and best practice within our Environmental Management System and cascade this information to all relevant employees.		Robertson will demonstrate improvement against key performance indicators. Existing indicators will be reviewed with a focus given to key SEPA priorities.
	<i>Compliance</i> - supporting businesses to exceed their environmental obligations.				
	<i>Beyond compliance</i> - supporting the transition to a circular net zero economy; water, energy and material efficiency; utilising low/zero carbon energy sources; enhancing the environment for people and nature.	SEPA will proactively engage with Robertson, and the key suppliers and subcontractors within their preferred supply chain, as a national leader supporting and communicating the aspirations, challenges and opportunities for environmental performance in Scotland.	SEPA will make it easier for Robertson businesses to work with us and co-deliver environmental outcomes, by allocating a 'key contact' for those that we regulate or have regular interaction with.		
			SEPA will attend and present at four Robertson regional supply chain engagement events per year.  SEPA and Robertson will both continue to champion environmental best practice with public and private sector customers, taking opportunities to proactively influence design and decision making where possible.		

Theme		Commitment	Activity		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Knowledge share	Both parties will work collaboratively to share best practice knowledge and lessons learned to support better understanding of their respective environmental challenges and opportunities.	SEPA will engage Robertson and their supply chain in a range of activities to share knowledge and support development of new SEPA initiatives.	SEPA and Robertson will undertake targeted engagement with selected supply chain partners to increase awareness of key issues around environmental compliance (and beyond).  This will include facilitating partnerships and engagement with other complementary support organisations.	As per Year 1, plus Robertson will support the implementation of sector plans and other key SEPA initiatives by providing SEPA with insight into the business context and supply chain challenges that affect decision making in development and construction.	
		Robertson will act as a ‘critical friend’ to SEPA from a business and project delivery standpoint, to highlight any systemic issues associated with meeting environmental regulations, or where improvements to go beyond can take place.	SEPA and Robertson will meet quarterly to review: most frequent environmental issues identified within the relevant sector(s); appropriate actions or approach to support compliance, and beyond, moving forward; successes arising from the actions or changed approaches previously identified; share lessons learnt from other initiatives and explore opportunities for them to be applied e.g. other SGAs or place based projects.  Both parties will engage in an ongoing forum to provide structured feedback from Robertson and its preferred supply chain, supporting continued effectiveness of relevant SEPA policies and procedures.		



Theme		Commitment	Activity		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Process development	Both parties will work collaboratively to develop new and innovative processes around supply chain engagement and development.	SEPA and Robertson will undertake a joint review to help prioritise focus and actions in the supply chain.	SEPA and Robertson will develop a supply chain prioritisation framework to establish risk and impact. This will consider: current position of the sector (with regards to environmental performance) and scope for improvement; lessons learned from other SGAs; scope of influence and potential levers to support increased performance.  We will then agree shared priorities and actions to focus working moving forward.	Following this Year 1 review, SEPA and Robertson will focus activity through priority actions.	
		SEPA and Robertson will work collaboratively to pilot, review and share SEPA training content and guidance for the industry around environmental compliance, and beyond.	Robertson will pilot new training content and guidance developed by SEPA to ensure appropriateness for the supply chain.	Robertson will act as a conduit to help SEPA engage sub-contractors with training content and guidance.	
		SEPA and Robertson will explore new ways of identifying the suppliers and sub-contractors most in need of support, intervening to help support, but using compliance history to inform supply chain selection, and contractual compliance requirements to drive improvements.	Robertson will utilise publicly available information on a supplier’s compliance history and require supplier disclosure to support decision making around preferred supplier and sub-contractor development and selection.		

# Sustainable Growth Agreement Management

1. All the normal laws continue to apply to Robertson and nothing in this Sustainable Growth Agreement is intended to, or shall be deemed to:
  - a. establish any partnership or joint venture between the parties, constitute any party as the agent of any other party, nor authorise any of the parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other party;
  - b. adversely affect or prejudice the ability of SEPA to act in its capacity as a regulator.
2. The parties have agreed that this Sustainable Growth Agreement will remain in place for five years from the date of this Sustainable Growth Agreement.
3. 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.
4. This agreement will be made available to the public by both parties, e.g. on SEPA and Robertson websites.
5. Robertson and SEPA agree to review and document progress on a six-monthly basis and report this to the SEPA and Robertson's Chief Executives.
6. Opportunities to promote the Sustainable Growth Agreement and its outcomes will be included in the six-monthly reporting to the Chief Executives.
7. There will be a formal annual review and joint annual reporting by SEPA's CEO and Robertson's CEOs to assess progress against the commitments set out in this Sustainable Growth Agreement and to measure success.
8. The annual review and joint annual report can also identify areas of focus for the following year, possible amendments to the Sustainable Growth Agreement and opportunities to promote the Sustainable Growth Agreement.
9. The joint annual report on this Sustainable Growth Agreement will be presented to the SEPA and Robertson Boards and made available to the public.
10. Both parties reserve the right to withdraw from this Sustainable Growth Agreement if they believe it is no longer effectively promoting their aspirations.
11. 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.



## Signatories

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**Terry A'Hearn**  
Chief Executive,  
SEPA



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**Elliot Robertson**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Robertson Group



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**John Low**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Robertson Residential Group



## Further information

### Scottish Environment Protection Agency

[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)

Tel: 03000 99 66 99

Twitter: @ScottishEPA

[facebook.com/ScottishEnvironmentProtectionAgency](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishEnvironmentProtectionAgency)

### Robertson

<https://robertson.co.uk/>

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