



CaBA Monitoring & Evaluation

2020/21

CaBA Benefits Assessment Working Group

May 2022

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Catchment Based Approach

Celebrating the benefits of a collaborative approach for people and wildlife

Action and Activities in 2020/21

This reporting was for projects and activities taking place up to March 2021, and includes the impact of Covid-19.



100 partnerships reported their work

25YEP

Reporting data show links to the 25 Year Environment Plan

852 projects details submitted

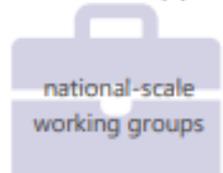
Building Partnerships


379
CaBA meetings across the country

All partnerships work with their local water company and

72%
have the water company involved in funding or delivery

National Support


8 national-scale working groups
building capacity and expertise

Connecting People with the Environment

15,265
primary stakeholders engaged in 2020/21



 **63390**
volunteers & citizen scientists actively involved in projects

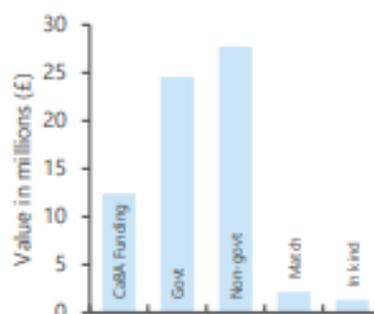
6029 
farmers engaged, often with on-farm measures implemented

Funding & Financing

£1 : £2.23

For every £1 directly invested by the Government, CaBA partnerships have raised £2.23 from non-government funders

plus
£24.5 million
of wider government funding invested via a collaborative catchment approach



Improving Biodiversity

 **1238ha**
habitat created

78 barriers 
to fish migration mitigated

 **344**
projects tackling ecological quality of waterbodies

>700km 
riverbank controlled for specific invasive species

Clean & Plentiful Water

 **259**
projects tackling diffuse pollution & improving water quality

Executive Summary

Results from the 2020-21 reporting initiative confirm that CaBA represents an important mechanism for the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (HM Government, 2018) highlighting that the work partnerships undertake is directly related to several of the 25 YEP goals.

Connecting People with the Environment: CaBA partnerships engaged over 17,000 new primary stakeholders including members of the public, farmers, local businesses and community groups. Over 10,000 volunteers and/or citizen scientists were engaged, with more than 600 projects focused on raising awareness.

Clean and Plentiful Water: Nearly 300 CaBA projects addressed rural diffuse pollution, with partnerships working with farmers on soil, nutrient and slurry management, riparian buffer strips and fencing, and farm infrastructure improvements. A key objective of over 200 projects was to reduce urban diffuse and point source pollution, primarily through nature-based solutions

Creating and Protecting Habitat and Improving Biodiversity: 60 projects led to 1,200 ha of habitat creation highlighting the importance of closer alignment between CaBA and local nature recovery. 78 barriers to fish migration were removed or mitigated, opening 750 km of river. Over 755 km of invasive species were cleared from river corridors and other locales, often through local community support.

Reducing Risk of Harm from Flooding and Drought & Adapting to Climate Change: More than 350 projects addressed flood risk, typically through implementation of natural management techniques. An increasing number of CaBA partnerships are working to support the adoption of a strategic, catchment-wide approach to the management of water resources. Collectively, these projects are building resilience to climate change in catchments nationwide.

Greening our Towns and Cities: More than 250 projects included a focus upon green-blue (nature-based) infrastructure, such as wetlands, in the urban environment. Typically, such delivery included multiple beneficial outcomes including reduced flood risk and the building of climate resilience, improved water quality, and the opportunity for local communities to engage with nature.

During 2020/21, for every £1 directly invested by Government, CaBA partnerships raised approximately £2.23 from non-governmental funders including water companies, businesses, lottery funds, EU funds and grant giving trusts. This diverse mix of funding sources aligns, therefore, with the 25 YEP statement that 'the right mix of public and private funding and financing for projects that protect and enhance natural assets will be crucial to its successful delivery' (HM Government, 2018). This ratio is slightly higher than last year, indicating that the diverse range of funding that CaBA partnerships secure has been maintained through the pandemic.

CaBA provides a strong framework for developing greater integration of water governance in England and can help to join up and coordinate different plans and initiatives (Collins et al., 2020). With sufficient and sustained funding, CaBA can support the delivery of Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans, realise synergistic outcomes with Nature Recovery Networks and develop a more strategic and sustainable use of water resources. CaBA can continue to mobilise local expertise to collect data and build evidence to support decision-making and cost-effective delivery – increasingly critical in the light of resource constraints associated with regulatory monitoring of the water environment

CaBA Overview

The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) is an inclusive collaborative water management initiative that works in partnership with Government, NGOs, local authorities, water companies, businesses and more, to maximise the natural value of our environment. CaBA partnerships are actively working in all 100+ river catchments across England and cross-border with Wales, directly supporting the achievement of many of the targets under the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.).

Each CaBA partnership has a host partner organisation, whose role it is to oversee and facilitate the partnership in its development and its delivery of outcomes. The CaBA partnerships are supported directly by funding for each host organisation from the Environment Agency.

The CaBA National Support Group (NSG), whose members represent many of the organisations engaged in CaBA, plays a key role in supporting CaBA activity and promotes the initiative across all key sectors including water industry, business, agriculture and local government. This engagement aims to strengthen the diversity of the wider initiative and help it access new sources of funding.

The NSG also works to support partnerships across England through identifying gaps in knowledge or process and resolving barriers to delivery. Many members of the NSG engage directly with partnerships and have on-the-ground knowledge of CaBA in action. Communication with the partnerships is undertaken via national conferences, workshops, newsletters, webinars and the CaBA website that incorporates a discussion forum.

A series of CaBA working groups, overseen by the NSG, each has a set of objectives specific to a particular theme or issue. Each group includes a primary focus to support the building of capacity and expertise across catchment partnerships nationwide, with respect to their theme. The focus areas of the working groups include data and monitoring, urban water management, abstraction, biodiversity, flooding, agriculture, coastal and estuarine waters and the evaluation of benefits arising from CaBA's collaborative approach.

The programme of mentoring overseen by the NSG is focused upon building knowledge capital throughout catchment partnerships nationwide. A small team of experienced practical catchment scientists support partnerships in a wide range of technical areas including the application and interpretation of modelling tools, spatial analysis through Geographical Information Systems and practical project delivery across a range of issues including water quality, flood risk management, and habitat restoration. Also operating under the NSG, a dedicated CaBA Water Stewardship Service raises awareness of CaBA amongst businesses, highlighting the opportunities it provides to support business water stewardship strategies, providing support to catchment partnerships to engage with business and developing collaborative projects.

Each year, the CaBA partnerships are required to complete a reporting form. The information gathered in these forms is used to help identify priorities, look at trends and changes in priorities and focus areas over time, identify areas where partnerships may benefit from support and capacity building, and promote the work of CaBA partnerships to a range of key stakeholders. This report summarises the outputs of the reporting from the financial year 2020/21, which is the first reporting period that will review the impact of Covid-19 on the partnerships.

CaBA Reporting 2020/21: Introduction

The CaBA Monitoring & Evaluation process for 2020/21 took place in summer 2021. The partnerships were asked to self-report details about the work and activities of their partnership that took place between April 2020 and March 2021.

Important note: March 2020 saw the start of the COVID-19 restrictions in the UK. The timing of the reporting therefore means that the year being reported on (April 2020-March 2021) will, for the most part, have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic may have made it more challenging for the partnerships to gather project data and complete the form with the help of their partners, particularly with a lot of partnerships and partners experiencing staffing changes over the year. A generous deadline was given which gave the partnership ample time to gather the information needed from the partners, however, there may still be some data gaps in this year of reporting, particularly in the project details section.

The CaBA annual reporting process has been running for several years and, though the process has been developed and refined, it aims to maintain consistency across many of the questions and measures. This allows some comparison of the data between years and will start to allow a view of trends and changes over time. Where relevant, broad comparisons to last year's results (CaBA Benefits Assessment Working Group, 2021) are indicated within the report.

These comparisons should be used as an indication only, as this large and complex self-reported dataset is affected by multiple factors over varying timescales. This includes the learning process of those completing the form as well as improvements and adjustments to the monitoring system itself. Key to the Catchment Based Approach is a cycle of partnership building, planning, delivery and improvement, a cycle within which the partnerships will be at various stages, and which brings forward different aims, focuses and outcomes over time. It is also important to note that the normal 'ebbs and flows' in funding sources and work streams (e.g. the appearance of short-term funding opportunities such as the Water Environment Grant and the 5-Year cycle of the Periodic Review process in the water industry), will have an effect on the outputs and activities of the partnerships in any particular year.

CaBA & the 25 Year Environment Plan

This report illustrates the linkages and alignment between the work of CaBA partnership and the ambitions in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (HM Government, 2018).

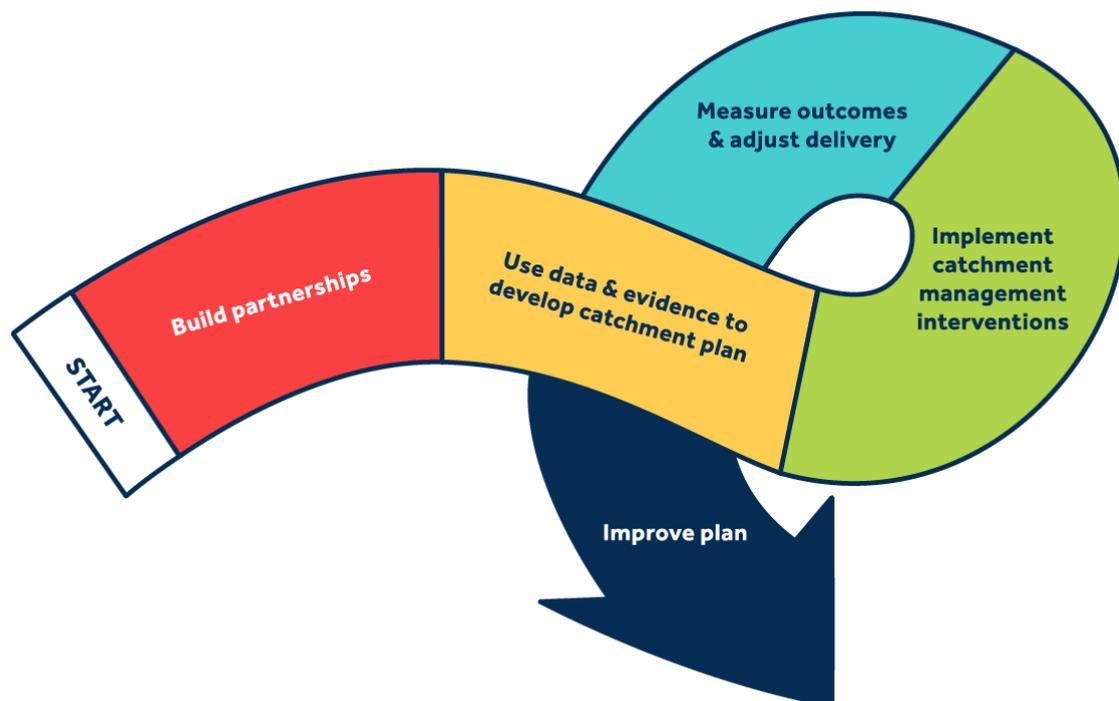
The 25 Year Environment Plan (YEP) is the Government's plan for improving the environment and leaving it in a better state for the next generation. It sets out a series of goals for the next 25 years. This important document provides a path for organisations and partnerships to follow in order to integrate and take action in alignment with national aspirations.

Throughout the report, inset boxes have been used to highlight how the results from the partnerships across the country fit with the plans and aspirations in the 25YEP.

Section 1: Collaboration & Organisation

In the first section of the CaBA reporting process each year, the partnerships report on details about their partnership as a whole, including partnership hosting, overall partnership communication and engagement with groups of stakeholders, the use of the various elements of support from the CaBA National Support Group, and the level of development of partnership plans.

The partnership details submitted through the CaBA reporting have been analysed and are presented in the context of the [CaBA Workflow](#) (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.). The CaBA Workflow is a framework for integrated catchment management and collaborative working. It is an adaptive cycle through which partnerships are built and strengthened, plans are developed and agreed, and environmental improvements are achieved.



Working in this way can provide multiple benefits for all the partner organisations and the local community. The CaBA workflow follows a natural capital approach consistent with the [Natural Capital Workbook](#) (Natural Capital Committee, 2017). By developing an integrated catchment plan, based on the principle of adaptive management, CaBA partners agree on the best course of action to maximise the natural capital of their catchments.

In addition, the stages of CaBA partnership working directly support the achievement of many of the targets under the Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (HM Government, 2018). Key linkages between the stages of the CaBA Workflow and the 25 Year Environment Plan have been highlighted throughout this report.

Building Partnerships

Building partnerships takes time and effort and is vital as the foundation for collaboration. CaBA partnerships work on building trust between partners in order to gain benefits in the long run such as joint funding bids and local community support. CaBA partnerships use engagement tools and techniques to bring stakeholders together, set a vision and agree priorities.

25YEP

Building partnerships is a theme running through the 25 Year Environment Plan, with strengthening partnerships one of the key steps in 'Putting the Plan into Practice'.

Hosting

Each CaBA partnership has one or more host partners, who take the lead role in running and administering the partnership. These organisations receive funding from the Environment Agency for this work and may receive or raise additional host funds from other sources.

In 2020-21, **282** people worked on partnership hosting, with a median average of **2** people working on each partnership.



The time spent on hosting work across all partnerships adds up to a total of **51 full-time equivalents**, with each partnership on average having 0.4 full-time equivalent working on hosting. Which is a slight reduction on last year's results.

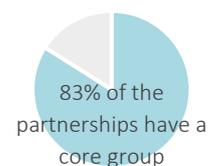
Meetings & Communications

Meetings and regular communications are a key element of building and maintaining partnerships.



A total of **379 CaBA partnership meetings** took place across the country in 2020-21, an average of **3** per partnership.

83% of the partnerships have a **'core' or 'steering' group** to help lead the partnership, this is similar to previous years. These core groups held a total of 331 meetings through the year, which is less than last year, with a median average of **3 per partnership**.



The most common ways that information is shared with partners is via meetings and email. Newsletters, and websites and social media are also used by many of the partnerships. Other forms of communication reported include feeding into regional and national media, hosting or online 'storymaps'.

Engagement

Engaging new partners and wider stakeholders is a vital part of building partnerships and gaining support and buy-in for partnership initiatives and projects.

Engaging individuals and primary stakeholders

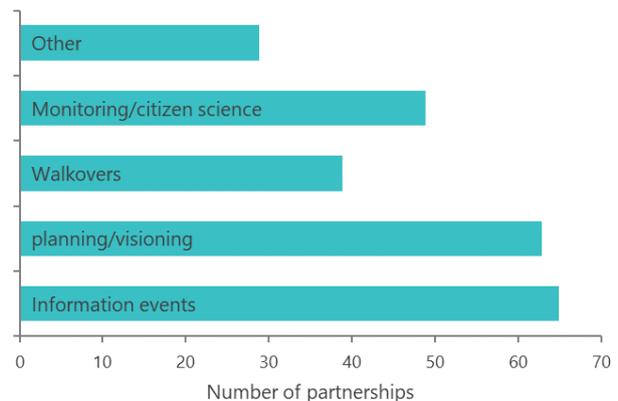
25YEP Increasing engagement with the natural environment is one of the key goals in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

The partnerships across the country engaged over 17130 new people in 2020/21, an average of 34 new people per partnership. Of these, over **15,265, or 24 per partnership, were primary stakeholders** such as members of the public, farmers, local businesses and community groups.

The numbers of stakeholders engaged across the partnerships has decreased by around 14% from the previous round of reporting (2019-20), this variation is likely to be related to the impact of Covid-19. With 97% of partnerships reporting an impact on engagement, 45% of these were recorded as a mostly negative and 50% reporting a mixture of positive and negative impacts.

Some partnerships focus strongly on primary stakeholder engagement, with the highest figure for a single partnership being over 4,700 primary stakeholders.

Primary stakeholders are most commonly engaged through information events and planning. Around half of the partnerships engage primary stakeholders through monitoring and citizen science. These summary figures show that their planning visioning has remained the same as last years. However, fewer information events and catchment walkovers were reported this year compared to last year and is likely to be linked to a reduction in face-to-face contact during the height of the covid-19 pandemic. Other means of engagement reported include newsletters, published media and social media; farm advice and visits; volunteering and clean-up events; shows, events and workshops; and work with schools and universities.



Engaging with businesses, groups and organisations

Across the partnerships, **340 new people are actively engaging with the partnerships** and contributing to key roles such as hosting, planning, delivery and monitoring. This is a median average of 1 new contributors per partnership, and these figures are almost half of those reported last year (2019-20), and is likely to be linked to the pandemic.



In total, **384 new organisations** were engaged across the partnerships in 2020-21, a decrease of around 300 from the previous year. The median average number of new organisations engaged with each partnership is 2, which reflects the overall reduction, and another probable impact of Covid-19.

The organisations that partnerships typically engage with most strongly was water companies, local authority environment teams and landowners, land managers or farming & forestry community.

Partnerships currently typically have lower engagement levels with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Nature Recovery Networks, Coastal Partnerships and Community Flood Partnerships. The majority of partnerships are either not engaged with these groups or report that these groups are aware of the partnership but not more involved. Increasing engagement with these groups could be supported by the CaBA Working Groups focusing on biodiversity, estuaries and coasts, and flooding.

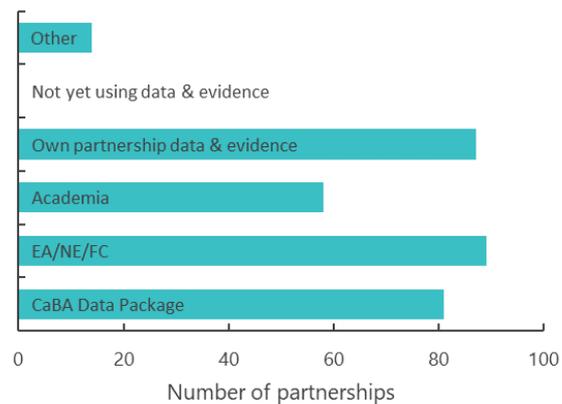
25YEP

Working with land managers is key to the goal to ‘Use and Manage Land Sustainably’. Catchment Partnerships, Nature Recovery Networks, Local Enterprise Partnerships, water companies, businesses, local authorities, and other organisations are highlighted in the 25YEP as groups which need to work together and cooperate under a natural capital approach to maximise environmental benefits.

Using Data & Evidence to Develop a Catchment Plan

All the partnerships use data and evidence in their work. The most common sources of data and evidence are Government sources (the Environment Agency, Natural England and/or Forestry England) and their own partnership data. The CaBA data package and academic data are also used by many partnerships.

Other sources of data and evidence reported by partnerships include; data from citizen science, data recorded during specific projects; water companies, and local biological records centres.



Data and evidence are used by the partnerships for a variety of purposes, most commonly to **support funding bids** and **to design and target actions**.

Through the combination of partnership building and use of data and evidence, the partnerships all have a **Catchment Plan**. These plans can be accessed online via a [list on the CaBA website](#) (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.).

The plans are typically made up of several components. The Catchment Vision and Terms of Reference are at a ‘sustainable’ level for more than half of the partnerships. Delivery Plans, Data Strategies, Monitoring Plans and Communications Plans are all more commonly at the ‘growing’ stage, reflecting the ongoing development of partnerships and their areas of work.

National Support

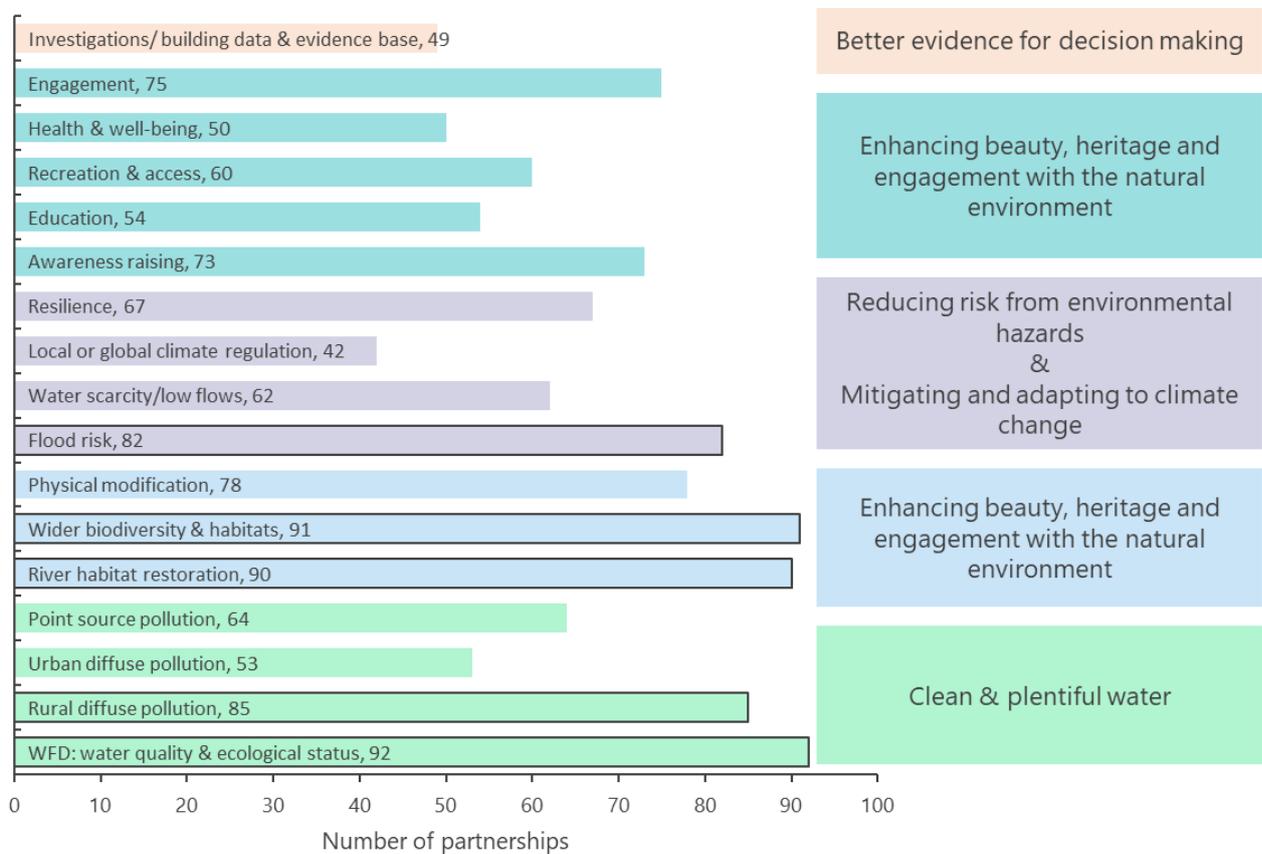
The Catchment Data User Group (CDUG) supports catchment partnerships to take an evidence-based approach to catchment management. The multi-sectoral group oversees the CaBA technical support programme, producing outputs such as the [CaBA Data & Evidence Forum](#) and the [CaBA data package and data hub](#) (Catchment Based Approach Data Hub, n.d.).

Implementing Catchment Management Interventions, Measuring Outcomes and Adjusting Delivery

CaBA Catchment Plans typically cover multiple objectives. This reflects the different partners involved and the different issues and priorities which are important across the catchments, which may include a combination of uplands, rural landscapes, urban areas, and transitional and coastal waters.

The graph below shows the number of partnerships who reported each of the different issues and objectives as key to their Catchment Plans. Those with a dark outline were selected by more than 80% of the partnerships, and therefore are shown to be core to the Catchment Based Approach.

25YEP The objectives are broadly equivalent to goals in the 25YEP, as summarised below.

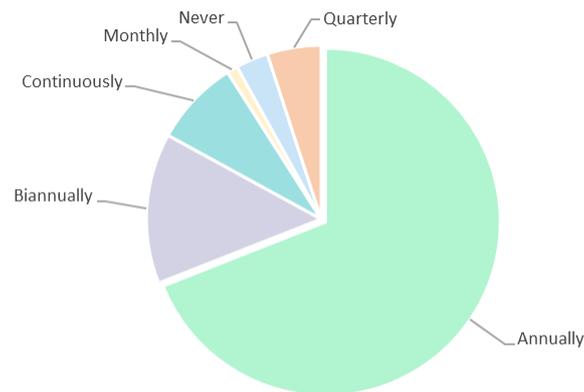


The annual CaBA Monitoring and Evaluation process also asks partners about the projects, activities and initiatives undertaken by the partnerships that year. This gives detailed information about the delivery and monitoring of interventions in each Catchment Partnership area. The information from this part of the annual reporting is detailed in Section 2 of this report.

Improving Plans

The final stage of the CaBA workflow, which then links it back around into an adaptive cycle, is improving plans.

The partnerships' own catchment plans are reviewed over a timescale agreed by the hosts and partners. Most commonly, this is on an **annual basis**, though some partnerships review on a biannual, quarterly or ongoing, continuous basis.



The partnerships are also often involved in the development of plans of other groups and organisations. **84** of the partnerships reported that they have had some level of influence over the Environment Agency Medium Term Plan for their region, and **63** report they have had some success in influencing the plans of their local water company. Just under half have influenced flood risk management plans and local authority plans.

25YEP

The 25YEP highlights that 'At present many organisations and partnerships pursue their own plans, across different areas and boundaries. In places there is good coordination between them, but in other places opportunities for joining up and integrating environmental work are missed'.

CaBA has an important role in helping to join up and coordinate different plans which affect catchments and the water environment.

Section 2: CaBA Project Delivery

Over **850** projects were submitted as having taken place during the 2020/21 financial year. Each project is described in both its broad objectives and its more detailed outputs and outcomes. Each project can have multiple objectives and outcomes.

The objectives and outcomes have been grouped according to some of the key goals in the 25 Year Environment Plan (HM Government, 2018). These are:

25YEP

- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
- Clean and plentiful water
- Creating and protecting habitats & improving biodiversity
- Reduce risk of harm from flooding and drought & adapting to climate change
- Greening our towns and cities
- Using and managing land sustainably

Several case studies have been included throughout the report to provide illustrative examples. The case studies are based directly on the project information submitted through the forms and summarise the aims of the project, the outputs and outcomes delivered and how the project was monitored and evaluated.

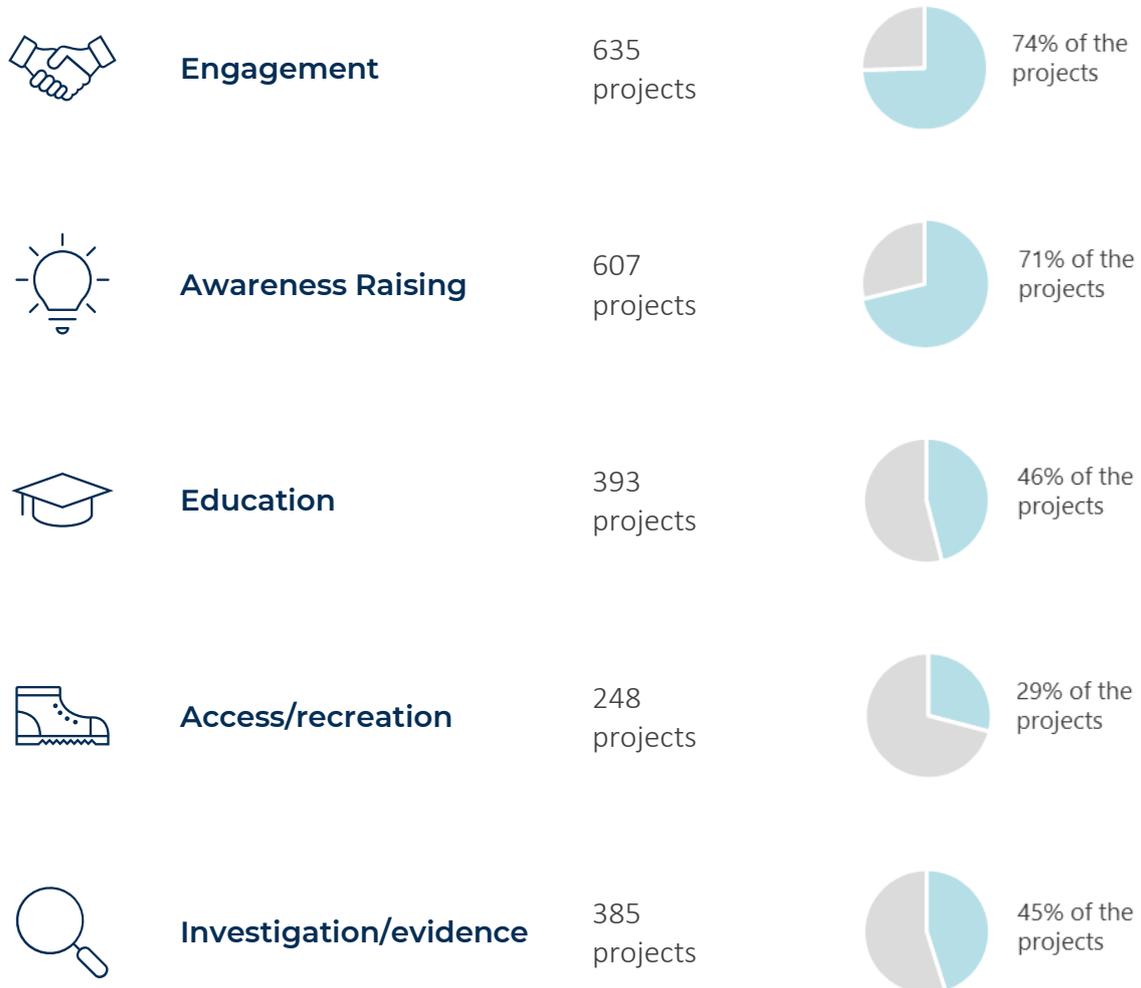
Throughout the sections, some of the work of the [CaBA Working Groups](#) (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.) has also been highlighted. These national scale groups support the CaBA partnerships on a variety of specific areas or issues. Currently, the following Working Groups are active:

- Catchment Data User Group
- Urban Working Group
- Biodiversity Working Group
- Benefits Working Group
- Water Resources Working Group
- Agriculture Working Group
- Flood Working Group
- Estuaries and Coasts Working Group
- Chalk Streams Restoration Group

The final section provides summary information about the funding of the projects across the country. This helps to indicate the contribution CaBA partnerships make to the 'Putting the Plan into Practice' section of the 25 YEP, which includes a section on funding, financing and incentivising improvement in natural capital.

Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing

Project objectives



Project outputs and outcomes

Volunteers/citizen scientists engaged: 10,015

Farmers engaged: 6,029

Other people engaged: 63,390 - this is lower than last year and could be linked to the pandemic.

Although improvements in the reporting process may also account for a proportion of this reduction.

Partnerships are also asked to report, where possible, the **social outcomes** of the project work, including benefits for health and well-being. Some examples reported include:

- Scheme that delivered an enhanced environment for local people;
- Volunteer opportunities - reduced stress and anxiety;
- Targeted work with landowners to address highways flooding sites strengthens the connection between local residents, their local authority, and landowners.

Project Case Study: Ribble Life Together

Ribble Life Together is delivering a healthier river system for the benefit and enjoyment of local communities and local wildlife. This ambitious, five year project brings together many organisations who all have a common goal of improving water quality, reducing the risk of flooding and droughts and increasing river connectivity and biodiversity. Ribble Life Together is exploring and celebrating the rich heritage of the river and encouraging more people to discover the wonder of the river for themselves.

Objectives

- Engagement, awareness raising, education.
- Rural diffuse pollution.
- Resilience, river habitat restoration, biodiversity.
- Physical modification.
- Access/recreation.
- Green-Blue infrastructure.
- Investigation and evidence.

Outcomes

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, between April 2020 and March 2021 we were still able to continue delivering most aspects of the programme.

Engagement:

Over 670 people were engaged in the project, including school children, members of the public through zoom talks, diffuse pollution training and audio walk guides. Farmers/landowners were engaged through PinPoint surveys and through creating woodland on their land.

This has allowed us to raise awareness of the issues facing our rivers, increase people's knowledge and encourage them to take a more active role in helping protect and improve their catchment, for example through volunteering to plant trees and control invasive species. Ribble Life Together is providing a range of enjoyable experiences, which we recorded through feedback forms, verbal feedback and other correspondence, and supporting better health and wellbeing of those involved.

River Habitat Restoration and Biodiversity:

This year 3 km of waterbody have been enhanced, 11ha of woodland was created and almost 5ha of Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed were cleared.

Water quality and water resources:

- Woodland created as part of the project and by providing farm advice, should have improved water quality and subsequently therefore improved in-river habitat quality.
- Natural Flood Management associated with woodland schemes.

Monitoring

A range of monitoring techniques were used including, fixed-point photography, drone flights, hydrological monitoring, ecology, social media, google analytics, as well as event and training feedback, evaluation forms, radio tracking and hydrological monitoring.

Clean and plentiful water

Project objectives



Rural diffuse pollution

291 projects



34% of the projects



Urban diffuse pollution

166 projects



19.5% of the projects



Point source pollution

180 projects



21% of the projects

Project outputs and outcomes

Improved water quality was reported as an outcome for **259** of the projects this year, this is a small increase on last year. 24 of these were specifically related to tackling point source pollution, 157 to tackling diffuse pollution, and 78 to tackling both.

Improved ecological quality was reported as an outcome for **315** of the projects. A 9% increase on the numbers reported last year.

Also see the section on 'Reducing risk of harm from flooding and drought & adapting to climate change' for the project outputs relating to **water resource management**, which is also essential for the delivery of clean and plentiful water.

National Support

The CaBA Agriculture Working Group champions and demonstrates the role of catchment partnerships in the development and delivery of agricultural land management that benefits both the environment and farm business. This includes a focus upon approaches that realise multiple benefits, for example, with respect to water quality, flood risk, air quality and biodiversity. The Group also provides for knowledge exchange, disseminating best and innovative practice across CaBA including Defra and the industry, and sharing developments in agricultural policy (e.g. Farming Rules for Water) with catchment partnerships.

The new [Agricultural Advice Hub](#) was established to connect farmers and other actors in the food supply chain with advice and information on sustainable farming practices.

Project Case Study: Win Win Project

A project to assess and understand outcomes of changing land use and new agricultural measures to reduce nutrients and sediment loss through monitoring of rivers, ecology, morphology and engagement with the local community. Community groups are being trained to use Riverfly monitoring. Land use advice is being provided by Water company advisers and CSF.

Objectives

- Engagement, raising awareness and education.
- Rural diffuse pollution and point source pollution.
- Flooding and low flows and water scarcity.

Outcomes

Engagement:

- Engaged with 6 citizen scientists and 5 landowners.

Water Quality:

- Water quality was addressed by identifying sources of pollution and solutions with landowners.

Water Resources: Flooding & Water Scarcity:

- Identifying opportunities for NFM with landowners.

Social & Economic Outcomes:

- Carrying out identified works will support fisheries.

Monitoring:

- Riverfly monitoring and walk over surveys.

Creating and protecting habitat & improving biodiversity

Project objectives



River habitat restoration

477 projects



52% of the projects



Biodiversity and conservation

623 projects



73% of the projects



Physical modifications

361 projects



42% of the projects

Project outputs and outcomes

Habitat creation was reported as an outcome for **60 of the projects**, with **1,238ha** of habitat creation reported, this is a 60% reduction in projects reported, and 50% reduction in area created. While fewer projects have listed this as an outcome, those that did have created, on average more habitat compared to last year. Habitat creation work included wetland habitats, riparian buffer strips, flower-rich grasslands, in-river habitat improvements, woodland and hedgerows, moorland restoration, intertidal habitat work and pond creation, among other more specific habitat work. The habitat creation work undertaken by CaBA highlights the potential for synergistic outcomes arising from greater engagement between CaBA and Local Nature Recovery initiatives.

Barriers to fish migration have a significant impact on fish populations and a knock-on effect on the biodiversity of rivers and streams. **78 barriers** to fish migration were reported as removed or mitigated, opening up **750km** of river for improved fish migration. While the overall number of barrier removed is less than last year, the resulting river habitat opened up has increased. This could be an effect of better planning and targeting of barrier removal.

Invasive non-native species negatively impact habitats and biodiversity. They each have their own impact, which may include out-competing native species, affecting natural processes like soil functioning, and damaging natural features such as riverbanks. In the reporting form, participants were asked to provide details of the types and amount (in hectares or kilometres) of invasive species controlled or eradicated through their projects. **107 projects** reported outputs and outcomes relating to the clearance or management of invasive species. **Over 755km** of invasive species were cleared or managed on linear features such as rivers. Much of this total was not reported to a species-specific level, but for those which did, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed were frequently reported, as well as less commonly tackled species such as rhododendron, signal crayfish, American mink and floating pennywort. **Just over 60ha** of clearance or management was recorded, with giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam again being common.

National Support

The CaBA Biodiversity Working Group supports catchment partnerships in their delivery of water and wetland biodiversity projects. The group has produced the [CaBA Biodiversity Pack](#) which includes habitat-specific guides promoting the restoration of natural function in rivers, headwaters, lakes, ponds, wet grasslands, wet heaths, reedbeds, and more, plus a guide covering action for key species, and a summary of how WFD and biodiversity policy inter-relate (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.). Furthermore, a new [Biodiversity Hub](#) has been created, this is a tool to guide partnerships through the key national and local data and evidence that can help identify opportunities to deliver more naturally functioning landscapes.

Project Case Study: Keekle River Restoration

The Keekle River Restoration project aimed to remove plastic lining which was installed on a 2.5km stretch in the 1990s. The plastic was breaking up and pieces were being washed downstream. The project was funded by DEFRA and was split in to two phases; a trial in summer 2019 and the full removal of the remaining plastic in 2020. This was a collaborative project led by the West Cumbria Rivers Trust, other partners involved included the Environment Agency, Natural England, OpenSpace, the Local Authority, a local waste management company and The Rivers Trust.

Objectives:

- Engagement
- Rural diffuse pollution
- River habitat restoration, physical modification, resilience and biodiversity
- Green-blue infrastructure

Outputs and outcomes:

Biodiversity and River habitat restoration

By removing the plastic lining and restoring the riverbed, the instream habitat is more suitable for benthic invertebrates and fish, such as salmon and trout. As well as the restoration, 4ha of riparian woodland and 1.5ha of wetland was created over the course of the project.

Monitoring:

To monitor the impact of the restoration, repeated drone imagery and fluvial audits were carried out, as well as electrofishing and water chemistry samples. An increase in fish numbers hasn't been recorded yet as there's only been one year of surveys since the project was completed. Surveys are continuing to survey and hopefully an increase will be recorded over time.



Reducing risk of harm from flooding and drought & adapting to climate change

Project objectives



Flooding

358 projects



42% of the projects



Low flows/ water scarcity

170 projects



20% of the projects



Resilience

460 projects



54% of the projects

Project outputs and outcomes

Better **water resource management** was reported as an outcome for **176 projects**. Of these, 105 projects reported that they specifically tackled flooding, which is higher than reported last year, 17 tackled low flows, 48 tackled both of these water management issues and 6 did not specify. These results suggest that there is a greater focus this year on water resource management than previous years.

National Support

The CaBA Flood Working Group focuses on developing capacity and helping Catchment Partnerships' work to reduce flood risk, including using Natural Flood Management (NFM), land management and Working with Natural Processes (WWNP). There are lots of Natural Flood Management resources available through the CaBA website (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.), including a [7-step guide to NFM](#) and a guide to [monitoring and evaluating NFM projects](#), and there are data layers relevant for planning flood risk projects through the [CaBA data package](#) (Catchment Based Approach Data Hub, n.d.).

The Abstraction (Water Resources) Working Group was established to ensure that catchment partnerships are supported to integrate water resources management into a wider programme of integrated catchment planning and delivery. The group is supporting the testing of new management approaches in some initial priority catchments but will be looking to broaden the impact and knowledge of the group's activities across all catchments in England.

In addition, climate change adaptation is a crucial and growing element in the work of many of the other national working groups. More information on the working groups and the new advice hubs can be found on the [CaBA website](#) (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.).

Project Case Study: Jugger Howe Restoration Project

Objectives:

The Water Environment Grant funded project to restore 1.6ha of degraded upland heathland (from training activity in WW2). Work included installing 419 coir rolls and 16 stone sediment traps to slow the flow and reduce erosion and spreading heather brash and planting plug plants to re-vegetate the site. This was a collaborative project between the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency.

Objectives

- Engagement.
- Rural diffuse pollution.
- Flooding, low flows and resilience.
- Biodiversity.
- Investigation and evidence.

Outputs and outcomes

- Engagement with two local land managers and education officer.
- 55km of waterbodies downstream of site enhanced.
- 1.62ha of moorland restored by re-vegetation and slow the flow interventions.
- Sediment traps installed (419 coir rolls and 16 stone traps), which will slow water and trap sediment.
- More water will be retained on the moor due to slow the flow measures.
- Work has complemented the conservation work on Fylingdales Moor, a popular place for visitors and school groups.

Monitoring

Fixed point photos and there are drone surveys planned for in 2021/22. The education officer for the Estate has carried out some ad-hoc vegetation monitoring.

Greening our towns and cities

Project objectives



Green-blue infrastructure

252 projects



29.5% of the projects

National Support

The CaBA Urban Working Group champions a collaborative, partnership approach to urban water management. The CUWG supports CaBA partnerships nationwide to engage more effectively with key stakeholders in urban water management, including local authorities, communities, businesses and developers. The group is helping to drive the delivery of urban water management under the 25 Year Environment Plan, including through the promotion of green-blue infrastructure. The group regularly holds workshops to showcase the multiple benefits of a collaborative approach to urban water management and has supported the production of various resources and guidance packs. These

resources and contact details for the group can be accessed through the [CUWG page](#) on the CaBA website (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.)

In addition to the Working Group pages there are also a number of Advice Hubs available and includes a new [Urban Advice Hub](#) which helps to make key datasets and evidence resources more accessible to CaBA partnerships working in urban environments.

Project Case Study: Whitworths Mill Greening

Installation of floating ecosystems to the riverbank, previously this was just hardstanding (sheet piling, concrete and brickwork). This was a collaborative project which was led by the River Nene Regional Park working in partnership with Natural England.

Objectives

- Engagement and raising awareness.
- Pollution, flooding and water availability.
- Resilience, river habitat restoration, physical modification and biodiversity.
- Access/recreation.
- Green-blue infrastructure.
- Evidence and investigation.

Outputs and outcomes

- 0.3km of riverbank was enhanced with the installation of floating ecosystems on hardstanding banks.
- As the site is publicly accessible there was plenty of interest whilst the ecosystems were being installed, and over 30 people have been engaged over the course of the project.
- 0.025km² of habitat has been created.



Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken in the future once the ecosystem has become established. Invertebrate and fish surveys are planned to be carried out as well as drone footage annually to show the greening effect.

Using and managing land sustainably

Project outputs and outcomes

The partnerships were asked to give written details about how their projects have tackled farm and land management issues and the outputs and outcomes of these interventions, and a description was given for **nearly 180** of the projects.

Key topics which are being discussed, planned and advised on across the projects are:

- **NFM**, slowing the flow and floodplain management;
- Nutrient & pesticide use;
- **Soil** management;
- Water quality and **interventions to protect watercourses** such as buffer strips, fencing, crossing points and drinking water solutions;
- Point source and diffuse pollution issues;
- Invasive non-native species (INNS) management;
- **Nutrient** loss.

Some specific examples of land management work undertaken in individual projects include:

- Riparian fencing to prevent livestock accessing watercourses, purchase of two soil aerators to improve soil condition;
- Advice was provided on how to farm sustainably near a chalk stream;
- Funding was provided to landowners to modify the land management of wetland and riparian habitats;
- Engagement of livestock farmers with soil management issues;
- Cattle drinks to prevent bank erosion from cattle;
- Encouraged floodplain meadow seed mix to be incorporated into riparian buffer strip;
- Integrating NFM with management issues;
- One dedicated manure store being built, farms nutrient management plans. pesticide amnesties yielding out of date/banned pesticide.

National Support

The CaBA Agricultural Working Group works to ensure farmers, landowners and rural industries are well represented and active in CaBA partnerships and champions the role of catchment partnerships in the development and delivery of agricultural land management that benefits both the environment and farm business. The group have developed guidance and are bringing together stories and case studies illustrating good practice. The [Agricultural Working Group page](#) on the CaBA website (Catchment Based Approach, n.d.) has resources to download and up-to-date contact details for the group and, as mentioned on page 16, the new [Agriculture Advice Hub](#) connects farmers and other actors in the food supply chain with advice and information on sustainable farming practices.

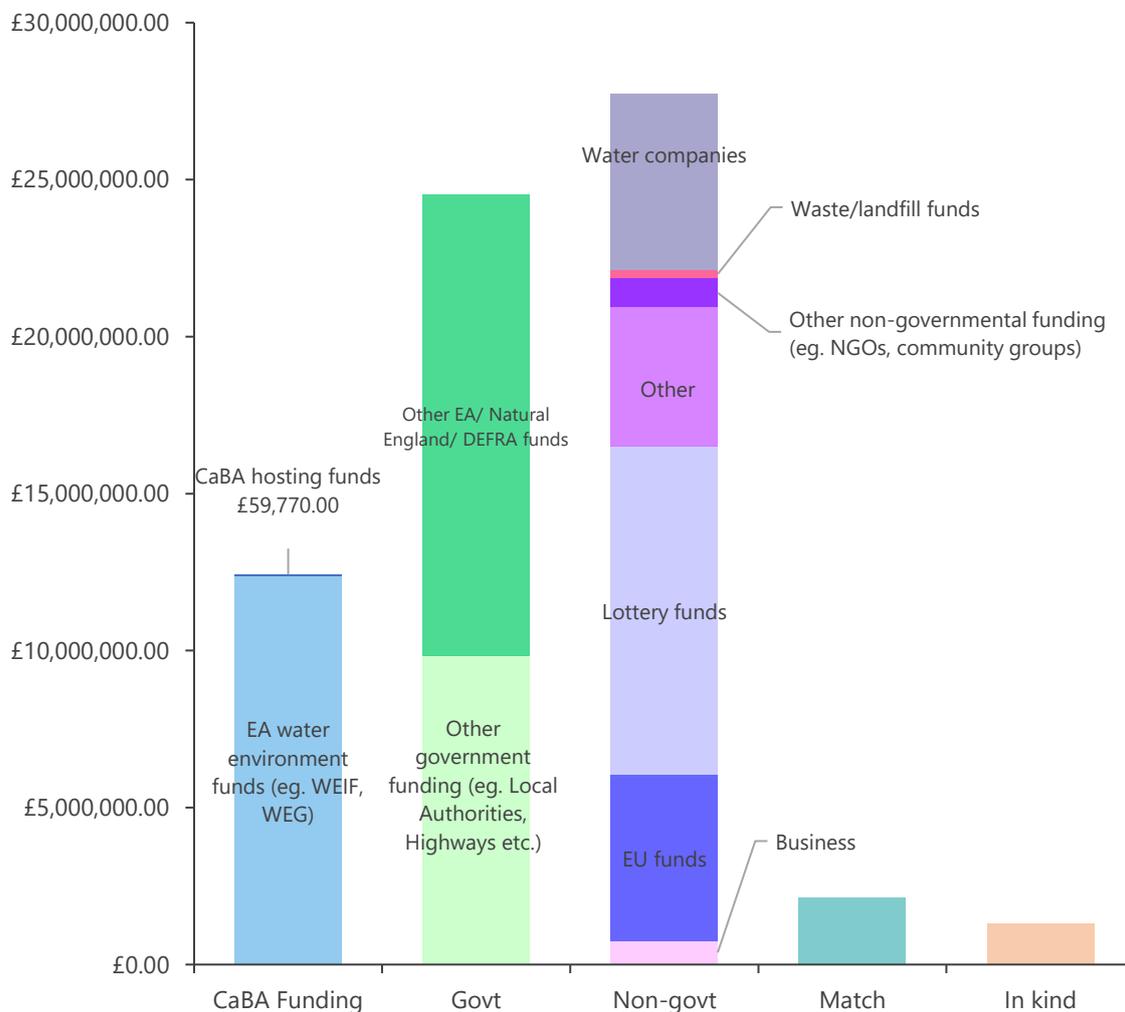
Funding, financing and incentivising improvement in natural capital

25YEP

The 25 Year Environment Plan states that ‘the right mix of public and private funding and financing for projects that protect and enhance natural assets will be crucial to the successful delivery of this ambitious plan’ (HM Government, 2018).

Funding for CaBA projects comes from a variety of sources from both the public and private sector. Each year, the project funding details submitted through the CaBA form are assessed to understand the different funding sources being accessed for catchment-based projects. The data is also used to give an indication of the ratio between direct funding for CaBA and the water environment, and funding brought in from outside, non-governmental sources.

The graph below shows the funding reported this year, and the groups and figures are explained in more detail on the following page.



The CaBA partnerships receive funding to cover the costs of hosting and running the partnerships, which across all the partnerships totals around £1.5m a year. In addition, partnerships are able to bid for funding from the Environment Agency (EA) for specific catchment-based funding, such as the Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) and the Water Environment Grant (WEG). Due to improvements in the reporting system in previous years this was more consistently reported and has been included within the CaBA funding section in the graph above and the ratio below. EA Water Environment Funds including WEIF and WEG together totalled just under £12.4m of the project funding reported in 2020/21, a similar figure to the previous year's figure of £12.7m.

Other DEFRA, EA and Natural England funding, and funding from other government sources such as local authorities, totalled £24.5m in the reporting for 2020/21. This government funding has been invested in the environment in a collaborative and targeted way via the Catchment Based Approach. This figure is lower than reported last year, which was £29.1m.

Funding from non-governmental sources is the largest source of funding for CaBA partnership projects. This includes funding from water companies, businesses, lottery funds, EU funds, NGOs and community groups. In 2020/21, this funding totalled £27.7m. This is lower than last year's total, £31m. There also appears to have been a shift in the composition of this total figure. EU funds comprise a smaller portion of the total this year, and funding from Water Companies has increased by 5%.

Finally, partnerships were asked to report the amount of match funding and in-kind contributions invested in their partnership projects. These total £2.1m and £1.3m respectively, both lower figures than last year where the combined total was approximately £4.5m.

The ratio of CaBA funding to non-Governmental funding this year is 1:2.23.

This ratio is based on the comparison between the first column above (direct CaBA funding) and the third column (non-governmental funding). Although the overall funding this year has reduced, this ratio has increased very slightly from 1:2.2 to 1:2.3. This shows that even with an overall reduction in funding, the balance between CaBA funding and non-governmental funding was maintained during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It should be noted that collecting funding data from such a large and diverse group as CaBA partnerships on an annual basis, especially as many projects run on multi-year timescales, is challenging. The process of collecting this data within the reporting form has been through some refinements. In particular, Environment Agency Water Environment Improvement Fund and Water Environment Grant funds are now more consistently recorded and included as host funding. The greater level of consistency between the figures from this year and last year, taking into consideration likely changes in availability of EU funding, suggests that the process, although not perfect, appears to be resulting in a consistent ratio.

We will continue to reflect on the recording and reporting of CaBA data and improve the process where possible, while also maintaining some consistencies to allow comparison between years.

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