



Scottish Government
RESAS
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

17th April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Rural Affairs and Environment Consultation on the Research Strategy for 2016-2021

Archaeology Scotland is a voluntary membership organisation which works to secure the archaeological heritage and the wider historic environment of Scotland for its people through education, promotion and support, and is a voice for the archaeological community. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the above consultation (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00444965.pdf>).

The actions of land managers and other rural players are crucial in retaining the quality of our rural heritage. Since well over 90% of Scotland is rural and the vast majority of the rural heritage assets surviving here do not have statutory protection, farmers and land managers are the unacknowledged custodians of these outstanding historical assets. (The last [SHEA 2012](#) recorded only c8% of recorded historic sites had scheduled monument (SM) protection and the records do not cover the full landscape extent of our cultural heritage resource. The areal extent of SMs is only c0.6% of Scotland as opposed to the over 12% protected as SSSI & Natura sites.) The vast majority of decisions taken on managing the countryside are outside the development control process and normally beyond local or central government scrutiny. Therefore decisions taken within the Rural Affairs and Environment Directorate have a crucial impact on the survival and potential increased valuation and appreciation of this resource. The RESAS Research Strategy has a critical role in achieving better integration of cultural heritage protection as part of tangible and intangible cultural services that are central to the ecosystem process.

The recently published [Historic Environment Strategy](#), allied to the Scottish Government's stated policy in the [Scottish Historic Environment Policy](#), show Scottish Ministers' commitment to caring for this resource and equally to mainstreaming this

with other aspects of government policy and practice. The merger of the two main Government-funded bodies responsible for care of the historic environment creates an important single focal point, combined with the movement of the Historic Environment Policy Unit (HEPU) into the [Culture & Heritage Directorate](#) in the Scottish Government offers the opportunity for better communication and integration of policies with the work of RESAS but proactive attitudes will need to be taken to achieve this.

This direction of travel accords with current government trends towards better integration across departments, in line with previous and current developments like SEARS, the Scottish Land Use Strategy, SEWeb and One Scotland, One Geography.

Question 1: Do the 2011-2016 strategic priorities remain robust and relevant for the period 2016-2021?

The consultation states -

'The White Paper on „Scotland“s Future“ makes clear that a strong research base is essential to the ambitions of a strong and confident Scotland. A clear message is recognition that the best research takes place across boundaries, be they political, geographical, organisational or disciplinary. Scotland will ensure that appropriate systems and structures are in place to enable Scottish-based researchers to remain active and valued contributors to the UK research base and to the wider international scientific community.'

-and yet, it goes on to state that

'„Scotland“s Future“ also re-states the SG“s commitment to the sectors and assets to be supported through this research strategy.

- It recognises that Scotland“s agricultural sector underpins the rural economy and our successful food and drink sector. Scotland“s farmers and crofters, in their stewardship of our land, contribute greatly to our natural heritage, and support our environment and successful tourism sector;
- Scotland“s rural and island communities are a significant and prominent part of our nation, culture and economy. Rural Scotland is a significant part of Scotland“s economy as a whole and intrinsic to Scotland“s identity, and to our appeal as a visitor destination;
- Scotland has a spectacular natural environment and rich biodiversity. The Scottish Government recognises that our natural assets underpin our economy and the health and wellbeing of our citizens and visitors;
- Scotland“s rich natural resources are central to our identity as a country and as a people. They underpin the growth of a thriving rural economy and the industries of tourism, farming, fishing, forestry and food and drink, as well as new opportunities in renewable energy.'

This is a lost opportunity to emphasise the inter-relatedness of the natural **and cultural** assets of Scotland in line with the Scottish Government Strategic Objective

- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations;

We would therefore believe that the vision

”to support research that is relevant, respected and responsive to Scotland’s communities, its people and to the rural economy”

is not sufficient. It should be expanded to include **‘Scotland’s heritage, environment and landscapes’**. This vision must be sustainable and reflect the Scottish Government’s obligations to protect these for the future.

The three strategic priorities adopted for 2011-2016:

- Supporting policy and practice;
- Supporting innovation and the economy;
- Scientific resilience.

with the two supplementary priorities

- supporting scientific excellence and impact and
- collaborative and multi-disciplinary working ([Research Strategy 2011-2016](#))

therefore remain secondary to these high level outcomes. They are primarily process orientated than strategic priorities in themselves.

Question 2: Do the „enabling principles“ set the right context or should additional principles be adopted?

- **Exchanging Knowledge** – effective knowledge exchange is essential to ensure that knowledge is clearly communicated to end users and that relevance and impacts are maximised for them.
- **Inspiring Innovation** - symbolises the aspiration to constantly look for new and novel approaches including facilitating interdisciplinary research; enhancing the funding base; and collaboration and cross-partner working to deliver solution focused impacts.
- **Maintaining National and International Capability** – supporting and sharing the physical and intellectual assets within the science base including infrastructure, equipment, data and expertise and other research platforms (e.g. farms) to safeguard the continuous development and retention of internationally recognised expertise within Scotland.

We do not have a problem with these enabling principles but believe that there should be an additional one

- **Sustainability** – supporting systems that retain and enhance Scotland’s heritage, communities, environment and landscapes and encourage adaptability to its changing climate

While this is also an outcome, it should be an underlying principle for all work carried out.

Question 3: Are the high level outcomes sufficiently clear, if not, what changes would you propose?

We believe that that the outcomes as set out are very utilitarian and should do more to reflect broader cultural and environmental outcomes. The importance of protection for the archaeological heritage to be found on our land is nowhere clearly stated in this document. Indeed it is a matter of much concern that while farmers and other land managers' importance in caring for the natural environment is now well recognised and actively supported, there is scant recognition of their importance as custodians of the historic environment.

Ecosystem services must include cultural as well as natural capital. Cultural services, including cultural heritage services, have factored only marginally in recent ecosystem research and yet were identified in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment 2011 <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/> as a key area for further research. The place-making agenda, as reflected in the National Outcome - We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need -, requires to be integrated into these outcomes.

Health & Wellbeing – about ensuring we have healthy and vibrant communities that are built around community led innovation, good (local) environmental quality and secure supply chains. The **outcomes** sought include:

- Resilient communities;
- Safe food and secure food supply chains;
- Healthy and sustainable diets;
- Encouraging the uptake of key low carbon and other behaviours contributing to broader societal wellbeing;
- Diverse and resilient energy supply chains.

While none of these outcomes is to be denigrated, they are broad brush and particularly the first one, without clear definition. If 'resilient communities' allows for better place-making activities, integration of Local Development and Land Use Strategies with better focused farming and other land management then the RESAS Strategy will be successful. We note for example that access has not been identified as an action under the SRDP 2014-2020, yet if considering health of both urban and rural communities, facilitating access would seem to be an important health benefit.

We would support a landscape-scale community engagement here and it may be that if Community Planning begins to operate successfully, this will lead to better 'health & wellbeing' for rural communities. The Scottish Government is signed up to implementing the European Landscape Convention as well as the [SHEP](#) and the new Historic Environment Strategy. This is not always apparent from many of the policies adopted within the Rural Directorate or indeed from much of the research financed through RESAS.

Productive, Sustainable and Viable Land Use – supporting a diversity of rural industries, food and other primary production, helping Scottish businesses innovate, using the best available tools and knowledge, generating and

adapting new options and solutions for Scottish agriculture. The **outcomes** sought include:

- An innovative and competitive rural economy;
- A profitable and sustainable food and drink industry;
- Productive, profitable and sustainable agriculture built on;
 - High health and welfare livestock; and
 - Appropriate, **sustainable and integrated** land use;
- Integrated pest and disease management.

These outcomes only refer to agriculture which contributes c 1% directly in Gross Added Value ¹to Scotland's rural economy and yet gets a disproportionate amount of Scottish Government financial support. The role of forestry, recreation, heritage, sporting, tourism, energy supply and other interests relying on rural land should be more directly addressed. There appears to be an overt assumption here that productivity is the primary function of land use but this seems to imply an extractive use of land and is in conflict with an ecosystems approach. The creation of the CAMERAS research partnership provided a much-needed forum to bring together the various bodies with responsibilities for Scotland's natural environment. This ensures that forestry interests are included –this is particularly important to archaeology which can become rapidly invisible in new plantations and progressively destroyed if not thoughtfully provided for.

A broader construct of public benefit needs to be defined for the rural industries and research funded by the Scottish Government.

Ecosystem Services – using our natural **and cultural** capital within a framework that helps ensure **that** the integrity, health and functionality of key ecosystem services are maintained while at the same time maximising their contributions to the high-level outcomes sought. The high level **outcomes** include:

- Optimised climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- Food security and sustainable intensification;
- Development of low carbon and efficient waste management systems;
- The integrated management of water and land resources including;
 - Sustainable flood risk management for rivers and coastal erosion risks
- **Tangible & intangible cultural services are fully identified and integrated into sustainable land use policies.**

Ecosystem services must include cultural as well as natural capital. Cultural services, including cultural heritage services, have factored only marginally in recent ecosystem research and yet were identified in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment 2011 <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/> as a key area for further research. Both tangible and

¹ This is accepting that agriculture is a primary producer for important industries like whisky. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/06/ERSA13062012>

intangible cultural heritage have a major role to play in strengthening rural industries and rural communities.

Question 4: Are the three broad themes identified, an appropriate way of structuring our work? If not, what alternatives should be considered?

As discussed above, the **Ecosystem Service** outcome needs further work to integrate cultural service outcomes to produce true sustainable land use. There appears to be some risk that the important custodial aspects will become viewed as negatives in the drive for “productive and viable land use”. Some rewording to retrieve the spirit of social benefit is necessary. As mentioned above, a much broader set of measures seems to be necessary to capture public benefit in processes and research being funded by the Scottish Government.

Question 5: How can the SG maximise the benefits of on-going investment in the MRPs [Main Research Providers] to build and benefit from connectivity with the wider science base?

The Scottish Government needs to make sure that the MRPs are creating true centres of excellence related to the outputs it wishes to see develop from its research funding. We welcome the drive for greater integration with other sectors, through the Higher Educational Institutes, as such cross-fertilisation and the development of multi-disciplinary skillsets will allow more complex multi-factorial issues to be addressed. This could benefit our sector seeking to have its wider social contribution more appropriately recognised and supported. It is also important that there is scope for a wide range of study beyond short-term research questions, so that integrated research thinking is created in these centres.

Question 6: What are your views of the performance and operation of the CoEs [Centres of Excellence] to date? Are there any additional areas that would benefit from such support?

Climate Change, Water & Animal Disease Outbreaks

The Centres of Excellence (Climate exchange, EPIC & CREW) seem a sensible way to co-ordinate research activity and in particular draw in expertise beyond the MRPs. There is a danger that focus on these topics may inevitably exclude related interests – e.g. some of the issues to do with pathology and disease containment covered by CREW must surely relate to crop and forest diseases.

A bigger focus must centre on landscape issues and while some of this relates to study under the Land Use Strategy programme, there may be scope for a CoE to be set up to explore wider issues of the landscape value and change (such as heritage, visual factors, tourism impacts). This would fit with SG work elsewhere on place-making and community empowerment and it may be that the CoEs need to be expanded to identify better the public benefits arising from SG policies and actions.

One of the prime interactions between the planning process and the environment is through the Environmental Impact Assessment process and it might be that useful synergies could be developed here.

Question 7: Do you agree with the SG's proposal to end support for SPs and to explore alternative mechanisms to strengthen engagement between its investment in research and the business sectors it aims to support?

As described above, we are concerned that this question implies that primary focus of the SG's funding here is primarily on the productive sectors and not on wider public benefits deriving from SG support.

There is a difficult balance to be achieved between maintaining strategic capacity, which includes career structures and departmental resources to support the applied research being carried out for SG, and being able to commission research outcomes that benefit SG needs. Once established, institutions tend to become autonomous to the neglect of the wider societal needs.

Question 8: Do you have any proposals for how the research portfolio can better link to the business community to deliver the desired outcome?

There would appear to be scope for collaboration with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, as well as the tourism sector. We would encourage some new focus on exploring how the various forms of custodianship contribute to tourism as a key Scottish business sector.

This could be expanded through work with the energy and water as well as the primary industries to develop synergies between public and private benefit.

Question 9: Is the purpose and value of underpinning capacity sufficiently clear, if not how can it be improved?

The 'underpinning capacity' must be integrated with other sectors. It is unclear that the 'provision of advice' and 'maintenance of key long-term datasets of national significance' is best done by MRPs. This is particularly important in achieving the aims of the recently launched [Scottish Historic Environment Data Strategy](#) to produce (amongst other outcomes) an integrated dataset for land managers. The using of Historic Environment Record data through the [Pastmap](#) portal and the planned completion of HLA mapping for the whole of Scotland in 2015 offer opportunities to make the [Land Information Search](#) a really useful tool consistent with the direction of travel of Common Agricultural Policy to become more sustainable and greener in its outcomes.

Question 10: Do you have any views regarding the performance and use of the Contract Research Fund including how it could be improved?

No

Question 11: Could the overall delivery model be further simplified in a way which still enables SG to meet its strategic priorities for the portfolio, if so how?

No comment

Question 12: Do you have specific suggestions as to how the RESAS research strategy can contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the CAMERAS partnership?

No, though as discussed below, the relationship with external funders and other research councils is crucial in getting research focused on wider outcomes beyond sectoral and specialist interest.

Question 13: Do you have any suggestions for developing the partnership with other research funders?

Greater integration with other sectors of Scottish Government policy such as health, community empowerment and place-making could lead to more integration and thus funding from these other areas of government.

Question 14: Do you have any particular suggestions as to how greater engagement with the HEI sector might be achieved?

No

Question 15: Are the research outputs from the RESAS portfolio of research readily accessible or can this be further improved, if so how?

No. It can certainly be improved.

Question 16: Is the current performance management approach fit for purpose or can it be improved, if so how?

No comment

Yours faithfully



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