

Value the environment

Past drivers

No simple relationship between attitudes, engagement and behaviour change. Evidence suggests that place attachment, environmental values and idea of what is “right and normal” influence the formation of attitudes to ecosystems, landscape and species change. Institutional trust is important.



Where are we now?

- In 2016 just under two-thirds of adults perceive a value in action which helps the environment, a slight decline since 2008.
- Around 83% of people in Scotland in 2017 believe Scotland’s areas of wild land should be protected and 84% believe Scotland’s landscapes make an important contribution to the economy.
- 95% of survey respondents in 2017 believed that there was at least one benefit from forestry worth supporting with public money.
- 57% of adults in Scotland rated their local landscape positively in 2017, with older people, people living in rural areas and those living in least deprived areas more likely to rate their local landscape positively.
- Half the people in Scotland believed their local landscape had not changed at all in the few years prior to 2017; 26% and 19% reported that their local landscape had got worse and better respectively.
- In 2015 around three quarters of Scottish businesses believed there is an expectation that they should be environmentally responsible, with half of businesses saying there is a clear business case for investing company resources in community, social and environmental issues.

Key evidence gaps

Limited research on attitudes to actual and prospective changes to ecosystems, landscapes and species.
How public concerns and attitudes can be better understood to deliver successful radioactive waste management programmes.
Initiatives which raise public awareness of natural capital and ecosystem services.
Factors influencing organisations and consumers which generate buy-in to the circular economy concept.

Future drivers

Indications that the up-coming generation of business leaders may have deeper appreciation of their social and environmental responsibilities than previous generations.
Scotland’s Public Health Review and Scotland’s Mental Health Strategy.



Where do we want to be?

- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our natural environment ¹



Current initiatives and their impact

Natural Capital Asset Index: Scotland was the first country in the world to develop detailed accounts which monitor annual changes in natural capital. The development of the index, along with our work on the Natural Capital Protocol, will help the process of engaging businesses in valuing and protecting the environment.
Greener Scotland campaign.
Branching Out – Positive Mental Health Through Nature: Branching Out is an innovative referral programme of woodland activities for people using mental health services.

¹ National Performance Framework

Draft Knowledge Account – Value the environment

A Introduction

1. The attitudes that people hold towards environmental issues can influence their behaviour with regards to the environment. In turn, the way in which a person interacts with their environment can have a positive effect on that individual and the environment itself. For example, increasing outdoor activity may improve the health of the individual and lead them to support environmental measures.
2. Changes in attitudes can be encouraged through public initiatives and the conversion of positive attitudes to positive behaviour can be aided by ensuring that provision of appropriate resources are available to the public.

B Recent trends

3. In 2016 just under two-thirds of adults (63%) perceived a value in doing things to help the environment, a slight decline since 2008 (68 per cent).ⁱ
4. The vast majority of people in Scotland in 2017 believed the country's areas of wild land should be protected (83%); allied to this is a widely held belief that Scotland's landscapes make an important contribution to the economy (84% agree). Most people believe that Scotland's finest landscapes are being well looked after (59%), although this has declined from over 70% in previous years.ⁱⁱ
5. Around 70% of adults in Scotland in 2017 agreed that more effort is needed to improve urban landscapes. Public opinion is divided, however, on whether or not new developments in the countryside are impacting positively on rural landscapes (only 33% agree and 23% disagree).ⁱⁱⁱ
6. For forestry, 95% of survey respondents in 2017 believed that there was at least one benefit of forestry worth supporting with public money.^{iv}
7. In terms of people's perceptions of the future for Scotland's landscapes, opinion is divided on whether or not things are changing for the better. Half the people in Scotland believe their local landscape had not changed at all in the few years prior to 2017, with 26% and 19% reporting that their local landscape had got worse and better respectively.^v
8. There are a large number of organisations in Scotland actively seeking to promote biodiversity and help raise the awareness of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. People throughout Scotland take part in a range of environmental activities, from large scale citizen science projects to focused species specific research. Figures from Scottish Environment LINK show that around 565,000 people were involved in these types of projects in 2015,^{vi} around 10% of the population.
9. Research undertaken back in 2008^{vii} found that overall only 12% of respondents considered the environment or environmental issues (such as global warming or climate change) as one of the most important issues facing Scotland, with only 4% saying that the environment is the single most important issue. Respondents were more likely to mention issues relating to the economy

and the 'credit crunch' (38%), crime, law and order and anti-social behaviour (32%), and the Scottish constitution (17%).

10. However, the environment was mentioned more often when respondents were asked what were the most important issues facing the world, with around a third of respondents (35%) reporting this. When asked about environmental issues specifically, climate change/global warming was mentioned more than any other issue (41%). The second most commonly mentioned issue was weather patterns/freak weather (19%).^{viii}
11. Specifically, research^{ix} has examined the public's views and values of peatland restoration in Scotland with the vast majority of respondents choosing restoration rather than business as usual even if it involves a financial sacrifice. The average monetary value that people attach to the benefits associated with peatland restoration (in terms of carbon storage, water quality and wildlife habitat) range from £127 to £414 per hectare a year, depending on the degree of improvement and where restoration takes place.
12. In terms of the attitude of businesses in Scotland to our environment, a survey^x undertaken in 2015 revealed that 89% state that their company is socially and environmentally responsible, with three-quarters of companies citing the expectation that they should be 'environmentally responsible'.
13. Indeed 52% of businesses say there is a clear business case for investing company resources in community, social and environmental issues. The business case, however, still appears to be unproven among a large minority of Scotland's companies (particularly small and medium companies). This reflects the on-going difficulty in establishing a positive correlation between corporate responsibility and commercial performance.
14. In 2015 a survey of 300 senior business decision makers in central Scotland found that over six in ten businesses reported that Scotland's natural capital was important to them and should be protected and enhanced. Over 70% considered that action to protect and enhance natural capital was urgent or extremely urgent.^{xi}

C Past drivers of change

15. There is no simple relationship between attitudes, engagement and behaviour change. A wide range of contextual factors influence attitudes and constrain behaviour; habit and routine are also important. If engagement is undertaken for the purpose of changing attitudes and/or encouraging behaviour change, then these wider factors will also need to be addressed.
16. The existing research literature suggests that place attachment, environmental values and ideas of what is 'right and normal' are closely involved in the formation of attitudes to ecosystem, landscape and species change.
17. Institutional trust is likely to be an important influence on opinions of environmental change, whether that change is directly engineered or managed.

18. It is generally the ability of companies to act that constrains progress on environmental issues rather than the interest, commitment or knowledge of business leaders. This is particularly the case for small businesses.

D Future drivers of change

19. Companies have reported two main obstacles to doing more to support the environment: the ability to meet the costs of discretionary activities and the lack of staff capacity to get involved.
20. 62% of companies expect community, social and environmental issues to increase in relevance over the next 3 years.
21. The upcoming generation of business leaders is reported to have a deeper appreciation of their social and environmental responsibilities than previous generations of business founders and managers.

E Current interventions and their impact

22. Participation in the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital and supporting the use of the Natural Capital Protocol: The Protocol gives a framework to allow decision makers to identify, measure, and value both the impacts and the dependencies on natural capital and is a key aim of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital. Work is being taken forward in Scotland by Crown Estate, Scottish Land and Estates, SNH, SEPA and others to trial the application of the natural capital protocol in land-based businesses in Scotland.
23. Branching Out – Positive Mental Health Through Nature: Branching Out is an innovative referral programme of woodland activities for people using mental health services. It is a group only referral programme, which can be either community or hospital based mental health services.
24. Greener Scotland: is the one-stop website for greener living.

ⁱ Scottish Household Survey 2016, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/9979/345329>

ⁱⁱ Scottish Nature Omnibus Survey, SNH, 2018, <https://www.nature.scot/scottish-nature-omnibus-summaries-perception-landscape-scotland-august-2017>

ⁱⁱⁱ Scottish Nature Omnibus Survey, SNH, 2018, <https://www.nature.scot/scottish-nature-omnibus-summaries-perception-landscape-scotland-august-2017>

^{iv} [https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pof2017scot.pdf/\\$FILE/pof2017scot.pdf](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pof2017scot.pdf/$FILE/pof2017scot.pdf)

^v Scottish Nature Omnibus Survey, SNH, 2018, <https://www.nature.scot/scottish-nature-omnibus-summaries-perception-landscape-scotland-august-2017>

^{vi} Aichi Interim Report, SNH, 2018 <https://www.nature.scot/aichi-targets-interim-report-2017>

^{vii} Scottish environmental attitudes and behaviours survey (2008)
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/263040/0078663.pdf>

^{viii} Scottish environmental attitudes and behaviours survey (2008)
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/263040/0078663.pdf>

^{ix} https://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/Documents/research/sri/peatlands/Views_and_values_peatland_restoration_Scotland.pdf

^x “Better business, better Scotland”, Social Value Lab

^{xi} <http://www.centalscotlandgreennetwork.org/news-and-events/news/1082-business-benefits-from-investing-in-green-infrastructure>