



# Getting the best from our land

A land use strategy for Scotland

## Action Plan

December 2011

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# Ministerial foreword



The publication of our Land Use Strategy earlier this year provided a Government statement on land use policy across Scotland. It signalled a shift in our thinking and our approach to land use in terms of delivering multiple benefits, working in partnership with nature and linking people more closely with the land. This Action Plan sets out how we will deliver the thirteen proposals in the Strategy and highlights our key tasks during the 5 year life of the Strategy. In this Action Plan we have brought together for the first time an integrated set of commitments from across the spectrum of Government policy, all contributing to our long term policy agenda on land use. These commitments are set in the context of our agenda for growth and in the refreshed Government Economic Strategy.

The Action Plan refers to the wider delivery of the Strategy's objectives through the application of the Principles for Sustainable Land Use to all significant decisions about the use of land. The Principles hold the key to sustainable land use. They bring together for the first time in a single statement the Government's policy on land use. They show our commitment to the integration of our thinking, our policy making and our actions.

Some of our stakeholders have argued for a new delivery or decision-making mechanism for land use. We will evaluate the effectiveness of current processes at translating the Principles in the Strategy into decision-making on the ground. In practice, we believe that we have the correct tools in place, each suited to particular locations or circumstances, but we recognise the need to test our assumptions. This evaluation will be a significant body of work and will inform our thinking when we begin to prepare the next Land Use Strategy as required by the Climate Change Act.

We are also committed to the publication of an annual progress statement. This will provide an opportunity to identify any significant updates that might be required to the Action Plan.

Scottish Government will lead jointly with our SEARS partners and others on the specific commitments in this Plan. However, the wider delivery of sustainable land use and the achievement of our objectives requires broad partnership working at all levels, whether integrated policy development by Government or integrated management on the ground by land managers. If we are to succeed, it is essential that all parties work together effectively to build mutual understanding and to maximise the opportunities that this closer working will bring. At a time when resources are limited it is essential that we take every opportunity to learn from each other and to optimise the contribution that our land resources can make to Scotland's prosperity.

**Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary**

# 1. Introduction

The publication of this Action Plan meets the requirements of Proposal 1 of Scotland's first [Land Use Strategy](#) which was laid before Parliament on 17 March 2011. The Action Plan focuses on the actions required to deliver the Strategy's Proposals. The Action Plan also comments on the mainstreaming of the Principles for Sustainable Land Use through public policy and the contribution the private sector may choose to make.

The Land Use Strategy set out a long term Vision towards 2050:

**A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation.**

The Strategy also articulated three Objectives relating to economic prosperity, environmental quality and communities:

- **Land-based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity**
- **Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people**
- **Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use**

In order to move us towards the Vision for Scotland and to achieve these Objectives the Strategy identified ten Principles for Sustainable Land Use. The application of these Principles to all major decisions affecting the use of land will, over time, deliver the three Objectives set out above. The Strategy also identified thirteen Proposals to be taken forward by Scottish Government and its SEARS partners during its five-year lifetime. The Proposals represent actions that we need to work on now such as research and evidence, guidance or mainstreaming into policy, all contributing to the application of the concepts in the Land Use Strategy to public policy development in Scotland.

We are committed to the publication of an annual progress statement which will record and monitor progress against delivery of the Proposals. The annual Progress Statement will be published mid-year.

## 2. Delivery of the Strategy

### 2.1 The Principles for Sustainable Land Use

The [Principles for Sustainable Land Use](#) (Annex A) reflect Government policies on the priorities which should inform land use choices across Scotland. The Strategy made clear that Government expects public bodies to use the Principles for Sustainable Land Use when making plans and taking significant decisions about the use of land. Where the private sector has significant land management responsibilities it is encouraged to do likewise.

Our view is that the Strategy provides a context for all decisions about land use and that the application of the Principles to decision-making will, over time, deliver the Strategy's Objectives. The Principles are the means of translating the high level aims of the Strategy into decision-making on the ground.

The decision-making processes for delivery are already in place across Scotland through a range of existing mechanisms such as Forestry and Woodland Strategies (F&WS), development plans, River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) or National Park Plans, along with a range of less formal approaches that suit the variety of different locations and circumstances across Scotland. Detailed policies and decisions for different parts of Scotland are matters which require local engagement and decisions. Application of the Principles at a local level will result in more consistent and integrated land use decisions and will enable communities to be better connected to the land, resilient and better able to adapt to the effects of a changing climate. One thing that all current processes have in common is that they rely heavily on a partnership approach in order to succeed. Partnership working is the key to successful delivery of an integrated, strategic approach to land use.

The Strategy also stated that we will work with existing processes and willing partners to determine what works best and where. We will evaluate the effectiveness of existing formal and informal delivery mechanisms at utilising the Principles as part of their everyday planning and decision-making. This will enable us to determine whether existing mechanisms are an effective tool for delivery of the Strategy and consider the lessons to be learned about applying the Principles in different circumstances and processes across Scotland. The outcome of this evaluation will provide a valuable insight into the effectiveness of the Strategy's current approach to delivery; translation of the high level Objectives into decision-making on the ground via the application of the Principles. This in turn will inform our thinking about decision-making processes for future reviews of the Land Use Strategy.



### 2.2 Delivery of the Proposals

This Action Plan focuses on the actions required to take forward delivery of the thirteen [Proposals](#) (Annex B). The Strategy described the wider Government policies which contribute to the delivery of sustainable land use. We will ensure that our own policies, as they relate to land use, are aligned with the Strategy's Objectives and Principles. These plans and policies will be reviewed on an ongoing basis so as to align with the Strategy.

Each Proposal has a primary focus on research and evidence; guidance; or mainstreaming into policy. This is shown in [Annex C: Indicative characteristics of Proposals](#). These classifications are indicative, showing the types of outcomes we are seeking and what delivery will look like for each Proposal.

Delivery of the Land Use Strategy Proposals requires good evidence and research. The Scottish Government Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) is funding a portfolio of [Strategic Research](#) over 2011-16 through its [Main Research Providers](#) (MRPs).

This includes two five-year multidisciplinary research programmes:

- Environmental change programme
- Food, land and people programme

The RESAS research portfolio also includes [Centres of Expertise and Strategic Partnerships](#).

Centres of Expertise:

- [EPIC Centre of Expertise in Animal Diseases](#)
- [ClimateXChange](#)
- [Water](#)

What follows is a summary of key factors for each Proposal:

- lead + key partners
- deliverables
- short term milestones
- long term milestones
- risks

Our SEARS partners have contributed to the development of this Action Plan and are key to the delivery of many of the Proposals outlined below. This Plan is dynamic, and the Government will review progress and communicate changes over time. The annual Progress Statement (Proposal 2), along with stakeholder input, will inform future development and revision of the Plan and in time the Strategy itself.



## Proposals in the Land Use Strategy

### **Proposal 1** Publish an action plan following publication of the Strategy.

This Action Plan meets the requirement in Proposal 1. It has been developed in conjunction with our SEARS partners who will work with us to take forward delivery of the Proposals. We will review the need to update the Action Plan in the light of progress and if significant change has taken place we will publish an update to the Action Plan as appropriate.

### **Proposal 2** Provide an annual progress statement on the Land Use Strategy.

The annual Progress Statement will provide a snapshot view of progress with delivery of the Proposals and provide a commentary on wider delivery. It will be a key monitoring tool which will facilitate debate with all who have an interest in land use, as well as providing a focal point for collaborative thinking and action.

### Objective 1

#### **Proposal 3**    **Align land use regulations and incentives with Land Use Strategy Objectives.**

The delivery of this Proposal focuses on the need to embed the Strategy's Principles for Sustainable Land Use into regulations and incentives. Close working across Government will ensure that clear policy linkages are made. We will work to ensure that all our incentives and regulations are effectively supporting the shift in approach identified in the Strategy towards the delivery of multiple benefits whilst also supporting our land-based businesses and placing as light a burden on business as possible.

Many regulations and incentives in the land-based sector are set within the context of EU legislation and directives, such as the Water Framework Directive, others are set within the framework of Scottish legislation. In all cases we will seek regulation that is proportionate and incentives that are efficient and cost effective.

Engagement with stakeholders will continue via existing groups and forums. Further consultation will take place as appropriate.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + SEPA, SNH, FCS.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<p>The embedding of Land Use Strategy Principles into new regulatory approaches and incentives.</p> <p>Guidance document focusing on the Land Use Strategy Principles which is aimed at policy and decision makers in the land use environment. This will be designed to support the development of new legislative proposals and incentivisation initiatives.</p>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<p><b><u>Guidance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Guidance on the application of the Land Use Strategy Principles in regulations and incentives – summer 2012.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Regulation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CAP reform – 2012/13 (See also Proposal 5).</li> <li>● SG/SEPA led better environmental regulation programme including creation of Environment Crime Taskforce – by Spring 2012.</li> <li>● Guidance on local flood risk management strategies – 2012.</li> <li>● Better Regulation primary legislation – 2012/13.</li> <li>● Planning and other development consent regimes – explore options to simplify and speed up overall consents process; Consolidated Planning Advice Note on flooding, water and drainage – 2012.</li> <li>● Contaminated land guidance – end 2011.</li> <li>● SNH/SG-led process for better alignment of SSSI consents and SRDP Rural Priorities approvals – early 2012.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Incentives</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CAP reform – 2012/13 (focus of Proposal 5).</li> <li>● Research project to consider approaches to incentivisation of natural flood management by rural land managers – completion winter 2011/12.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	Incorporation of Land Use Strategy Principles (where appropriate) in new legislation.
<b>Risks</b>	Different stakeholders will have differing expectations of what successful delivery looks like.

### Objective 1

**Proposal 4** Further encourage land-based businesses to take actions that reduce land-based greenhouse gas emissions and that enable adaptation to climate change threats and opportunities.

All business sectors in Scotland must consider how they can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet climate change targets. The land-based sector has a significant role to play and like other businesses across Scotland can also reap benefits from the opportunities that a changing climate presents. There is also a need to ensure that the land-based sector has the right skills in place developed through education and knowledge exchange to enable it to meet the challenges of adaptation.

The [Farming For a Better Climate](#) (FFBC) initiative aims to support land managers in taking action on both climate change mitigation and adaptation. At this stage it seeks the maximum voluntary uptake of win-win actions which both reduce emissions and improve farm performance. Adopting measures like optimising nitrogen fertiliser management has multiple benefits, and can also help to achieve other environmental targets, including for example those for water and air quality. More broadly RBMPs already provide a major tool for taking forward a more integrated approach to water management. Action programmes have been put in place to address climate-sensitive pressures such as diffuse pollution from land use practices and abstraction for irrigation. An Agri-Renewables Strategy will consider key barriers to uptake of renewables on farms, supporting farm business as well as contributing to climate and renewables targets.

Other key policies relate to increased woodland planting (see Proposal 7), peatland restoration (Proposal 9) and measures under the Climate Change Adaptation Framework (see Proposal 11).

Looking ahead we will continue to assist land managers actions on adaptation by working in partnership with stakeholders through forums such as the Agriculture & Climate Change Stakeholder Group. Water and water industry related groups such as the RBMP National Advisory Group, Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group, Area Advisory Groups, Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group, Scottish Advisory and Implementation Forum for Flooding are in place to consider issues that influence adaptation for the water sector and industries.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + FCS, SNH, SAC (Delivery Agency for FFBC), Agriculture and Climate Change Stakeholder Group, SEPA and partner organisations involved in River Basin Management and Flood Risk Management Planning.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agricultural industry contributing to greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and maximising opportunities through on-farm renewables generation.</li> <li>● Increase woodland creation to 10,000 hectares per year (see Proposal 7).</li> <li>● Implementation of RBMPs, including specific action plans to reduce diffuse pollution and morphological impacts.</li> <li>● Implementation of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) including working with the land to manage flood risk and adapt to climate change.</li> <li>● Develop a range of research projects designed to support delivery of integrated catchment management.</li> </ul> <p>Deliverables on peatlands and carbon storage are referred to under Proposal 9.</p>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inclusion of comprehensive statements in relation to agricultural GHG emissions in the statutory Report on Policies and Proposals (RPP) – 2011 and 2012.</li> <li>● Complete analytical work to establish indicators for uptake of abatement measures on farms – early 2012.</li> <li>● Complete research on influencing behaviours in agriculture to underpin Communications Strategy – 2012.</li> <li>● Development of an Agri-Renewables Strategy addressing barriers to renewables uptake on farms – summer 2012.</li> <li>● Publish <i>Woodland Carbon Code</i> – July 2011, and guidelines on <i>Forests and Climate Change</i> – Nov 2011.</li> <li>● Develop guidance on planning for future forests in a changing climate – summer 2012.</li> <li>● SNH to work with industry groups to promote actions to minimise the impacts on climate change associated with deer management – late 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research to refine UK GHG inventory methodology with the aim of better reflection of on-farm activity – 2015.</li> <li>● Reviews and updates of RBMPs by 2015, 2021 and 2027.</li> <li>● Production of FRMP by 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	Lack of uptake by land managers; voluntary initiatives fail to have impact.

### Objective 1

#### **Proposal 5** Use the Land Use Strategy Objectives to influence negotiations on CAP reform.

We recognise the importance of the revision of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for land-based businesses such as agriculture and forestry, and for other policy objectives such as biodiversity, environmental quality, recreation and rural communities. Although the land-based sector is driven by outside influences such as commodity markets the CAP is the key factor in terms of influencing individual land manager choices about land use.

The Objectives of the Land Use Strategy will help shape our input to CAP negotiations at EU and UK level and will inform our thinking when developing the detail of the incentives regime for Scotland. This work is at an early stage with draft EU Regulations published in October 2011, the timetable for delivery will be driven by EU processes. We will continue to work with stakeholders throughout the CAP reform process via the CAP Stakeholder Group and relevant subgroups.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + SEARS partners and CAP Stakeholder Group.
<b>Deliverables</b>	A revised CAP that enables the Strategy's Objectives and Principles to be delivered via the new incentives regime post 2013.
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft Regulations published – Oct 2011.</li> <li>● CAP Workstreams to provide advice to Scottish Government throughout the CAP reform process (including impact assessment).</li> <li>● Regular meetings of CAP Stakeholder Group – Nov 2011, Jan 2012, Mar 2012.</li> <li>● Defra/Devolved Administrations discussions in advance of, and Scottish Government participation in, EC Working groups – from Oct 2011 onwards.</li> <li>● CAP consultation, end Nov 2011 to Feb 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final EU regulations agreed – 2013.</li> <li>● Approval of Scottish scheme – 2013.</li> <li>● Roll out of new incentives in Scotland – ongoing from 2014.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<p>Expectations exceed what is permitted or likely to be permitted across all 27 Member States.</p> <p>Disproportionate EU bureaucracy associated with sustainable land use.</p>



### Objective 1

**Proposal 6** Use demonstration projects to determine the best means by which land use and land management practice can contribute to climate change objectives.

Scotland already has a good record of sharing good practice and live demonstration projects to share expertise and knowledge. It is vital that we continue to trial new approaches, monitor their success and then share the results of that success and ensure that it is applicable across Scotland, for example the SNH *'Sharing Good Practice'* events are an important link between policy and practice.

Focus Farms attract land managers to events and receive good press coverage. It is important that the benefits of these events are widely communicated to enable as many land managers as possible to benefit. We will continue to work with our stakeholders to refine and develop communication methods so as to meet their needs.

The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) has also identified responding to climate change as one of its key outcomes and will be facilitating a range of land use projects to demonstrate in practice the contribution of multi-functional green networks.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government and FCS + SAC (the delivery agency for FFBC and Climate Change Focus Farms) and the Agriculture & Climate Change Stakeholder Group.
<b>Deliverables</b>	Focus Farms are leaders in sustainable farm practices, including creating and managing farm woodlands. Land managers actively utilise them as they adopt climate friendly farm management.
Short term milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus Farms are demonstrating practical implications of adopting abatement measures (GHG emission reductions and the business impacts of actions) as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 farms selected representing key sectors: dairy, arable, upland livestock, diversification;</li> <li>○ regular topical events held on focus farms;</li> <li>○ farmers discussion groups established;</li> <li>○ information arising from events, including advisory notes communicated through FFBC webpage.</li> </ul>               Focus farms also demonstrate the benefits of creating and managing farm woodlands.             </li> <li>● Completion of initial 3-year Focus Farm programme and progress report evaluating findings – end 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integration of FFBC messages into other demonstration projects.</li> <li>● Further development or continuation of FFBC will depend upon outcome of evaluation in 2013.</li> <li>● Develop best practice programme for sporting land businesses building on the Wildlife Estates Initiative and the Wild Deer Best Practice programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	Lack of uptake by land managers; voluntary initiatives fails to have impact; farm advice landscape is cluttered, with too many initiatives operating in isolation.

### Objective 1

**Proposal 7** Identify more closely which types of land are best for tree planting in the context of other land-based objectives, and promote good practice and local processes in relation to tree planting so as to secure multiple benefits.

We wish to increase woodland creation to 10,000 hectares per year, but are mindful that this needs to be achieved in a way which is integrated with other land-based objectives such as agriculture and food production, climate change, rural development, renewable energy, biodiversity, soil, water, deer, green networks, historic environment and landscape.

In August 2011 the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment established the [Woodland Expansion Advisory Group](#) (WEAG) with the purpose of taking forward delivery of this Proposal. The WEAG is charged with advising him, by June 2012, on which types of land are best for tree planting in the context of other land-based objectives, and on related good practice and local processes.

This Proposal will be taken forward against a backdrop of CAP reform and potential changes to the incentive regime for new planting and the fluctuation of world markets for timber and timber products. The involvement of stakeholders in forestry is crucial and the continuing role of Scottish Forestry Forum and Regional Forestry Forums will be emphasised in order to continue to deliver multiple benefits as well as new planting.

## Land Use Strategy Action Plan

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<b>Lead + key partners</b>	FCS + a range of other partners include members of WEAG which consists of farming, forestry, conservation, community and land experts.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achieving woodland creation of 10,000 hectares per year by planting the “right trees in the right place”, integrating with other land uses and contributing to sustainable economic growth.</li> <li>● Publication of UK Forestry Standard and associated environmental guidelines.</li> <li>● Development of F&amp;WS by local authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<p>Woodland Expansion Advisory Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WEAG seek views by correspondence Oct – Dec 2011.</li> <li>● Regional stakeholder meetings – Feb/Mar 2012.</li> <li>● Report to Cabinet Secretary – Jun 2012.</li> </ul> <p>Submission of the Report of the WEAG – June 2012. Following the Group’s Report in June 2012 an action plan will be put in place.</p>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	Dependent upon WEAG final report and consideration by Cabinet Secretary, a subsequent action plan will set out longer term milestones.
<b>Risks</b>	Planting targets not achieved due to land managers not taking up incentives to plant trees and conflicts with other land use interests.

### Objective 2

**Proposal 8** Demonstrate how the ecosystem approach could be taken into account in relevant decisions made by public bodies to deliver wider benefits, and provide practical guidance.

We have published an Information Note on [‘Applying an ecosystems approach to land use’](#). This is aimed at public bodies involved in land use decision-making but is also of interest to land managers and NGOs. It outlines the integrated principles and practical applications of an ecosystems approach in delivering a wider range of sustainable benefits from our land.

An ecosystems and ecosystems services approach to decision-making is increasingly favoured by the European Commission and is being built into a wide spectrum of environmental policies related to biodiversity, integrated catchment management, the marine environment and air quality. Delivery of the Land Use Strategy will reflect the best practice ecosystems approaches being taken forward through relevant aspects of these policies. Development of the National Ecological Network will help ensure land management decisions are better targeted to delivering ecosystem services and support climate change adaptation. Across Central Scotland, action will be focused on the delivery of multifunctional green networks by the CSGN.

The Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme will support the wider adoption of the ecosystem approach. This is linked to Proposal 10, as research will support both practical steps to improve individual decisions and decision-making processes, and research into the analytical needs and broader implications of a fully-fledged ecosystem approach. It is also linked to Proposal 6, by linking guidance with demonstration projects that show the benefits of the ecosystem approach in practice.

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is under review. It will reflect new international targets that place the maintenance of the levels of ecosystem services alongside the preservation of species and habitat diversity as headline goals.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + the MRPs, FCS, SEPA, SNH, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the Centres of Expertise.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further information notes and guidance on the ecosystems approach to support existing decision-making.</li> <li>• Case studies (including statutory plans) incorporating an ecosystems approach as a core methodology.</li> <li>• Comprehensive mapping of ecosystem services.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim Field Guide to implementation of the ecosystems approach – 2012.</li> <li>• Proposals and guidance for building natural capital through the National Ecological Network – mid 2012.</li> <li>• Water environment mapping by SEPA of key ecosystem services; practical indicators of their status; and relevant pressures acting upon them – mid 2012.</li> </ul> <p>This information will be assessed for its potential to inform characterisation and significant water management issues for the first reviews of RBMPs due in 2015.</p>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim Case Examples – 2013.</li> <li>• Projects which demonstrate the benefits of adopting an ecosystem approach to developing the National Ecological Network.</li> <li>• An ecosystem health and state of ecosystem services view of Scotland's environment on SEWeb.</li> <li>• Full Field Guide with range of sectoral and cross-sectoral examples.</li> <li>• Accessible geographic data on ecosystems services.</li> <li>• Research exploring the potential for compatibility between EIA/SEA tools and the ecosystems approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<p>Decision makers do not recognise that an ecosystems approach has something to offer them in improving decisions.</p> <p>The additional information requirements may put some decision makers off using the approach.</p>

### Objective 2

**Proposal 9** Develop a methodology to take account of changes in soil carbon for carbon accounting purposes; improve understanding of potential benefits from conservation and management of carbon-rich soils; and deliver measures to help secure long-term management of all land-based carbon stores.

This Proposal will build on a range of existing work. In March 2011 SEPA co-ordinated publication of a report on [The State of Scotland's Soils](#), which followed a [discussion paper on carbon-rich soils](#) in December 2010 by the Scottish Government. The aim of the Proposal is to make accounting of changes in soil carbon part of the overall framework of land use decision-making and promote measures for long-term management of soils rich in carbon. SNH is developing with partners a programme for peatland restoration and enhancement.

Achieving that aim requires action not only in Scotland, supported by resources such as the [Government's Strategic Research Programme](#), but also through our involvement with, and influencing of, international actions and decision-making.

The Soils Focus Group is a key forum for this work within Scotland. Initiatives such as the [Woodland Carbon Code](#) and [associated reporting guidelines](#) are important for both Scotland and the UK. We will engage with EU-level CAP reform discussions, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on emissions reporting.



<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + DECC, Defra, CEH, MRPs, FCS, SEPA, SNH, SAC, ClimateXChange, Centre of Expertise on Water, NGOs.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IPCC process on development of international reporting rules, 2011 – 2013.</li> <li>● Methodology to incorporate the impact of peatland restoration measures into GHG inventory.</li> <li>● Stakeholder consideration of the usefulness of these measures in a Scottish context.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host IPCC science review meeting – Edinburgh, Jan 2012.</li> <li>● Support IPCC author meetings – Feb and Jul 2012.</li> <li>● More robust and detailed map of carbon stocks linked to actual land use patterns in Scotland – 2012.</li> <li>● Framework for multiple benefits from carbon-rich soils including ecological and hydrological functions – 2012.</li> <li>● Pilot areas for peatland restoration identified.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IPCC process on development of methods - will not conclude before mid/late 2013.</li> </ul> <p>Measures to deliver long-term conservation of soil carbon stocks integrated with adaptation actions for the land use sector in 2015 (linked to Proposal 10).</p>
<b>Risks</b>	<p>Failure to deliver evidence to promote scientific consensus.          Method agreement required at future UNFCCC COP meetings.          Funding of proposed measures not secured.</p>

### Objective 2

#### **Proposal 10 Investigate the relationship between land management changes and ecosystem processes to identify adaptation priorities.**

This proposal responds to a research requirement to identify and understand the relationships between ecosystem functions and services and land management practices. Improved information on these relationships will better enable land use in Scotland to meet the challenges of adapting to a changing world. In particular, the proposal seeks to investigate the ability to sustain beneficial ecosystem services and to identify trade-offs between these within the context of changing land management. This is a cross-cutting proposal which links to other proposals in the Land Use Strategy (notably Proposal 8) and in addition to a range of environmental and rural policy areas.

Achieving this understanding requires substantial research and stakeholder engagement. The Ecosystem Approach Working Group is a key forum for this work. Of particular relevance to this proposal is the environmental change programme of the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme and the new Scottish Centres of Expertise.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + the MRPs, FCS, SEPA, SNH, CEH, Centres of Expertise.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased understanding of the linkages between ecosystem processes and drivers of change.</li> <li>● Increased understanding of the adaptive capacity of environmental assets to deliver ecosystem services under a range of land use changes.</li> <li>● Assessment of the role of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem health and function.</li> <li>● Identification of opportunities for multiple benefits from land, interpreting the ecosystems approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provisional framework and indicators for associating land use management with ecosystem processes and services – 2013.</li> <li>● Development of land use/climate change scenarios within an ecosystem services framework to identify the key aspects of future change – 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provisional valuation of scenarios using indicators of wider land capability (beyond agricultural production) – 2014.</li> <li>● Development of mapping/ inventory of ecosystem services – 2016.</li> <li>● Web accessible ecosystem services indicators database – 2016.</li> <li>● Evaluation of present and future projected changes in land management and the natural environment for Scotland, including key local and regional characteristics – 2015.</li> <li>● Identification of potential usage of ecosystems approach across a range of scales – 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<p>Ecosystem processes are dynamic and complex.  Data limitation in some areas.  Difficulties in handling uncertainty.  Failure to deliver evidence with sufficient scientific consensus.</p>

## Objective 3

### Proposal 11 Develop the land use aspects of our Climate Change Adaptation Framework to support communities as they adapt to change.

The Adaptation Framework is the non-statutory forerunner to the Adaptation Programme required by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act. It established 12 Sector Action Plans which identify the climate change issues and challenges for each sector and provide a list of planned work to strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Delivery of this Proposal is dependent on each individual sector. Future work may be required to identify new actions in the Sector Action Plans which will enhance the land use aspects which support communities. In Central Scotland, a key mechanism for delivery of these actions will be the CSGN.

The Scottish Adaptation Programme, as required under the above Act will be introduced in 2013. The actions in the current Sector Action Plans are a baseline from which we will begin to work with communities as they respond to climate change. When the Scottish Adaptation Framework is published we will be able to develop and refine our actions in response.

<p><b>Lead + key partners</b></p>	<p>Scottish Government and FCS adaptation sector leads.</p> <p>There are also a wide range of organisations identified to deliver the actions in the current Sector Action Plan, including SEPA, SNH, FCS, the MRPs, Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, Historic Scotland and Local Authorities.</p>
<p><b>Deliverables</b></p>	<p>The land use aspects of the Adaptation Framework that support communities in <b>current</b> actions in Sector Plans. Examples which have links to land use and communities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health &amp; Wellbeing             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Core path plans: encouraging local authorities to provide opportunities for everyday journeys and recreation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Water Environment and Resource             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improve monitoring of flood risk – new monitoring stations and flood risk mapping.</li> <li>○ Providing better information on the contribution that land management and river restoration can make to managing flood risk.</li> <li>○ FRMPs to allow co-ordinated and catchment focused decisions on managing flood risk.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Transport             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect and analyse information to determine areas of transport network susceptible to environmental hazards and future actions required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Built Environment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Historic environment coastal survey.</li> <li>○ Joint agency communications project to develop climate change messages for natural and landscape environment.</li> <li>○ Change permitted development rights for replacement of surface water hard surfaces.</li> <li>● Spatial Planning &amp; Land Use             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aid understanding and awareness of impacts of climate change on landscapes.</li> <li>○ Integrate adaptation into Development Plans.</li> <li>○ Support development of woodland expansion and habitat and green networks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Forestry             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investigate the role of forestry in sustainable flood management through the establishment of catchment scale integrated land use studies.</li> <li>○ Publish guidance for land managers on forest management considerations relevant to adaptation.</li> <li>○ Identify key locations vulnerable to land slips and help facilitate local site management strategies.</li> <li>○ Support further research on (and promote) the role of trees and woodlands for urban climate control.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Biodiversity             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assess and manage vulnerable coasts, promoting adaptive coastal management that works with natural processes.</li> <li>○ Promote restoration of natural processes and promotion of wetland networks in catchments as a means of increasing resilience.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Agriculture             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enhance existing advice and guidance for land managers to take up adaptation measures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Details of specific target dates for each action and key milestones, where appropriate, are <a href="#">available online</a> with links made to information sources for communities under Proposals 12 and 13.</li> <li>● Second progress report on Sector Action Plans – 2012 (although the Plans can be updated at any time).</li> <li>● The Scottish Adaptation Programme will supersede the Adaptation Framework and Sector Action Plans – 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	<p>Many of the actions in the Sector Action Plans will be delivered before 2013; land use will feature as appropriate in the Scottish Adaptation Programme post 2013.</p>
<b>Risks</b>	<p>Current actions from the Sector Action Plans are not taken forward. New actions are not identified/delivered.</p>

### Objective 3

#### **Proposal 12 Identify and publicise effective ways for communities to contribute to land use debates and decision-making.**

We wish to provide all communities with the opportunity to find out how land is used, have a voice in debates over the land's future and where possible get involved in managing the land themselves. This Proposal aims to provide a resource for the public to access information regarding the various statutory and non-statutory opportunities available to influence land use related plans and decisions. Good practice examples will demonstrate how these processes can be made most effective. The publicity and collation of good practice and advice may be aided through the delivery of Proposal 13.

We are committed to enhancing the involvement of communities in the use of land and decisions made regarding it. A Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill is being taken forward to support communities taking over unused or underused public sector assets and promote communities participation in the design and delivery of public services.

The variety of interests involved in land use debates from communities, land managers, industry and government, mean that there are numerous linkages within government policy, from planning to forestry, National Parks, energy to River Basin Management Planning and many more. In delivering this Proposal government and agency consultations will make appropriate links to the Land Use Strategy and its Principles.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	Scottish Government + FCS, SNH, SEPA, local and National Park Authorities.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on current statutory, and where appropriate non-statutory, opportunities for communities to contribute to land use related plans and decisions. Provide easy access to these opportunities through links on <a href="#">Scotland's Environment Web (SEWeb)</a>.</li> <li>• Identify good practice examples of community involvement in land use related plans and decisions on the Scottish Government/SEWeb sites.</li> <li>• Raise awareness about how land is used, through education-based and knowledge transfer activities.</li> <li>• Relevant Scottish Government and agency consultations to make appropriate reference to Land Use Strategy and its Principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on statutory opportunities and where appropriate non-statutory opportunities – Mar 2012.</li> <li>• Consult on policy proposals for the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill – Spring 2012.</li> <li>• Good practice examples – end 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	Resources, channels of communication and examples of good practice will be updated as they develop and change.
<b>Risks</b>	Lack of really good examples of good practice. Communities fail to actively engage.



## Objective 3

### Proposal 13 Provide a Land Use Information Hub on the Scottish Government website.

We would like people to have greater access to information, guidance and opportunities to contribute to debates about land use. A multi agency project titled SEWeb has been developed as a focal point for environmental data. It is being developed as a first port of call for anyone looking for reliable and accurate information on Scotland's environment.

The site will provide access to data held and managed by a wide range of organisations across Scotland. It will bring together and analyse data from different sources and present this in an accessible form.

The site will also directly involve users in developing our understanding of the environment and improving the way we protect it, through citizen science. The project has gained LIFE funding to develop the public involvement in the collection, use and understanding of environmental data.

<b>Lead + key partners</b>	SEPA + a range of data-holding partners including Scottish Government, Historic Scotland, SNH, MRPs, Environment Link, NHS, FCS and many others.
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a single website for access to land use and environmental data, information and guidance.</li> <li>• An opportunity for the public and stakeholders to access data and contribute to our understanding of Scotland's environment.</li> <li>• The LIFE funding will be developed to enable greater public involvement with the collection, use and understanding of environmental data.</li> </ul>
<b>Short term milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of SEWeb – 28 Nov 2011. Initially, the content will be based upon SEPA's State of the Environment Report, an inventory of environmental information and map-based means of accessing and assessing data.</li> <li>• Further development of the site's data sources and functionality – 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>Long term milestones</b>	SEWeb is a long-term project currently planned over five years (2010/11 to 2015/16). It will be developed progressively in terms of the data it holds and the functionality of the site. The LIFE funding will be used to develop a 3 year programme of public engagement and involvement in environmental monitoring and action.
<b>Risks</b>	Communication of the site and its functionality fails to engage the wider public.

### 3. The Wider Context

The Scottish Government and its SEARS partners are leading on delivery of the Land Use Strategy and the Action Plan is focused on the specific work required to deliver the Proposals. However it is important that we do not lose sight of the high level objectives and our wider desire to move our thinking and our actions towards a better integrated approach to land use.

We will encourage partnership working wherever possible whether across the public sector, between the public, private and third sectors or between the different sectoral interests in land use. Working together will help us to better understand the opportunities and constraints faced by different sectors. Better understanding will assist us all in taking advantage of the opportunities that may arise as a result of closer working. The overall goal is the achievement of sustainable land use bringing with it increased policy integration. The application of the Principles for Sustainable Land Use to significant decisions about the use of land will lead to well considered and wise choices about land use and will improve land use integration on the ground leading to improved benefits for Scotland.

The key shifts in our thinking that are set out in the Land Use Strategy are equally applicable for strategic policy making as they are for local decisions about land management and we should be mindful of the need to aim for these shifts in approach :

- **Delivering multiple benefits**
- **Partnerships with nature**
- **Linking people with the land**

*Getting the best from our land: A land use strategy for Scotland* has a lifespan of no more than 5 years. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires a revised strategy to be laid before Parliament no later than 5 years after publication of this first Strategy. This Action Plan will continue to be reviewed as appropriate in light of progress, stakeholder input and other developments.

All documents associated with the Land Use Strategy, as well as other relevant information, can be accessed at:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/landusestrategy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/landusestrategy)

If you wish to get involved or comment on any aspect, please contact the Land Use and Natural Environment team using the following contact details:

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### Annex A: Principles for Sustainable Land Use

- a) Opportunities for land use to deliver multiple benefits should be encouraged.
- b) Regulation should continue to protect essential public interests whilst placing as light a burden on businesses as is consistent with achieving its purpose. Incentives should be efficient and cost-effective.
- c) Where land is highly suitable for a primary use (for example food production, flood management, water catchment management and carbon storage) this value should be recognised in decision-making.
- d) Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the functioning of the ecosystems which they affect in order to maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services which they provide.
- e) Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering the implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and to our individual and social wellbeing.
- f) Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land should continue to contribute to delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.
- g) Where land has ceased to fulfil a useful function because it is derelict or vacant, this represents a significant loss of economic potential and amenity for the community concerned. It should be a priority to examine options for restoring all such land to economically, socially or environmentally productive uses.
- h) Outdoor recreation opportunities and public access to land should be encouraged, along with the provision of accessible green space close to where people live, given their importance for health and well-being.
- i) People should have opportunities to contribute to debates and decisions about land use and management decisions which affect their lives and their future.
- j) Opportunities to broaden our understanding of the links between land use and daily living should be encouraged.

### Annex B: Proposals in the Land Use Strategy

The Scottish Government will:

1. Publish an action plan following publication of the Strategy.
2. Provide an annual progress statement on the Land Use Strategy.
3. Align land use regulations and incentives with Land Use Strategy Objectives.
4. Further encourage land-based businesses to take actions that reduce land-based greenhouse gas emissions and that enable adaptation to climate change threats and opportunities.
5. Use the Land Use Strategy Objectives to influence negotiations on CAP reform.
6. Use demonstration projects to determine the best means by which land use and land management practice can contribute to climate change objectives.
7. Identify more closely which types of land are best for tree planting in the context of other land-based objectives, and promote good practice and local processes in relation to tree planting so as to secure multiple benefits.
8. Demonstrate how the ecosystem approach could be taken into account in relevant decisions made by public bodies to deliver wider benefits, and provide practical guidance.
9. Develop a methodology to take account of changes in soil carbon for carbon accounting purposes; improve understanding of potential benefits from conservation and management of carbon-rich soils; and deliver measures to help secure long-term management of all land-based carbon stores.
10. Investigate the relationship between land management changes and ecosystem processes to identify adaptation priorities.
11. Develop the land use aspects of our Climate Change Adaptation Framework to support communities as they adapt to change.
12. Identify and publicise effective ways for communities to contribute to land use debates and decision-making.
13. Provide a Land Use Information Hub on the Scottish Government website.

Annex C: Indicative characteristics of Proposals

PROPOSALS	INDICATIVE FOCUS	Mainstream into policy	Research and evidence	Guidance
1. Publish an action plan following publication of the Strategy.		✓	✓	✓
2. Provide an annual progress statement on the Land Use Strategy.			✓	✓
3. Align land use regulations and incentives with Land Use Strategy Objectives.		✓		
4. Further encourage land-based businesses to take actions that reduce land-based greenhouse gas emissions and that enable adaptation to climate change threats and opportunities.				✓
5. Use the Land Use Strategy Objectives to influence negotiations on CAP reform.		✓	✓	
6. Use demonstration projects to determine the best means by which land use and land management practice can contribute to climate change objectives.				✓
7. Identify more closely which types of land are best for tree planting in the context of other land-based objectives, and promote good practice and local processes in relation to tree planting so as to secure multiple benefits.		✓	✓	✓
8. Demonstrate how the ecosystem approach could be taken into account in relevant decisions made by public bodies to deliver wider benefits, and provide practical guidance.			✓	✓
9. Develop a methodology to take account of changes in soil carbon for carbon accounting purposes; improve understanding of potential benefits from conservation and management of carbon-rich soils; and deliver measures to help secure long-term management of all land-based carbon stores.			✓	
10. Investigate the relationship between land management changes and ecosystem processes to identify adaptation priorities.			✓	
11. Develop the land use aspects of our Climate Change Adaptation Framework to support communities as they adapt to change.		✓		✓
12. Identify and publicise effective ways for communities to contribute to land use debates and decision-making.			✓	✓
13. Provide a Land Use Information Hub on the Scottish Government website.			✓	✓

### Annex D: Glossary and acronyms

This glossary provides a guide to terms as they are used in the Land Use Strategy Action Plan.

<b>biodiversity</b>	The variety of life on Earth.
<b>carbon</b>	A chemical element which is part of many greenhouse gases, for example carbon dioxide and methane. Greenhouse gas emissions are reported in carbon dioxide equivalents - for which 'carbon' is often used as shorthand.
<b>carbon sequestration</b>	Processes that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
<b>community</b>	The term community includes individuals and groups, and can be based on location (for example people who live, work or use an area) or common interest (for example the business community, sports or heritage groups).
<b>ecosystem</b>	A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment, interacting as a functional unit.
<b>the ecosystem approach</b>	A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, and which recognises that people with their cultural and varied social needs are an integral part of ecosystems.
<b>ecosystem services</b>	The benefits people obtain from ecosystems; these include provisioning services such as food, water, timber and fibre; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, waste and water quality; cultural services with recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling.
<b>land-based businesses</b>	Businesses which derive products and services from the management of land; for example farming, forestry, renewable energy, recreation and tourism.
<b>low-carbon economy</b>	An economy in which less energy and resources are used - domestically, commercially and across the public sector; where energy increasingly comes from sources that produce fewer carbon emissions, such as water, wind, wave and solar power; and where economic opportunities from efficiencies and saving carbon are realised.
<b>prime agricultural land</b>	Land which is capable of producing the widest variety of crops (identified as being of Class 1, 2 or 3.1 in the land capability classification for agriculture, as developed by the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute).
<b>public goods</b>	Goods that cannot be withheld from people, even if they do not pay for them.

<b>sustainable development</b>	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
<b>sustainable land use</b>	Land use that makes its best possible contribution to fulfilling our Objectives, with regard to the Principles in this Strategy, whilst maintaining the land's capacity for future use.
<b>vacant and derelict land</b>	<p>Vacant land is land which is unused for the purposes for which it is held and is viewed as an appropriate site for development. This land must either have had prior development on it or preparatory work has taken place in anticipation of future development.</p> <p>Derelict land is land which has been so damaged by development, that it is incapable of development for beneficial use without rehabilitation. In addition the land must currently not be used for the purpose for which it is held or a use acceptable in the local plan. Land also qualifies as derelict if it has an unremedied previous use which could constrain future development.</p>
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy, a system of European Union agricultural subsidies and programmes
<b>CEH</b>	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
<b>CSGN</b>	Central Scotland Green Network
<b>COP</b>	Conferences of the Parties
<b>FCS</b>	Forestry Commission Scotland
<b>FFBC</b>	Farming For a Better Climate
<b>FRMP</b>	Flood Risk Management Plan
<b>F&amp;WS</b>	Forestry and Woodland Strategies
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>LIFE</b>	The EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU, as well as in some candidate, acceding and neighbouring countries.
<b>MRPs</b>	This research is conducted through the Main Research Providers for rural and environment science in the Scottish Government.
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>RBMP</b>	River Basin Management Plan
<b>RESAS</b>	The Scottish Government Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division
<b>RPP</b>	Report on Policies and Proposals
<b>SAC</b>	Scottish Agricultural College
<b>SEARS</b>	Scotland's Environment and Rural Services, a partnership between eight public bodies aiming to improve the experience among land managers by working together to provide an efficient and effective

	service - see <a href="http://www.sears.scotland.gov.uk/">http://www.sears.scotland.gov.uk/</a>
<b>SEPA</b>	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
<b>SG</b>	Scottish Government
<b>SNH</b>	Scottish Natural Heritage
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WEAG</b>	Woodland Expansion Advisory Group





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