



Confor Response to Scottish Government Environment Strategy Consultation

Confor: Promoting forestry and wood (www.confor.org.uk) is a not-for-profit membership organisation which represents 1500 sustainable forestry and woodusing businesses across the UK. Confor represents the whole forestry and wood supply chain and focuses on strategic issues vital to the success and sustainable future of the sector.

Draft vision

'One planet prosperity' is a good vision, but the definition given suggests that 'environment' and 'economy' will always be in conflict, or at least disconnected. It would be better to have wording like:

'Our draft vision is for "one planet prosperity". This means protecting and enhancing nature in Scotland and globally as the foundation of a more prosperous, innovative and successful nation.'

Draft Outcomes

We are happy with the outcomes but it is not clear how they will be delivered.

The first 4 outcomes should all be delivered through existing strategies and it is important that the Environment Strategy does not duplicate these.

The importance of this Strategy is in ensuring that all important areas of environmental work are covered, and that more specific strategies do not conflict with one another.

In particular, objective 6 'The global footprint of our consumption and production is sustainable' does not have a strategy. It has therefore not been the subject of focused thinking, and therefore is at risk of having other strategies being delivered at its expense. Two examples of this are:

- the planting of native woodland for biodiversity instead of productive conifer has exacerbated our reliance on imported timber and therefore the pressure we put on global forests with higher biodiversity value than new native woodlands.
- The biggest reduction in Scotland's industrial carbon emissions was due to our reduction in steel production. Unless this is accompanied by the replacement of steel with more sustainable materials such as engineered

timber in construction, this merely 'offshores' the carbon footprint of our consumption.

As became apparent in the discussion at the consultation workshop with members of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital, the scope and strategy around objective 5 on people's connection to nature, also suffers from a lack of strategic thinking. The only aspect of this which has been the subject of policy discussion is rights of access to land, when arguably this objective would be better achieved through interventions such as green cities and education.

We would therefore suggest that the work required to be done by this strategy would include:

1. Develop and deliver a strategic plan on our global production and consumption.
2. Develop and deliver a strategic plan on people's access to and connection with nature.
3. Develop a set of indicators to monitor the success of subsidiary strategies including the Climate Change Plan, Zero Waste Plan, Biodiversity strategy, Clean air strategy, Scotland River Basin Management Plan, National Marine Plan, Land Use Strategy, Forestry Strategy, and the new Access to Nature and Global Footprint strategies.
4. Provide a framework for increasing integration both between subsidiary strategies and with Economic and Social strategies.

Draft Knowledge Accounts

We would support the idea of Knowledge Accounts as a way to monitor progress.

However, the draft set appear to be based around what we already know, rather than beginning with the knowledge required to deliver the outcomes. There should be a Knowledge Account for each outcome.

The final Knowledge Accounts should include a clear set of indicators which can be reported either with figures or at least with a 'traffic light' system. Statements like 'There have been improvements in the ecological status of rivers and lochs; however, there has been a decline in designated natural features to 2009, but has remained stable since then', is not a useful way to report and monitor trends.

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August 2018