

SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Feeding the policy process



The James
Hutton
Institute

Author: David Miller, The James Hutton Institute

Reviewer: Jorieke Potters, Wageningen University & Research

Editor: Roxana Vilcu, AEIDL



SHERPA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 862448. The content of the document does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).



The schedule of developing, and reporting on, international agreements (e.g. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) provides frameworks for public policy from pan-national to local government levels.

Each sector represented in Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) contributes its own knowledge of presenting evidence, communicating key messages, or insights to emerging opportunities for informing or influencing development of policy relevant to such frameworks.

Pathways to inform policy take different routes for each sector in the Platforms. Public institutions at regional or local levels have responsibilities for developing policies within their remits, alongside implementing higher levels of public policy (Scotland, UK). These institutions have established processes to inform policy and decision-making. Their participation in EU projects is well-established practice, but MAPs for co-learning and co-constructing solutions are new forums through which to engage with wider actor networks.

A key function has been to provide relevant, authoritative, evidence to policy interests, and interpretation of the findings. Members representing civil society, including communities and business, augment the evidence base from sectors of relevance. In 2021, the MAPs focused on the issue of climate change Ambitions to feed the policy process motivated an application to the UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021. The process energised the MAPs on how a platform with global significance can be used to create impacts benefitting their sectors.

Dee Catchment MAP

Location

Scotland, United Kingdom

MAP contacts

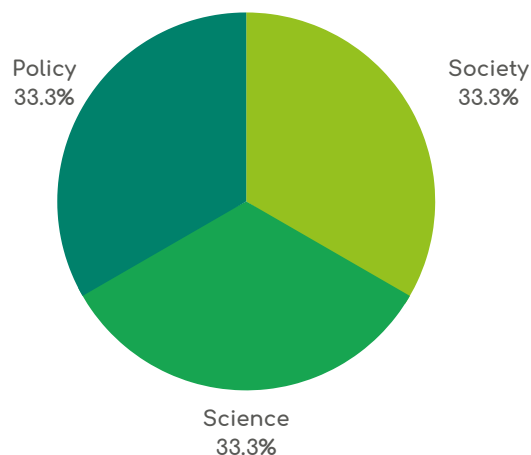
Facilitator: David Miller
Monitor: Susan Cooksley
Kate Irvine

More info

<https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/united-kingdom-dee-catchment/>



MAP membership:





ABOUT THE MAP

In north-eastern Scotland, United Kingdom, the James Hutton Institute coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform Dee Catchment Partnership. The platform has a local focus covering the catchment of the River Dee.

This area is defined by a biophysical unit and does not correspond to any socio-economic geographical units. The Dee catchment area is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Birds and Habitats Directive of the European Commission. Furthermore, it is the source of drinking water for Aberdeen, the habitat of Atlantic salmon, and other species of high ecological significance, and has an international reputation for its cultural heritage.

The area faces challenges relating to extreme events and flood risk and socio-economic and environmental impacts of the expansion of the City of Aberdeen. Further challenges relate to access to high-speed internet connectivity, and gaps in the provision of public services. The platform focuses on reviewing the most important influences on the management of the area, implementing natural flood management, and supporting responsible access to land and tourism. This will contribute to the aim of the Dee Catchment Partnership to protect, enhance and restore the natural processes that maintain the health of the river system.



OBJECTIVES

The activities of this MAP are being designed to achieve specific objectives which will be developed with the Partnership team, and at the kick-off workshop.

- Review trends and propose priorities that could influence the management of the catchment.
- Natural flood management, including sustainable drainage and blue-green infrastructure.
- Environmental impacts of river spates, managing priority species and non-invasive species.
- Responsible access and recreation.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The MAP membership contributed display materials to the [Celebration of the Living River](#), 1st February 2020. From March 2020, most engagement was held online, a key output of which, in collaboration with the Rural Scotland MAP, was a joint UK [Discussion Paper](#) on the future long-term vision for rural areas, which also informed thinking internal to participating organisations.

The discussions of the Multi-Actor Platform led to a proposal to contribute an event to the UNFCCC Convention of the Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021. The MAP, and the [Dee Catchment Partnership](#), were both displayed at the stand in the Green Zone of COP 26, which includes video interviews with members of the MAP, and dissemination of its Paper on a vision for rural areas. The MAP was also instrumental to the design of a live panel session on ['How rural areas can contribute to a just transition to climate neutrality'](#), on 10 November 2021, and two other sessions, on [agro-ecology](#) and [social innovation](#).



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