

SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Capitalising on research findings



The James
Hutton
Institute

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Creating and operating the Multi-Actor Platform in Scotland facilitated impacts of development of long-term relationships, and networks, and were instrumental in the uptake and generation of knowledge. Each member facilitates two-way engagement with wider networks. These enable inflows of knowledge to discourse in the MAP, from personal experiences or forums represented and sharing out of emerging knowledge (e.g. scientific evidence relating to rural inequalities or land use change).

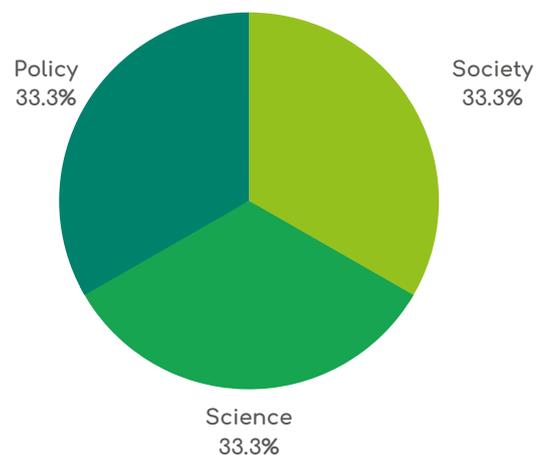
Feedback reported, in a rapid changing policy environment, access to the evidence bases of EU and Scottish level discussion papers relating to rural areas, was valuable for stimulating and informing debate, and identifying shared aspiration and challenges. It provided sources of external knowledge to inform a position or action, or validation of positions taken in public authorities and the exploitation of information and outputs by members for their purposes. As a result, contributions to developing a vision for rural areas were included in their presentations to external bodies (e.g. Scottish Parliament Rural Policy Group, science events), and the wider context of actions by members in each sector.

The research findings from a science, policy and society forum should be designed to be relatable to its members. Time is well invested in maintaining knowledge of the contexts of platform members, on an ongoing basis, not only when invited to participate. Contexts evolve, with individuals changing roles and responsibilities, and organisations changing remits. Ensuring synergies in content and interests improves the prospects of meaningful dialogue being maintained into the longer term.

Rural Scotland MAP
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More info https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/united-kingdom-scotland/



MAP membership





ABOUT THE MAP

In the United Kingdom, the James Hutton Institute coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform Rural Scotland. This has a regional focus covering the whole of Scotland. It is a newly established, bringing together members on the basis of existing regional development initiatives and representing all rural interests. The platform operates in alignment with the Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes Gateway (SEFARI Gateway), helping to link similar lines of policy evolution between national and European scales.

The focus is on both the environment and the people of rural Scotland. The aim is to improve the flow of research, knowledge and expertise to and from policy, industry and the public. The expected impact is to understand emerging trends affecting rural areas and to inform thinking in public policy, private sector and civil society of the future of rural Scotland. Outcomes sought are improvements in the resilience of rural communities, and delivery of public policy on tackling climate change together with safeguarding and restoring biodiversity.



OBJECTIVES

The platform's main objectives are the following:

- Review trends which could influence the environment and people of rural Scotland.
- Identify the implications of a net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045 on environment, land use and people.
- Identify and recommend how civil society and business can contribute to achieving public policy objectives of tackling climate change together with no net loss of biodiversity.
- Co-create visions of rural Scotland.
- Raise public awareness and understanding of implications of environmental change.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

From March 2020, most engagement was held online, a key output of which, in collaboration with the MAP of the River Dee Catchment, was a joint UK [Discussion Paper](#) on the future long-term vision for rural areas, which also informed thinking internal to participating organisations. Presentations facilitated included to audiences of policy and practice at the North-east Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (November 2019), and to science and policy audiences at the annual conference of the Scottish Alliance for Geoscience, Environment and Society (November 2020).

The discussions of the Multi-Actor Platform led to a proposal to contribute an event to the UNFCC Convention of the Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021. The event was the stand in the Green Zone of COP 26, including [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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