

Please feel free to take a handout for more info

# Making sense of sustainability:

## Working together to develop a sustainability assessment framework for Scotland's upland estates

Jayne Glass, Alister Scott and Martin Price

### Key message 1:

There is scope to develop assessment criteria that can be used to monitor progress towards sustainability on Scotland's upland estates.

#### More detail...

- The management of Scotland's upland estates is **diverse and complex**, with wide ranging land uses and management objectives.
- **Numerous stakeholders** have different interpretations of sustainability in a practical context which makes it hard to put into operational practice.
- It is common to develop **sustainability indicators** to monitor progress towards environmental, economic and social goals.
- Indicators that are poorly thought through or 'top-down' in nature can **antagonise stakeholders** and **hinder their effective implementation**.
- In order to draw on the benefits of top-down and bottom-up approaches, a collaborative learning approach to criteria development is taken (fig 1).

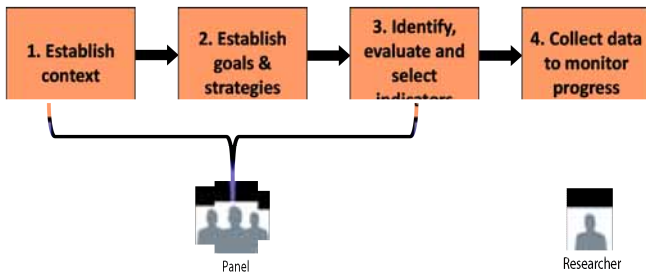


Fig 1: A collaborative learning approach to developing sustainability criteria

### Key message 2:

A panel of 19 practitioners, researchers and policy makers were engaged in a multi-round, anonymous interview/written survey.

#### More detail...

- This approach involved a panel of **stakeholders and specialists** in the process of developing assessment criteria rather than selecting indicators based purely on a thorough literature review or a 'one off' method such as a questionnaire/interview.
- An **iterative, deliberative survey** method (Delphi) was used to engage the panel in order to generate opinions/knowledge about a sustainability in this context.
- The panel is made up of a **balanced selection** of 19 practitioners, researchers and policy makers with expertise in estate management, sustainability, rural development, upland management etc. (fig 2).
- Each panellist has a **breadth of experience** (e.g. an estate manager who is also involved with representative bodies and an NGO).

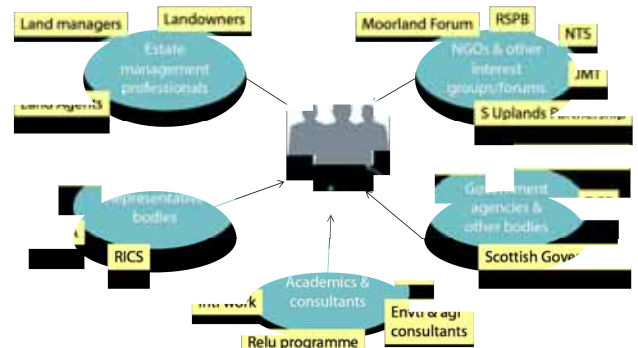


Fig 2: Working with a multi-stakeholder panel

### Key message 3:

The survey allowed exploration of sustainability perceptions, management strategies, and constraining and enabling factors.

#### More detail...

- Round 1 (establishing a context for sustainability) and Round 2 (exploring sustainability strategies) provided a **wealth of rich data** that could be used to develop assessment criteria.
- After the first round, panellists could see the **feedback** from a previous rounds and change/reassert their opinions and add ideas in light of what other panel members said (fig 3).
- There was a strong focus on **'innovation'** as being key for sustainability and the need for estates to be adaptable when faced with internal and external pressures and change.

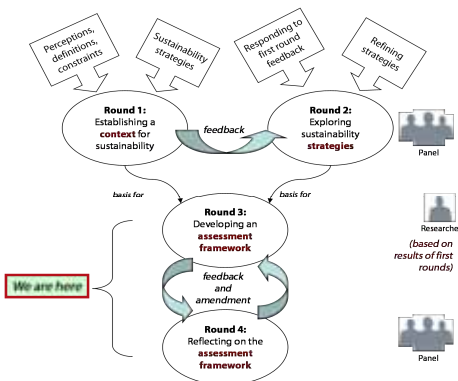


Fig 3: Developing assessment criteria over a series of rounds

### Key message 4:

Input from the panel in rounds 1 and 2 allowed the development of an assessment framework that can be implemented on any upland estate.

#### More detail...

- Following round one (establishing a context for sustainability) and round two (exploring sustainability strategies), the researcher developed an assessment framework based **entirely** on the panel's input (fig 4).
- For more detail, please take a handout.

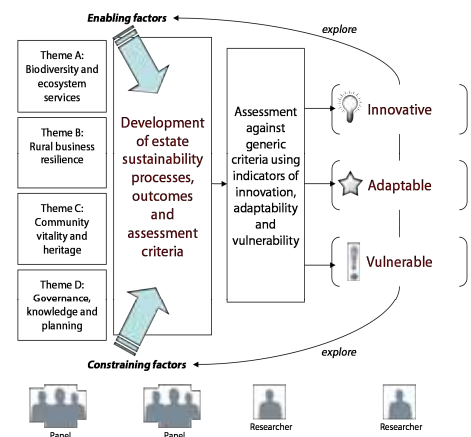


Fig 4: The assessment framework developed from the results of the panel survey



This project is part of 'Sustainable Estates for the 21st Century', an integrated research project being conducted at the Centre for Mountain Studies from 2007 to 2010. For more information, please feel free to talk to Jayne during the conference, visit the Centre for Mountain Studies website or email:

[jayne.glass@perth.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:jayne.glass@perth.uhi.ac.uk)

Jayne Glass  
PhD Research Student  
Centre for Mountain Studies  
Perth College UHI  
Crieff Road  
PERTH PH1 2NX  
t: 01738 877265  
e: [jayne.glass@perth.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:jayne.glass@perth.uhi.ac.uk)  
w: [www.perth.uhi.ac.uk/mountainstudies](http://www.perth.uhi.ac.uk/mountainstudies)

