

# **Review of the Scottish Climate Change Programme**

## **Submission from Scottish Environment LINK March 2005**

Scottish Environment LINK (LINK) is the liaison body for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK was established in 1987 to provide a forum and network for the voluntary environmental sector and to assist in co-operation and communication with government bodies and others with a role in Scotland's environment.

LINK members view climate change as the most serious problem facing the globe. There is clear evidence that the impacts of climate change are already being experienced and that they will get worse. Urgent action is required to reduce the anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change if we are to avoid the worst consequences. We support a review of the Scottish Climate Change Programme in light of recent government figures which reveal that Scotland has made only limited progress on its emissions reductions. Individual members of LINK have made detailed comments on the Scottish Executive's consultation document. The following comments are intended to provide a generic overview of the issues and are supported by the organisations listed below.

### **Delivering Emissions Reductions**

Questions 1-6

#### **Scotland needs Scottish greenhouse gas targets and a realistic programme to achieve them.**

Everyone - businesses small and large, the public, farmers, local councils - need to know what is expected of them and how they can do their bit to meet international targets. In the light of recent performance we think that Scotland should aim for a 12.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions on 1990 levels by 2010, and for a 60% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050. And, importantly, Scotland needs to make year-on-year progress in all sectors towards these targets reporting regularly on progress to Parliament.

Questions 13-21

#### **Scotland needs energy efficiency targets for domestic, commercial and industrial buildings, land use and food production.**

Every year thousands of Scots die from conditions related to cold, damp housing. Solving this national disgrace is now a priority for Scotland and doing it right will also reduce the 25% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions which come from people's homes. Between 1990 and 2002 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the Commercial sector rose by 35%, mainly because of increasing energy use within buildings. Energy use in the production of fertilizers, management of soil for agriculture and food production and procurement requires urgent review.

LINK supports the proposal for developing a Scottish Energy Efficiency Strategy. The Strategy needs to urgently prioritise action on demand reduction including the carrot of investment and incentive packages, but also to look at the stick of regulatory and financial measures.

#### **The Scottish Executive should promote a wide range of renewable energy schemes within a Scottish Energy Strategy (LINK's Energy Statement<sup>1</sup> refers to this issue).**

Renewable energy sources, like energy from the wind, waves, sun and specially grown 'energy crops,' are essential in reducing emissions. There should be significantly improved planning and funding within the framework of a national energy strategy which brings on all the renewables,

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<sup>1</sup> LINK Energy Statement 2003 – available on [www.scotlink.org/.....](http://www.scotlink.org/.....)

including those which produce heat, boost Combined Heat and Power schemes and work to phase out fossil fuels and nuclear power. Nuclear power is expensive and has major dangerous waste implications, Scotland's future energy provision, does not require new nuclear reactors. Investment in research, development and deployment of renewables is investment in clean energy, jobs in Scotland and new manufacturing industries. We think a challenging but achievable target for Scotland would be 50% of Scottish electricity to come from renewables by 2020.

Questions 28-31

**Transport emissions are significant and growing; an effective integrated transport policy is required to curb these emissions.**

Transport, mainly road transport, was responsible for 14% of climate change emissions in 2002 (excluding emissions from land use), and is the fastest growing sector of emissions. Aviation is the fastest growing source of traffic emissions with road traffic next. UK policy aims to cut transport emissions by 17% by 2010, half that reduction coming from measures like congestion charges and parking charges at work. More needs to be done to ensure that all transport proposals and policies contribute to reducing emissions, including an end to major, traffic-generating road schemes and measures to stabilise the growth in air travel.

Questions 32-50

**The Government needs to help people to understand the consequences of the choices they make and to enable them to make climate-friendly choices.**

The Government, industry *and* citizens all need to do their bit to tackle climate emissions, We can all help to reduce climate change emissions at work, at home, in school, etc, by making the right choices. Government should help us to do this by making the right choice the easy choice. This means investing in integrated transport, public information campaigns and leading the way by, for instance, forcing all new public buildings to meet tough efficiency standards and make use of renewables and/or CHP. Industry, business and commerce must be more robustly encouraged to lead by example.

**Scotland must safeguard its carbon reservoirs, particularly peatlands, through improved management of the land.**

Scotland's soils lock up a huge amount of carbon, far more than all the trees and shrubs in the UK put together, so it is vital to make sure these carbon 'stores' are protected through appropriate agricultural policies, an end to large-scale peat extraction and an urgent programme of peatland restoration. These policies would also protect the important wildlife and archaeological value of peat bogs and peat soils and contribute to a wider and integrated programme of land and landscape management. More generally, the choices we make about forestry, agriculture and built development should be designed to protect and enhance carbon locked in soils and vegetation, and to reduce direct carbon emissions.

Questions 51-54

**Scotland's rural, urban, marine and coastal areas are going to be affected by climate change. We must accept this, minimising effects where possible and coming up with strategies which help us adapt.**

The need to adapt has become ever more apparent since the publication of the Scottish Climate Change Programme in 2000. In the 2000 strategy, the section which addressed 'Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change in Scotland' only formed a very small part of a much wider strategy. However, new scenarios on the likely scale of climate change are now more alarming and since it is now accepted that some degree of climate change is going to take place the **adaptation** strategy must be given a more prominent role in the revised strategy. As the consultation document notes: "some climate change is now inevitable and therefore it is vital that we adapt to the unavoidable

impacts of climate change. These impacts will be felt increasingly on the environment, on communities and on business”. The new strategy will need to address, amongst other, the threats posed by flooding, coastal realignment, changing farming practices and habitat fragmentation. We need to prepare today for the changes which will happen in the coming decades.

Adaptation to the reality of climate change can drive policy on the environment whilst, at the same time, safeguarding economic prosperity. As the report, *Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland* notes: ‘The development of measures to adapt to climate change can help in re-thinking organisational goals and values, and in re-organising and re-engineering the provision of goods and services to customers and users’.<sup>2</sup>

A more co-ordinated vision of land use is essential in formulating an adaptation strategy. It is therefore vital that the revised Scottish Climate Change Programme takes into account actions from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, the Scottish Sustainable Development Strategy, the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the land use planning system.

We welcome the recognition in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy of the need to increase the connections between areas of habitat. An integrated approach to the revision of the Scottish Climate Change Programme should inform an expanded adaptation section which focuses on the need to allow for spatial movement of species in response to climate change and restore the land to ecological functionality. Where possible, measures must be implemented that prevent adverse effects, such as the loss of important species, habitats and archaeological sites.

Landscape scale action should be pursued, facilitated by protection of all semi-natural habitats, restoring and creating new habitats, a more co-ordinated vision of land use to make it more permeable to species movement and allowing the recovery of the marine environment. As well as being good conservation practice, this approach can deliver economic and social gains such as flood alleviation, recreation and tourism and increased air and water quality. These aims could be delivered through a variety of agricultural, marine and land use mechanisms. It is important that measures, such as those aimed at tackling flooding, use as a first line of response sustainable flood management and soft-engineering techniques, and do not rely on building ever higher concrete flood defences. An adaptive strategy for biodiversity would protect, restore and expand existing important habitat, and make the wider countryside more wildlife friendly to allow species and habitat movement.

Questions 55-59

**Sustainable development means considering the environment, social issues and the economy together. Only by doing this can we really tackle climate change.**

Climate change needs to be a major consideration in all areas of Government decision making and processes. Currently a number of competing priorities prevent a proper, joined-up response to climate change. The key example is the drive for economic growth. If the quality of the economy, rather than simply its size, were measured, it would be clear that climate change should be a major factor in economic and business planning. Education for sustainable development is a key part of changing the way we look at problems and make decisions. The emissions reduction and adaptation responses to climate change should be based on sustainability principles.

**Scottish decision makers must play a part in international climate negotiations, pressing the UK, Europe and UN for action.**

Scotland is part of the UK delegation to UN meetings on climate change. It is vital that Scottish interests are properly represented and that Scotland makes its full contribution to meeting UK

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<sup>2</sup> *Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland* Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2001.

targets. Scotland should help to ensure that international rules force most savings to be made 'at home', and that nuclear power and destructive forestry projects are not supported. It is essential that the UK keeps faith with the UN climate change process which respects the principle of climate justice for developing countries, rather than encouraging any side deals with the US.

**Members of Scottish Environment LINK supporting this consultation response:**

Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group  
Biological Recording in Scotland  
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers  
Butterfly Conservation Scotland  
Cairngorms Campaign  
Council for Scottish Archaeology  
Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust  
Marine Conservation Society Scotland  
North East Mountain Trust  
Plantlife Scotland  
Rangers' Association Scotland  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
Royal Zoological Society of Scotland  
Scottish Council for National Parks  
Scottish Native Woods  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Soil Association Scotland  
Sustrans Scotland  
The National Trust for Scotland  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society  
Woodland Trust Scotland  
WWF Scotland