

Delivering the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy in Scotland: 2015

LINK's Wildlife Forum has been very closely engaged in the delivery process for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy since its publication in 2004. Forum members have also been closely engaged in the 2020 Challenge document. Our suggestions on monitoring the success of 2020 challenge were laid out in our benchmarking paper in June 2013. This document is available on the LINK website:

<http://www.scotlink.org/public-documents/scotlands-challenge-2020-a-benchmark/>

The key issue for Scotland's biodiversity is coordinating and delivering effective action for biodiversity in order to meet the 2020 target to halt the loss of biodiversity in Scotland. Efforts to date have focussed on process rather than delivery outcomes. We have pressed for the new route map to provide the vision and strategic direction to enable all Scotland's stakeholders to act effectively to halt the loss of biodiversity within the next 5 years.

In our view, the Biodiversity route map needs to:

Deliver a step change in process so that real change is achieved on the ground

Provide strategic direction to coordinate effect of all the stakeholders so that effort is focussed and effective

Identify responsible lead bodies to coordinate action and provide leadership

Allocate sufficient resources to support action so that effective delivery can be achieved.

In order to do this the route map must:

Provide a strategic vision on why halting the loss of biodiversity is so key to Scotland's future and clearly show what steps need to be taken to meet our targets, including the Aichi targets by 2020

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It needs to add value to actions that are already being delivered by stakeholders. If it lists projects that are already ongoing, it fails to add value.

Six big steps for nature:

The route map puts forward 6 'big steps for nature', which relate to the chapter headings in 2020 Challenge and which are underpinned by a selection of projects. The rewriting of the 2020 challenge chapter aims is not necessary and could be confusing. We would question whether the rewrite adds any clarity and where the projects have come from. There is no evidence of strategic thinking behind these suggestions.

We would also ask where the added value behind these projects is. These projects are all important but taken together are unlikely to meet the Aichii targets. Given this fact, we would like to see a gap analysis and a route map that includes a strategy to fill these gaps with appropriate action over the next 5 years.

Big step 4: conserving wildlife in Scotland; this section is particularly weak and shows no evidence of strategic thinking on what is actually intended to meet the 2020 challenge outcome. We cannot see how the projects listed here can achieve this outcome on their own.

Big step 5: sustainable management of land and freshwater: again a lack of strategic thinking is evident in that we cannot see how the projects listed here will meet the outcome. The National Ecological Network should be an important element of this section but action is limited to developing and helping to identify priority areas for action. We would suggest that we need to be seeing action on the ground within 5 years rather than limiting the vision to the process. We would also query how we can measure the success of any measures under CAP in supporting biodiversity. How will success be identified?

What happens next?

We only have 5 years left to deliver our Challenge 2020 outcomes and targets. There are a very large number and range of stakeholders who are in a position to deliver action towards these outcomes and they

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need clear strategic visions, leadership to coordinate their work and to ensure progress towards the outcomes. It is difficult to see how the route map proposed can deliver the step change required to meet the 2020 Challenge outcomes.

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Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations - 34 member bodies representing a spectrum of environmental and associated cultural heritage interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK provides a forum and network for its members; and assists communication between members, government and civic society. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

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