



Scottish
Environment
LINK

Still Delivering the Goods

Case Study 10



ONGOING



PLANNED

Landscape Leadership Soil Association Scotland



Photo: Soil Association

Read the full report, with the 15 case studies here:

<https://www.scotlink.org/publication/still-delivering-the-goods/>



Background

Transforming land management in Scotland to restore nature and a safe climate will require innovative leaders and diverse groups and networks working collaboratively to achieve a shared vision. To do this, investment in developing leadership is needed.

This was a pilot project that developed the leadership capacity of individuals who can all make positive environmental change at scale. It was led by the Soil Association Scotland, in partnership with Scottish Land & Estates.



Project aims

The aim of **Landscape Leadership** is to deliver impactful and long-lasting benefits for Scotland's environment and people – restoring nature, tackling climate change, and supporting thriving rural businesses and communities. This will be achieved by enabling, empowering, and connecting land managers to create an environmental movement for making transformative change at a landscape scale.



Project Timescale

Launched in November 2019, the pilot was completed at the end of October 2020. The original intention was to complete the pilot by the end of April 2020, but this had to be changed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Based on the success of the pilot, it is planned to deliver Landscape Leadership to new groups of participants in the future, subject to securing funding.



SBS Objectives

The aims from the **2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity**:

1

To protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.

This project will, within a managed landscape, protect and restore a wide variety of biodiversity, as well as improve several ecosystems, with a particular focus on woodlands and peatlands.

2

To connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.

The focus on engaging land managers and their staff will connect a wide range of key audiences with nature and involve them in decisions.

3

To maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The aim of involving land managers will ensure that the habitats protected or enhanced will be recognised for their ecosystem services, be economically sustainable and support employment.





Project Summary

Soil Association Scotland ran the pilot for this programme from January to October 2020.

The project was originally due to be run as a series of overnight sessions, but due to Covid-19 restrictions, most were moved online. Participants were all able to take part in workshops and developed action plans for the landscapes that they are responsible for. Between sessions participants received coaching to further progress their Landscape Action Plans, with a focus on their own personal development. There was an intentionally diverse mix of participants based on ownership type (privately owned estates, environmental NGOs), ownership intention (forestry, agriculture, tourism, etc.), and gender.



Climate Impacts

Landscape Leadership is a leadership programme, underpinned by environmental principles. It develops the leadership of participants who have the capacity to make change at scale. All participants have prepared Landscape Action Plans for their own landscapes, and these will include actions that mitigate climate change, including woodland creation and peatland restoration.

Implementation of these Action Plans will contribute to Scotland's efforts to address climate change and, if/when the programme expands, these changes can be replicated across Scotland.



People Information

Direct employment:

The delivery of the pilot project included: an external facilitator who was contracted in, and a Soil Association Scotland communications manager who worked on the project for part of each week. The project was developed and overseen by a senior Soil Association Scotland manager.

Wider engagement:

The action plans developed by the participants were for their own landscapes, considering social (including community engagement), economic, and environmental factors. Actions within these plans would have included projects that retain employees or bring in additional labour such as for native woodland planting/management.



Successes and achievements

Collectively, the pilot project group of Landscape Leadership participants **manage over 75,000 acres of land**. Despite a diverse set of aims and priorities, all are united in their desire to restore nature and tackle climate change for Scotland's future generations.

Feedback has been very positive with participants saying that Landscape Leadership has made them think differently about how they manage land to balance environmental, economic, and social objectives. All participants benefitted from the course, developing leadership and strategic management skills, and enhancing their motivations to take action to address climate change and increase biodiversity. Although the project has only just completed, participants are already taking concrete actions within their landscapes and local communities.

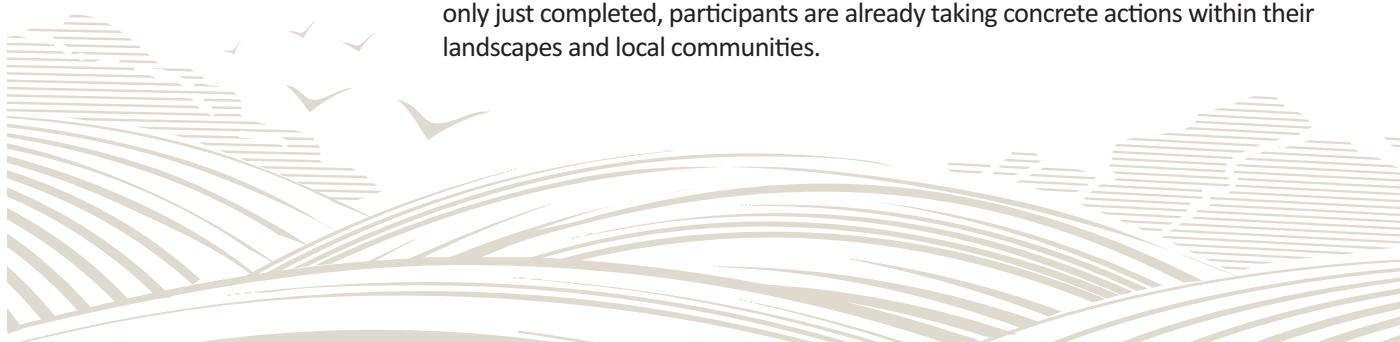




Photo: Soil Association



Issues and challenges

Covid-19 restrictions have been a huge challenge for this project. What should have been four overnight sessions interspersed with coaching, leading up to all participants having completed their action plans within a concentrated period, changed to virtual sessions over a protracted period, as key staff were furloughed.

This challenge has highlighted how important face to face contact is, and the need to remove people from their surroundings to be able to take a step back and look at their landscape from a different perspective. A future iteration of this programme would include virtual sessions, but these would not replace bringing a diverse group of people together to work on common problems.



Funding

The funding for the pilot project was £80,000 from a private donation, which included project development costs and the use of an external facilitator. Additionally, all participants were charged £500. A new programme would have a lower cost per participant.

Funding for future iterations is currently being sought.



Further information

<https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/scotland-farming-programmes/landscape-leadership/>