

Introduction

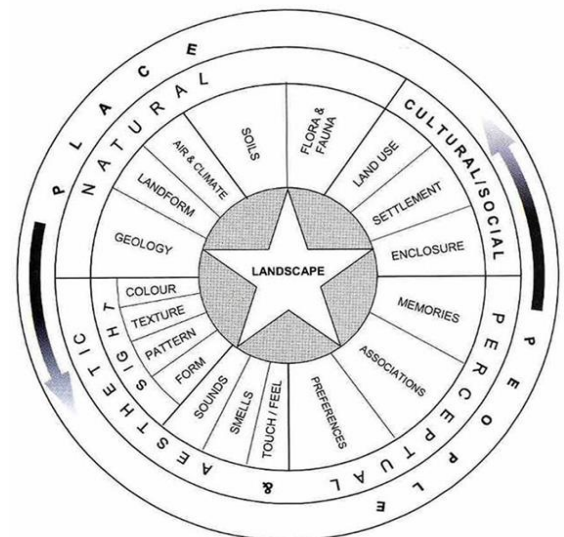
Scotland's Landscape Monitoring Programme reports on aspects of landscape change in Scotland. It's a national programme involving several partners and covering a range of topics encompassing the diversity of Scotland's landscapes. The development of this programme contributes directly to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Scotland. It also delivers the landscape component of the [CAMERAS Environmental Monitoring Strategy](#). The programme is led and coordinated by Scottish Natural Heritage.



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What is landscape and why should we monitor it?

Landscape is defined as *'an area, as perceived by people, whose character, is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'*¹ (Council of Europe 2000). This definition includes all our landscapes - not only the designated or 'scenic', but also the everyday places where we live and work.



This modern approach to landscape – illustrated by the wheel diagram (right) - encompasses both the physical components of place (such as landform, rivers, woodland and buildings) as well a range of attributes that can influence our response to these components (such as character, aesthetics and cultural associations).

Landscape is an important part of our natural and cultural heritage that contributes significantly to making Scotland a better place to live, work and visit. Good landscapes help to support our health and well-being. They attract new inward investment, businesses, visitors and tourists that help provide jobs and help grow our economy. Guiding landscape change can help to maximise these social and economic benefits.



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Scotland's Landscape Monitoring Programme will allow us to assess better how our landscapes are changing; and to identify key trends and their significance in terms of how people feel about them and respond to them.

¹ The [European Landscape Convention](#)



What is the Landscape Monitoring Programme?

The Programme brings together existing and new data to monitor landscape change in a meaningful, practical and efficient way. It has been developed through research, data review and pilot project work involving a range of partners.

At the heart of the programme is a number of landscape indicators grouped into four themes:

- Landscape Qualities
- Public Perception
- Land Cover
- Built Development.

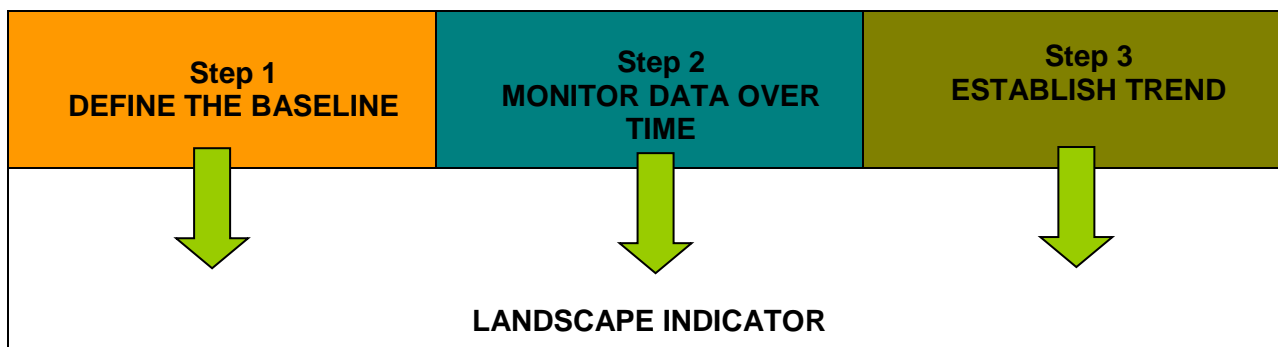
How have we selected the indicators?

The varied components of landscape mean that a single indicator, or even a few, could not explain enough about landscape change. Each indicator has therefore been selected to provide insight into an aspect of landscape change.

To be included as an indicator, the data underpinning it has to be capable of being expressed in terms of landscape change rather than simply land use or land cover change. Much of this work requires assessment at a more detailed scale, and this work will follow in due course. The data underpinning each indicator also needs to be capable of being updated at regular intervals using a standard method.

The methodology for compiling the Indicators followed the path set out below. All indicators must have a baseline set; for some indicators, this is all that can be reported at present so any trends will follow in later iterations.

Process used to develop indicators



To develop each indicator, the following issues had to be considered:

- The complexity of the subject and the amount of interaction between components – this often required use of proxy datasets.
- Dataset variation – inconsistencies with data collection would make subsequently collecting trend information difficult.
- Focus on using existing data – for practical purposes, the monitoring had to focus on information already available, or suggest relatively simple new ways of collecting information.
- Data frequency – different data is collected to different reporting periods.
- Data ownership – we are reliant on a range of partners' data as well as our own.



After extensive review and piloting we have identified a list of indicators that we plan to take forward using data collated by SNH and other key partners. The list of these indicators is presented in Table 1, split into “first phase” indicators which are available to launch the programme, and “second” phase indicators which will be developed over the next two years.

What methods are being used?

The landscape indicators use different methods and bring together both quantitative and qualitative data which will collectively monitor landscape change at the national level. The first phase indicators are the more straightforward examples e.g. existing mapped datasets being collated or currently reported opinion survey results. Meanwhile, we are working with others on piloting other methods, for example fixed point photography, to provide a more rounded picture of landscape change.

There is also scope for many of these indicators to be developed further and applied locally throughout Scotland. In working on these methods, we will use the landscape character assessment dataset, currently being revised and due to be published in 2017. We see this as helping to develop the focus of some indicators and aid their interpretation.

How are we publishing the findings?

As the first stage, we have identified and [published seven indicators on the SNH website](#). This will contribute to the production of a comprehensive baseline. Subsequent stages will see the publication of further indicators to complete the baseline.

When datasets are re-run, we will be able to analyse the information to identify trends (this happens already for some established indicators e.g. LLP1 Public Perception of Scotland’s Landscape and LBD1 Extent of Built Development). Updates will be phased, in order to accommodate the different rate of data updates, as well as the variable rate of landscape change. We envisage that each indicator will be updated at least every ten years. Through time this will give a picture of landscape change in Scotland.

Scottish Natural Heritage

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Table 1 - List of indicators

Landscape Theme	Phase 1 – to 2016	Phase 2 – 2017 to 2018
Landscape Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLQ1 Area of National Landscape Designations • LLQ2 Perceived naturalness of land cover in the CSGN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Local Landscape Designations • Fixed point photography in NSAs – special qualities. • Fixed point photography of Landscape features from selected view points
Public Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLP1 Public Perception of Scotland's Landscape • LPP2 Public Perception of Local Landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in landscape change
Land cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLC1 Land Cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of accessible green space within 5 minutes of where people live • Area of Vacant and Derelict Land • NSA land cover • Approved forest design plans in designated landscapes
Built Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LBD1 Extent of Built Development • LBD2 Visual Influence of Built Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Quality (local/regional studies) • Key Development Types (local/regional studies)

