



Action on Climate Change

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Forestry Commission Scotland and Historic Scotland are all government funded organisations with responsibilities for different aspects of Scotland's environment and heritage. We have come together to make a joint statement on climate change.



Our approach to climate change

Climate change is the most serious threat to Scotland's environment, now and over coming decades.

It will have far-reaching effects on Scotland's people and places, impacting on its economy, society and both natural and built environments. There are significant social, economic and environmental benefits in taking early action to lessen its effects and to prepare for likely changes.

As public organisations we have a shared responsibility to stimulate and support such action.

All four organisations have developed or are preparing a programme of action to respond to and help address climate change. While the respective action plans reflect the individual interests of each organisation, there are strong common themes. This short overview outlines our respective roles in taking forward action on climate change.

Mitigation

Action to minimise the degree of climate change which will take place

All four organisations encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions:

- SEPA regulates emissions from over 500 major industrial sites and in the construction of renewable energy developments, implements the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in Scotland and is preparing for implementation of the Carbon Reduction Commitment.
- SNH advises on how renewable energy development can occur with the least damage to the natural environment, and on the protection of peatland where a huge amount of carbon is currently stored.
- Forestry Commission Scotland promotes woodland creation for a wide variety of benefits including storing carbon in the form of trees. It also manages existing forests in a way which protects these carbon stores in the long term and minimises net greenhouse gas emissions. It encourages the use of wood for energy and as a substitute for construction materials, such as steel and concrete, that contribute to climate change in their production. The carbon in wood products can remain 'locked-in' for decades.
- Historic Scotland is committed to reducing emissions at its sites and provides advice to others on the sustainable management and energy efficiency of traditional and historic buildings. It encourages reuse of historic buildings to make full use of the embodied energy they represent.

All four organisations have environmental management systems or "greening" policies in place which aim to reduce the emissions from our own use of energy and transport.



Adaptation

Action to help prepare Scotland for a changing climate

All four organisations promote adaptation to climate change:

- SEPA helps with the development of river basin management plans, one of whose main purposes is to reduce the risks of flooding. It also runs a flood awareness and flood warning system to help minimise the risks to life and property from flood events.
- SNH encourages the development of healthy ecosystems, with more connection between habitats to allow for species to spread as the climate changes. Forestry Commission Scotland does likewise for woodland habitats and woodland habitat networks. SNH encourages the use of natural processes in reducing flood risks, by creating river wetlands or making use of natural coastal defences.
- Forestry Commission Scotland highlights the value of woodland to reduce riverbank erosion, to complement natural flood management, and to help stabilise slopes liable to landslip. It also advises on changes to forestry practices, including choice of tree species, and ways to manage forests that will increase their resilience to our changing climate.
- Historic Scotland advises on the management of historic sites and property exposed to river or coastal flooding, erosion and other impacts of climate change. Its research programme provides information on the impact of climate change on the historic environment and helps identify how to adapt to a changing climate.

All four organisations have reviewed the risks arising from climate change to our corporate operations and office property and the need for appropriate adaptation measures or contingency procedures.

Communication

All four organisations recognise the need to communicate to others the importance of action on climate change. We are working together to stimulate wide awareness about climate change issues among our staff and the people and organisations with whom we work, through training and guidance:

- SEPA provides advice and guidance to industry, and encourages consideration of climate change issues when decisions are being taken.
- SNH helps land managers to take action to make habitats more resilient to the effects of climate change, and to protect peatlands and other carbon stores.
- Forestry Commission Scotland advises the forestry sector on adaptive forest management and promotes demand for timber as a long-term construction material, and wood fuel for energy.
- Historic Scotland promotes advice to the public on energy efficiency in historic and traditional buildings.

'The time for action is now'

Climate change is an issue requiring early action on both reducing emissions and investment in adaptation measures. Historic Scotland is preparing an action plan, and SEPA, SNH and Forestry Commission Scotland have each published theirs. We hope that our action plans will help raise wide awareness of the issues and intended actions among our own staff and those who work with us.

Further information about our respective action on climate change is available at:

SEPA:

www.sepa.org.uk/climate_change.aspx

SNH:

www.snh.org.uk/strategy/sr-pco6.asp

Forestry Commission Scotland:

www.forestry.gov.uk/ccpscotland

Historic Scotland:

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/climatechange



The **Scottish Environment Protection Agency** is a non-departmental public body which acts as Scotland's environmental regulator. It protects and improves the environment by helping business and industry to understand their environmental responsibilities and comply with legislation and good practice, by regulating activities that can cause harmful pollution, and by monitoring the quality of Scotland's air, land and water. SEPA is funded by government and through regulatory fees.

Scottish Natural Heritage is a non-departmental public body, funded by government to promote the care and improvement, responsible enjoyment, greater understanding and appreciation, and sustainable use of the natural heritage, now and for future generations. Scotland's natural heritage is its wildlife, habitats, landscapes and natural beauty.

Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government, advising on and implementing forestry policy and managing the national forest estate. Its mission is to protect and expand Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. Its aims are to care for, protect and enhance the historic environment; secure greater economic benefits from the historic environment; and help people value, understand and enjoy the historic environment.

