

# Sustainable Estates Workbook Tool Review

## Public Engagement Tools

TABLES Project 2012: Mini reviews	
<b>Guidance</b>	<i>Using your experience and expertise, consider the following tasks in relation to the tool. It may not be possible to complete all tasks for each tool due to a lack of available information, the task not applying to the tool, etc. <b>Please note where this is the case by writing in the reason in the space provided.</b> Please use a maximum of 6 pages of A4 (excluding diagrams and appendices). <b>Your responses are required in the white spaces.</b></i>
<b>Task 1: Basic information</b>	
<b>Name of the tool</b>	Sustainable Estates workbook: 'Getting the Best from Scotland's rural estates – twelve actions for sustainability'
<b>Type of tool (list all that apply)</b> <i>Learning and skills (pedagogic); participatory; regulatory; collaborative; mapping; valuation; modelling; decision; futures; financial; ecosystem services</i>	Participatory Learning and skills (reflection on practice) Decision (aid for planning/change decisions)
<b>Group members</b>	1. Jayne Glass
<b>Please provide a brief synopsis of the tool</b>  <i>This may include: background context, development (and ownership if appropriate), current use and applications etc.</i>  <i>Please also note any desired outcomes of the tool so that you can make reference back to these in Task 7: SWOT analysis</i>	<p>This tool responds to the need to understand and monitor how rural estates in Scotland contribute to a range of sustainability goals (a completed copy can be found in Dropbox for reference).</p> <p>It focuses on the public goods and services that estates provide, and 'sustainability' is interpreted as the public and other benefits that estates can deliver in tandem with their own private management goals. This instils a sense of responsibility and recognition of the role of estates in implementing public sustainable development policy in Scotland. Environmental, economic and social aspects of estate management are considered, and the aim is to judge how active any estate is in delivering the twelve actions included in the workbook.</p> <p>Although detailed definitions are given for each of the sustainability actions, there is a degree of flexibility in how an estate delivers each one. This allows the tool to be applied within a range of management contexts. When completing the workbook, users are asked to explain their decisions clearly and make reference to relevant supporting evidence.</p> <p>The workbook was jointly developed by a representative and experienced panel of estate professionals (owners and managers), sustainability specialists, members of representative bodies, researchers, consultants and policy makers. The aim was to join up thinking on estate management and wider environmental, economic and social sustainability debates to develop a user-friendly learning and monitoring tool. The first edition evolved over a series of four reflective stages, allowing thorough exploration of areas of consensus and debate. See Glass et al (2013) for more detail.</p> <p>The workbook can be used by anyone interested in promoting best practice and disseminating ideas, enabling estates to develop a long-term approach to their</p>

activities and measure how well they are integrating sustainability goals with estate management. Specialist skills are not required: it can be used by an external auditor or as a self-assessment tool.

The workbook was piloted in 2010 on two estates owned by conservation charities. In 2011, the workbook was used on four community-owned estates in Scotland. There has been wide interest in using the workbook on a range of estates and ownership models (including privately-owned estates) but this has not happened yet.

### Task 2: Use of the tool

Position / Use	Stage	Currently used	Could be used
<i>If you can, please indicate which stage(s) of the decision / policy making process your tool is / could be used in (these stages were identified in the specification document)</i>	Ideas		Yes
	Survey		Yes
	Assess		Yes
	Policy / decision		Yes
	Implement		Yes
	Evaluate		Yes
	<p><b>Please add any further comments here:</b></p> <p>This is a little difficult to answer. The tool is designed mainly for land managers/owners to understand the areas in which they are doing well (or not) and how they could change practices in order to deliver the sustainability actions more effectively. This focus on 'delivering benefits' or 'demonstrating responsibility' mean that it is not explicitly a policy making tool (although the results may affect future policies/decisions).</p>		

### Task 3: Existing literature about the tool

Are you aware of any KEY policy and / or academic literature evaluating your	Author & Date	Title etc.	Web link (if available)
	Glass, J.H., Scott, A.J. and	The power of the process: co-	<a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264837712000580">http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264837712000580</a>

<b>tool?</b> <i>(e.g. reports, journal articles, books)</i>	Price, M.F. (2013)	producing a sustainability assessment toolkit for upland estate management in Scotland. Land Use Policy, 30(1), 254-265.	
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**Task 4: Your experience of working on the tool**

<b>Have you done any research/consultancy work on this tool in terms of its development, testing and/or evaluation?</b> <i>If so, please provide an outline.</i>	<p>I facilitated the development of this tool as the main part of my PhD research. I brought together 19 stakeholders from a range of backgrounds to develop the tool over four stages, using the Delphi method.</p> <p>I piloted the first version of the tool in 2010 (as stated above) and made some improvements to its application in light of operational challenges. I then used the tool to assess the management of four estates owned by communities (North Harris Trust, Knoydart Foundation, Storas Uibhist, Assynt Foundation). This work was funded by the Scottish Funding Council, in collaboration with the four community organisations.</p> <p>The tool would benefit from wider testing and appraisal. To date, it has been used as a means for external assessment (by a researcher) but there is scope to use it as a self-assessment/learning tool.</p>
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<b>Guidance</b>	For Tasks 5-7, please also try to consider the <b>future</b> development and application of this tool in the TABLES project in your answers.
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**Task 5: Incorporating the ecosystem approach (EA) and ecosystem services (ES)**  
*\*\*Please refer to the summary text about ES for concept clarification at the end of this template (appendix)\*\**

<b>Using examples (from practice, research or consultancy), explain how EA and/or ES are currently incorporated in/by the tool</b>  <i>If neither approach is currently incorporated, please move to the next question</i>	<p>‘Ecosystem thinking’ forms one of the five ‘Sustainable Estate Principles’ that is central to the tool (see Figure 1 below). This principle echoes a need for a joined-up, holistic approach to management, which allows a balance of management objectives in order to deliver public and private goals. Individual ‘sustainability actions’ that require assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining, enhancing and expanding natural and semi-natural habitats and species;</li> <li>• Maximising carbon storage potential;</li> <li>• Maintaining and improving catchments;</li> <li>• Maintaining and conserving the estate’s cultural heritage.</li> </ul> <p>Figure 1: Overview of the tool</p>
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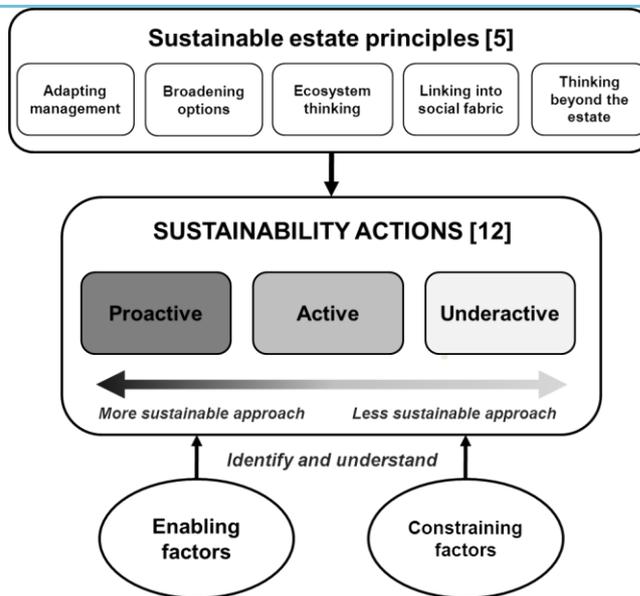


Figure 2: Synergies between the tool and the ecosystem services framework (MEA 2005)

**How could the ecosystem approach and/or ecosystem services be (further) incorporated within the existing tool?**

The 12 actions incorporated within the tool could be more explicitly linked to elements of the EA/ES framework and gaps could be identified to ascertain whether the tool gives full coverage, for example.

**Task 6: Situating the tool within priority questions/criteria arising from the scoping interviews**

Explain how the tool can be situated within the priority questions/criteria that arose in the scoping interviews	Priority question/criteria	Does your tool address/implement this question/criteria? <i>If yes, please explain how.</i>
<i>Complete as many boxes as required</i>	<b>Language and communication</b>	
	1. Contribution to aiding the development of shared vocabulary within which principles of EA and ES can be shared with multiple stakeholders across built and/or natural environment	Yes. This tool enables stakeholders to implement and assess delivery of agreed actions at the landscape scale. This requires a shared vocabulary and common goal to deliver the 12 'sustainability actions'.
	2. Capacity of the tool to develop shared understandings of the many identities and values of places from the perspectives of multiple visitors, residents and businesses	To a certain extent. The tool requires input from a range of people (e.g. estate staff, local community representatives, partner organisations etc.). This allows a variety of users to give their perspectives on how the estate delivers each of the actions.
3. Capacity of the tool to improve or enable engagement across different publics so avoiding	Yes. This tool could be used to construct wider	

	the usual suspect problem	user/policy discussions about sustainable land use. Although the tool was developed for the Scottish uplands, its content is applicable to other land use scenarios.	
	<b>Learning from experience/pedagogy</b>		
	4. Capacity of the tool to help reveal and value 'hidden' assets that are not recognised by communities or publics that use them	Yes. The tool encourages the land manager to think about the wide variety of assets that are impacted upon by management decisions and actions. For example, questions about the estate's cultural heritage force the land manager to think about what can be done in that respect.	
	5. Extent to which tool is building on other tools or EA/ES progress	Not explicitly, although there is scope for this as suggested above.	
	6. Extent to which tool is locally derived or grounded or can be adjusted to closely reflect 'local' context. Is the tool suitable for an open source approach?	Absolutely. The content of the tool was developed by a range of stakeholders. They felt that a tool of this nature should be flexible and malleable to suit a local context. It is suitable for an open source approach.	
	7. Extent to which the tool is open to interpretation and application in a variety of forms (that reflect 'cultural' differences)	Yes. Each of the actions could be interpreted/viewed slightly differently by each user. This could be seen as an advantage or perhaps a disadvantage as it may have limitations for replicability and comparison between sites?	
	<b>Developing and selecting tools</b>		
	8. Is the tool dependent on a specific funding source? How onerous is the application procedure? What are the chances of success?	No. This tool is not dependent on a particular funding source – it could be used by an individual land unit (in this case an estate) or at a catchment level.	
	9. Does skills development (essential or optional?) and support exist for the tool or is there a body to ensure the optimal and correct use of it?	No explicitly, although it has been designed to be relatively 'user-friendly'. Access to secondary data is required (e.g. natural heritage monitoring data) but no primary scientific data collection is mandatory. Primary data needs to be collected through interviews.	
	10. Extent to which current statutory hooks can be exploited by the tool or will benefit the quality or application of the tool (e.g. NNPF's duty to cooperate, SUDS, ecol. networks)	Unsure about this.	

<b>Informing resultant policies effectively</b>		
11. Extent to which the tool informs or improves policies/decisions. What does the tool cover? (full range of positive and negative economic, social and environment impacts / tradeoffs?)	The tool should help land managers to identify the extent to which they are delivering a range of sustainability actions. Therefore, it identifies areas of strength of weakness and suggests ways forwards.	
12. How does the tool link into the planning system (applications and processes). At what cost / extra burden?	It does not explicitly at this stage.	
<b>Delivering management objectives</b>		
13. Suitability or capacity of the tool to assist with managing visitor needs and pressures within protected areas / the considered area? How?	This is not considered explicitly.	
<b>Local ownership/new governance</b>		
14. To what extent can the tool assist in developing statutory plans (local and management plans) and improve ownership and use by publics?	The tool could be used to help more engagement by local people and other stakeholders in estate management decision-making and policy development. It provides a framework for structuring discussion and consultation.	
15. To what extent does/could the tool contribute to a new form of community governance in management of the environment?	It does not do this explicitly, although it advocates more community involvement in the management of the environment.	
<b>Improved tools: understanding flows, interconnections and spatial issues</b>		
16. Capacity to improve spatial understandings of the flows and interactions of various ecosystem services between sectors and at different scales	Not sure about this one.	
17. Capacity of the tool to reconcile assessments of options and benefits across different scales (and sectors)	Again, not sure how the tool would do this.	
18. Extent to which the tools is capable or can be manipulated to work across sectoral and administrative boundaries	It is flexible and could be used by a group of estates to assess their collaborative achievements.	
19. Extent to which the tool can handle data shortages and gaps (or is effectiveness considerably compromised?)	It can handle data gaps as there are not rigid prescriptions about which data should be used to assess each action.	
20. To what extent has/could the tool put landscape/nature conservation and designated	The tool requires awareness and evaluation of the state of designated sites/species.	

species/sites on the radar (positively or resulting in resentment?)

Please add any further comments here:

### Task 7: A SWOT analysis of the tool

**Referring back to the relevant policy and academic literature (listed in Task 3), plus your own expertise (listed in Task 4) and the way in which the tool is situated within the priority questions/criteria (listed in Task 6), please complete a summary SWOT analysis ensuring that each point is well justified**

*Where possible, this analysis should reflect the tool's past and current application, as well as its effectiveness in policy and decision making processes*

#### **Strengths** *(of the tool in delivering intended outcomes)*

- The tool demonstrates how land owners/managers can integrate sustainability thinking (and therefore ecosystem services/ecosystem approach thinking) into practical management and decision-making, within a bounded framework.
- It promotes learning as the process of completing the workbook raises awareness of each part of the sustainability framework and challenges land managers to consider how they address each one.
- Landowners and land management staff can be seen as 'unusual suspects' as (particularly in Scotland) they may not be very visible and/or active on the policy circuit. The tool enables this user group to become more involved in strategic discussion about sustainability.
- The tool is flexible and can therefore be applied to any local context/management situation.
- It encourages the management of land for multiple benefits (public and private).

#### **Weaknesses** *(factors that detract from the tool's ability to deliver intended outcomes)*

- The tool is quite qualitative in nature and this could be interpreted as a weakness in terms of robustness and comparability of results across land units. However, this could also be perceived as a strength as the tool requires land managers to think reflectively on their management practices.
- No clear 'what's in it for me' benefit for land managers that go through the process – could benefit from linking in with land use policy and/or planning.
- Use of the tool requires on financial input from the estate or an external funder. Uptake is currently low, although attempts to encourage uptake have not been widespread yet.
- The tool would benefit from wider use to iron out any other operational challenges that have not yet been identified.

#### **Opportunities** *(consider opportunities for application of the ecosystem approach and services)*

- The tool could be linked to rural development/agricultural funding grants so that applicants demonstrate that they achieving 'minimum standards'.
- Could be used as a self-assessment tool for payments for ecosystem services (or for external assessment).
- Could be used beyond the 'estate'/'land' scale as a more generic framework for businesses, communities and organisations seeking to implement an ecosystem approach to sustainable management/decision-making.

#### **Threats** *(factors which negatively affect the tool and its outcomes)*

*Classify these by their "seriousness" and "probability of occurrence" in the table below,*

and pay particular attention to the threats associated with potential use of ecosystem approach/ecosystem services.

Threat	Seriousness (high, medium, low)	Probability of occurrence (high, medium, low)
The tool is not well known, and therefore not used	High	High
The process is currently quite time-consuming (requires analysis of primary and secondary data)	Medium	Medium
Negative perceptions of the qualitative character of the tool (people like hard figures)	Medium	Medium

Please add further comments here:

**Guidance**

*Please now use the remainder of the document (box below) to make any general comments, observations or analyses of the tool*

**Further comments**

I have pasted a summary table of all of the ‘sustainability actions’ overleaf below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Table of Contents of the tool

Introduction

Structure of the workbook

Sustainable estate principles

Sustainability actions

The activity performance spectrum

Using the workbook

External audit

Self-assessment

Basic estate data

Principle: Adapting management

ACTION 1: Long-term, integrated management planning

ACTION 2: Integrating monitoring into estate planning and management

Principle: Broadening options

ACTION 3: Adding value to estate business(es), services and experiences

Principle: Ecosystem thinking

ACTION 4: Maintaining, enhancing and expanding natural and semi-natural habitats and species

ACTION 5: Maximising carbon storage potential

ACTION 6: Maintaining and improving catchments

ACTION 7: Maintaining and conserving the estate’s cultural heritage

Principle: Linking into social fabric

ACTION 8: Engaging communities in estate decision-making and management

ACTION 9: Playing a role in delivering community needs and projects

ACTION 10: Facilitating employment and people development opportunities

Principle: Thinking beyond the estate

ACTION 11: Reducing carbon-focussed impacts of estate business(es) and other activities

ACTION 12: Engaging in planning and delivery beyond the estate scale

Summary of results

Reflecting on the results

Action planning for the future