

The Environment Strategy for Scotland:

Second Progress Report to the Parliament



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Ministerial foreword

The Environment Strategy is the overarching framework for Scotland's environment and climate policies. It brings together, in one place, our plans and actions designed to tackle the twin crises in nature and climate. The strategy aims to strengthen the connections between environmental policy and policies across government.

As a country, we need to think more systematically about the challenges we face, and how to promote the wellbeing of current and future generations. The strategy will help to identify the transformative changes needed to meet our targets to restore nature and tackle climate change, while harnessing the opportunities this creates for our economy and wellbeing.

In 2020, we published the Vision and Outcomes¹ for the strategy, setting out the scale of our ambition for Scotland's environment, and for a healthier and sustainably prosperous society that thrives within the limits of our single, shared planet.

This report provides an update for the Parliament on our progress in developing the strategy.



Màiri McAllan MSP
Minister for Environment
and Land Reform

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Màiri McAllan'.

1 [The Environment Strategy for Scotland: vision and outcomes](#)

1. Introduction

The UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021 ('the Continuity Act')² provides a statutory framework for the Environment Strategy. Section 47 of that Act requires the Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish an environmental policy strategy. The section places requirements on the process and content of this strategy, including that a report containing an explanation of progress towards preparation of the strategy should be submitted to the Parliament annually until it is completed.

The Scottish Government intends to meet the requirements of Section 47 of the Continuity Act through the continued development of the Environment Strategy.

In 2021, the Scottish Government published an **initial monitoring framework** for the Environment Strategy.³ This set out the initial selection of indicators that will be used to track progress towards the strategy outcomes and plans for reporting progress. It also identified areas where further work will be undertaken to explore indicators as the monitoring framework is further developed. We have developed a website to show progress towards the strategy outcomes.

In 2022, we published the **first update report to Parliament**,⁴ as required by the Act. In that report, we set out some of the key policy areas that intersect with the strategy, and some of the main areas of progress.

There continues to be considerable progress across government in building policies that address the nature and climate crises. **Our new Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency**⁵ was published in 2022. This sets out our clear ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.

Our **Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan**⁶ published in January 2023 sets out our policies in this key area for our wellbeing, our prosperity and our impact on the planet. The draft energy strategy sets out policies to meet objectives for communities, for the economy, and for climate and nature.

2 [UK Withdrawal from the European Union \(Continuity\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021 \('the Continuity Act'\)](#)

3 [The Environment Strategy for Scotland: initial monitoring framework](#)

4 [The Environment Strategy for Scotland: progress report to the parliament](#)

5 [Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency](#)

6 [Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#)

The fourth **National Planning Framework**⁷ was completed and published in February 2023, incorporating a new national policy that when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.

This report presents an update on the progress with the development of pathways setting out changes to policy design and delivery to achieve the Environment Strategy's outcomes. We are developing a solid evidence base and working with partners to develop new and effective policy ideas to help Scotland to achieve our ambitious targets for nature and climate. This report also outlines the steps that will follow to consult on and adopt the strategy.

7 [National Planning Framework 4](#)

2. Environment Strategy Vision and Outcomes

The Environment Strategy **vision and outcomes**⁸ were published by the Scottish Government in February 2020. This followed lengthy consultation with stakeholders, through an online discussion and consultative groups. A series of knowledge accounts were published at the same time, summarising the key evidence that supported the development of the strategy.

One Earth. One home. One shared future.

By 2045: by restoring nature and ending Scotland's contribution to climate change, our country is transformed for the better – helping to secure the wellbeing of our people and planet for generations to come.

Alongside the vision, we presented six outcomes that provide focus for the efforts of the Scottish Government and partners to achieve the vision.

Three of the outcomes describe our ambitions for the environment, focusing on nature, climate change and sustainable resource-use:

- Scotland's **nature** is protected and restored with flourishing biodiversity and clean and healthy air, water, seas and soils.
- we play our full role in tackling the global **climate** emergency and limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C.

- we use and re-use **resources** wisely and have ended the throw-away culture.

There are established policies and strategies in these areas, which are reflected in the Environment Strategy. The Environment Strategy sets an overall framework for these policies and explores synergies between them.

The remaining three outcomes describe wider ambitions for Scotland's economy, society and global citizenship – drawing out connections with wider government policies:

- our thriving, sustainable **economy** conserves and grows our natural assets.
- our healthy environment supports a fairer, healthier, more inclusive **society**.
- we are responsible global citizens with a sustainable **international footprint**.

It is important that all areas of policy contribute towards the vision of the strategy, driving the transformative changes needed to tackle the twin crises, through a just transition. It is also vital to recognise the role nature can play in achieving wider goals for the health and wellbeing of Scotland's people and the resilience of our economy.

Figure 1 shows how our actions to deliver the strategy outcomes will help to achieve the Scottish Government's national outcomes and contribute to the UN sustainable development goals.

8 [The Environment Strategy for Scotland: vision and outcomes](#)

Figure 1: Contribution of the Environment Strategy vision and outcomes to National Outcomes and UN Sustainable Development Goals



Centre:
 Environment Strategy vision












Inner ring:
 Environment Strategy outcomes

Middle ring:
 National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework

Outer ring:
 UN Sustainable Development Goals

Key

National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework

- 
Children and young people: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
- 
Communities: We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- 
Culture: We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
- 
Economy: We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
- 
Education: We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- 
Environment: We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
- 
Fair work and business: We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
- 
Health: We are healthy and active
- 
Human rights: We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
- 
International: We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally
- 
Poverty: We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

UN Sustainable Development Goals



3. Development of the Outcome Pathways

The **outcome pathways** will be the heart of the fully developed Environment Strategy, setting out the policies and priorities that will lead us towards the outcomes, and therefore realise our vision.

The Environment Strategy will not be a separate programme of action – instead it will promote a whole-of-government approach to achieving our vision. Progress with delivery does not have to wait until the strategy is fully developed. As shown by the examples outlined in the first progress report, and the further examples set out in the Introduction to this report, delivery is already happening across many areas of policy. The Scottish Government is developing pathways to support further delivery of the strategy outcomes through a wide range of policies and programmes.

For the outcomes on **nature, climate change** and **resource-use**, outcome pathways will signpost to Scotland's established strategies and plans in these areas. As work develops across the full Environment Strategy, we will promote new opportunities for breaking down barriers between environmental policy and a whole-government approach to delivery. This means both finding new opportunities across government to promote environmental sustainability and nature recovery, and boosting ways in which the natural environment can support delivery of other policy goals.

For the outcomes on Scotland's **economy, society** and **global footprint**, pathways will explore where there is potential for further action to help drive transformative change, building on existing policies. As a core part of this process, we will seek opportunities to build actions into strategies and programmes across government to help achieve the Environment Strategy's outcomes, supporting a whole-of-government approach.

The development of the pathways will be based on firm evidence to identify opportunities to help deliver the transformative economic and societal changes needed to drive Scotland forward in tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

We are taking a two-phase approach to developing these new outcome pathways on Scotland's economy, society and global footprint.

- In the first phase, we will work with research partners, subject experts and stakeholders to understand in greater detail the nature of the transformations needed to achieve the outcome, and the types of policy levers that can be used to drive change.
- In the second phase, we will work to identify how these policy levers can be used in practice, by influencing the design and delivery of policies and programmes across government.

We will support the first phase of the pathway development through research focusing on the economy, society and global footprint outcomes. The work will address two broad research questions:

1. What does evidence tell us about current progress towards the outcome?
2. How can the Scottish Government use the available policy levers most effectively to drive progress?

This research will be supported by advisory groups with representatives from the Scottish Government, public bodies, stakeholders and academia to allow us to draw on additional expertise when overseeing the research. We will test the results of the research with wider groups of stakeholders through workshops.

The results of this research will feed into the second phase of outcome pathway development, where we will work across government to implement recommendations through changes to policy design and delivery. Our aim is to find new ideas to improve policy design to promote the outcomes of the strategy while supporting the other goals of government, including sustainable jobs, health and wellbeing. Some of these ideas will start to be built into policies as the strategy is developed.

A range of impact assessments will also be undertaken during the second phase of pathway development. These impact assessments will ensure that the proposals in the Environment Strategy are effective and protect important rights and communities. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be carried out to evaluate the impact of the proposed strategy on the environment, and to inform the development of the outcome pathways by robustly considering whether we have identified policies that best promote delivery of our goals for nature and environmental sustainability. The SEA process will be open and consultative and will be an important element in the development of the strategy. As a part of the SEA development, we shall give full consideration to the guiding principles on the environment, in line with the duty included in the Continuity Act.

4. Next Steps in the development of the Strategy

We have followed an open and participative approach throughout the development of the Environment Strategy.

We have ensured that the Environment Strategy informs policy development across government as it is further developed. We shall continue to do this as we develop the pathways.

Our aim is to launch a public consultation in the spring of 2024. We will conduct a public consultation on the full Environment Strategy (vision, outcomes, monitoring framework and outcome pathways) and the SEA Environmental Report. We will develop plans to hear views from as wide a range of interests as possible during the consultation, and seek to include economic sectors and social groups that do not usually respond to consultations on environmental policy.

After taking account of consultation feedback, the full strategy will be laid before the Parliament and designated as the 'environmental policy strategy' required under the Continuity Act.

Once the policy is adopted, the statutory duty on Ministers to have due regard to the strategy when developing all policies will take effect. This will help to ensure that the strategy has an impact across government. We will consider the need for guidance, training support for officials and record keeping to support the implementation of this duty.

Monitoring Framework

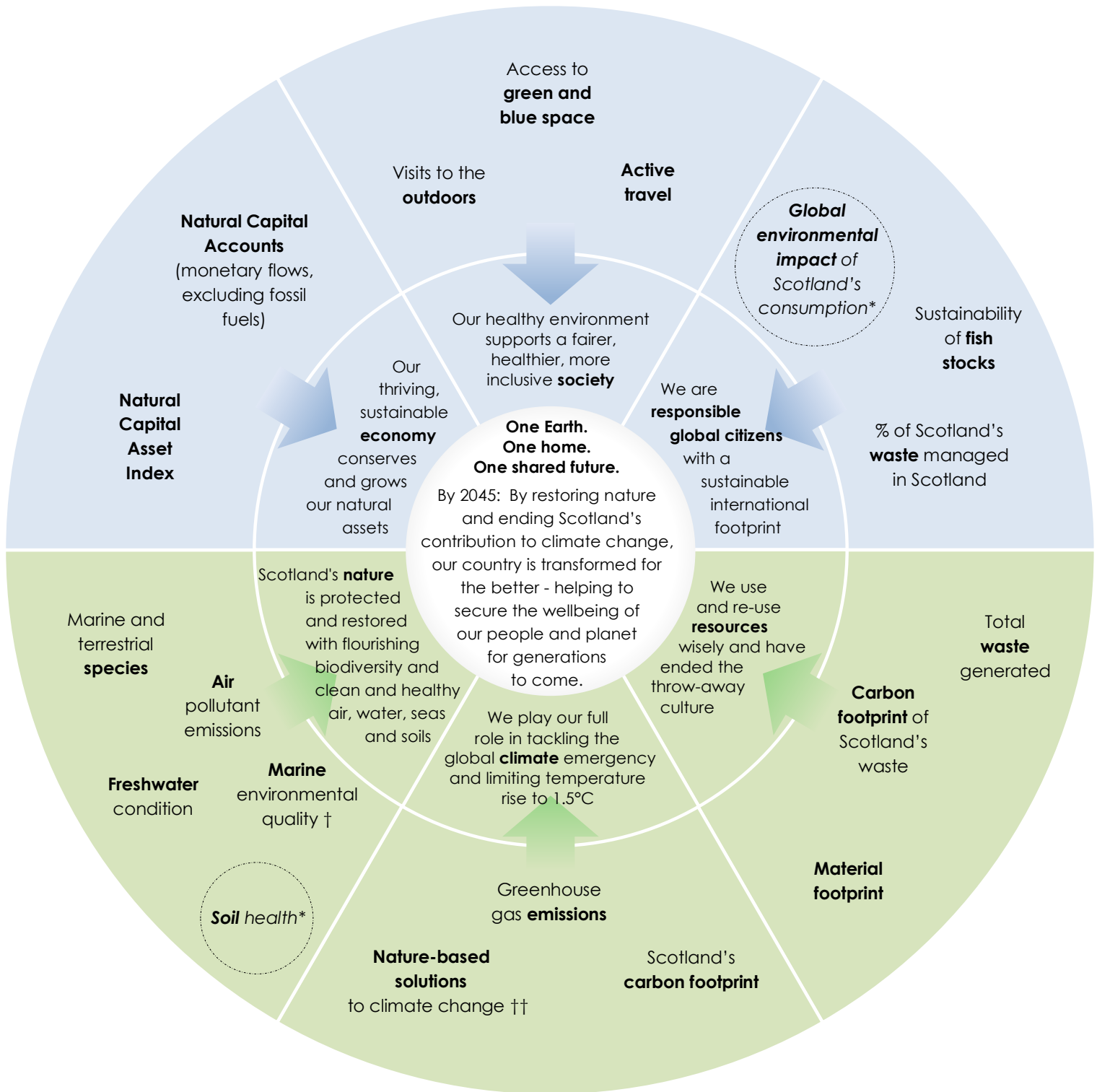
The initial monitoring framework, published in 2021, identified some areas where further work is needed to identify robust indicators of progress towards outcomes. Work to identify additional indicators will be undertaken following the development of draft outcome pathways. This will allow us to consider indicators to measure progress in the key areas for change identified in the pathways. The consultation on the pathways will also seek views on indicators to consider during this review. During the review process, we will engage with stakeholders to invite their views and expertise. Once finalised, new indicators will be incorporated in the monitoring framework website.

The monitoring framework will provide a strategic and accessible overview of progress towards the strategy's outcomes, helping to guide improvements in our approach as we strive to deliver our 2045 vision.

A website⁹ for reporting on the monitoring framework was launched in November 2021. The website presents information on the status of indicators and summarises what this tells us about progress towards the strategy's outcomes. It also signposts to where more detailed monitoring information can be found for the strategies and plans that sit within the Environment Strategy framework. The website is updated as new data becomes available.

⁹ [Environment Strategy for Scotland: monitoring framework website](#)

Figure 2: Environment Strategy: Initial Monitoring Framework



Key:

Centre: Environment Strategy vision

Inner ring: Environment Strategy outcomes

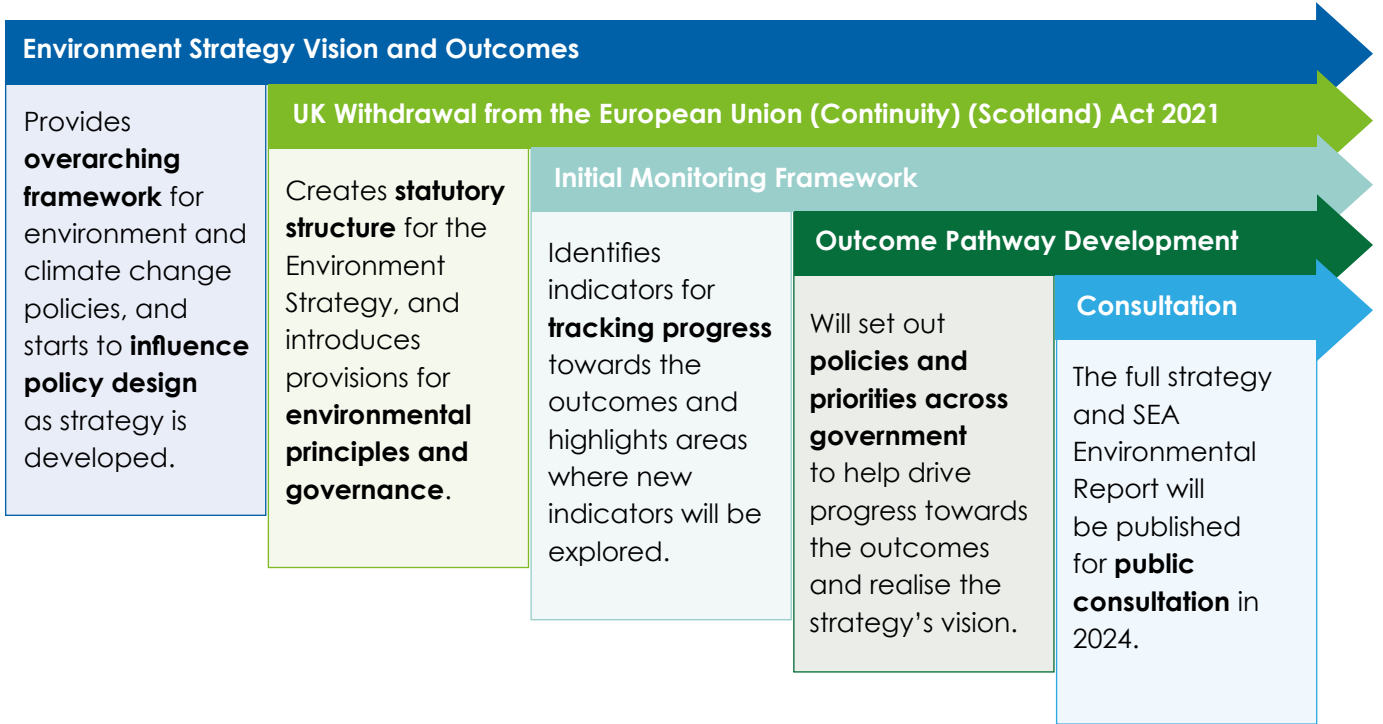
Outer ring: Indicators in initial monitoring framework

* Indicators to be confirmed

† A suite of indicators reflecting chemical contamination, marine litter and seafloor integrity

†† A suite of indicators relating to woodland expansion and peatland restoration

Figure 3: Summary of progress with development of the Environment Strategy





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