

SHIFTING NORMAL

How to design projects that **change things for the better**

Summary Guide



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The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



This guide is designed to help community groups tackling climate change maximise their success by taking account of how change happens when planning, carrying out and reviewing their activities. The Four Questions and Four Zones framework is based on the Individual Social and Material (ISM) Tool developed for the Scottish Government, and draws on the experience of community groups to help you understand better how change happens, and how you can use this knowledge as you work towards your aims. Part One of the guide illustrates how what people do is influenced by different aspects of the world around them, while Part Two shows how the Four Questions and Four Zones framework can be applied to design and deliver successful projects.

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The Four Questions – To do or not to do?

These are the Four Questions people ask themselves – nearly always unconsciously – as they make choices and decisions. For something to be easy to do, the answer to every question must be “yes”.

Does it feel right?

The way we feel is often an immediate, instinctive reaction and that initial impression can be hard to overcome later. However strong other more logical reasons might be, if something feels wrong or makes us uncomfortable, we will resist doing it.



Does it make sense?

We like to think we are rational beings, but we often use rules of thumb and over, or under, estimate costs and benefits – financial and otherwise. We also ‘rationalise’ decisions we’ve actually made for other reasons.



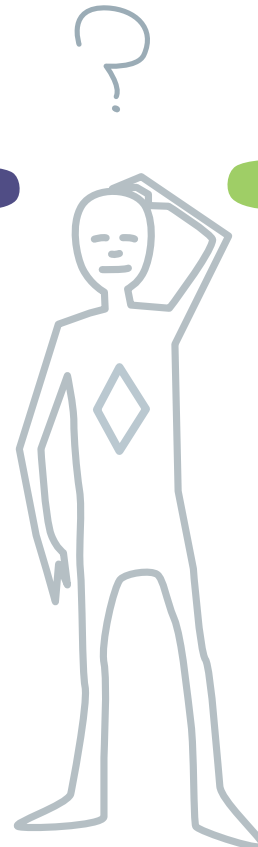
Does it fit into my day?

Most of the things we do, we do from habit, often prompted by our household and workplace routines. Changes are easier if they fit into our existing habits and routines. External schedules for transport, work and school can also influence our choices.



Can I do it?

We may want to do it but may be prevented from doing so by our lack of skills and confidence. We may also need particular tools, equipment and infrastructure to do things.



The Four Zones that influence our decisions: I, We, They & It

As we ask ourselves these four questions we are influenced by a wide range of different factors; some are personal to each of us, others are to do with the people around us. We are also influenced by what's happening in wider society and by physical equipment and infrastructure. To help make sense of all these factors this framework groups them into four zones: I, We, They and It.

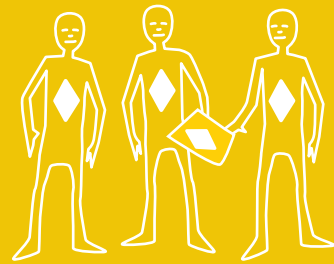
All four zones influence whether something **feels right, makes sense, is possible to do and fits into our day**. Successful projects make sure something in each of the zones is helping – or at least not hindering – people make greener, healthier choices.



The 'I' Zone

Factors that are personal and internal to each individual.

These include an individual's values, attitudes and skills, and their assessment of the costs and benefits of any decision.



The 'We' Zone

Factors related to the social groups that we are part of, such as our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours.

These include the different roles we have in particular circumstances, what's considered normal in our group, and who we know and trust.



The 'They' Zone

Factors related to wider society, beyond our immediate social group.

You might think "they should change the law about...".

These include rules, regulations, policies and procedures; and the economy.



The 'It' Zone

Physical factors that we use directly or are part of the world around us.

These include tools, equipment, technology and infrastructure.

Putting the Four Questions and the Four Zones together

Whether you are planning a major project, or a one-off event or activity, the framework helps ensure important issues aren't overlooked and that everything you are doing is moving in the same direction.

At its simplest, the framework can be used as a mental checklist: just running through the four questions might identify that something important has been overlooked. Likewise, asking yourself if all the zones have been covered can be useful.

For a more structured and powerful approach, the detailed questions opposite may stimulate new ideas and insights to help you identify what helps and hinders people in all four zones.

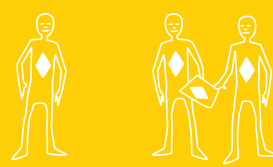
The Four Zones

Use these detailed questions to understand how the Four Questions and the Four Zones relate to your project.

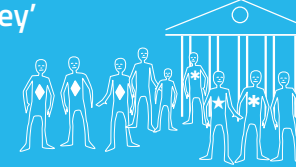
'I'



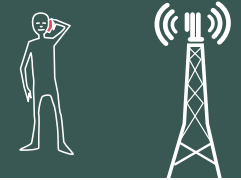
'We'



'They'



'It'



The Four Questions

Does it feel right?



EMOTION

How pleasant or unpleasant will this be?
How does this help or support people and places that are important to me?
What are my feelings about this activity?

Might this seem strange to colleagues, friends, neighbours and others in my social groups? How comfortable might I feel doing this?
Is this more or less relevant to me in my different roles, eg mother, manager, sports player?

What do people I admire in society say and do about this?
What festivals, celebrations or events may influence whether I do this?
What traditional, cultural or religious norms, expectations or rules help or hinder me to do this?

How do the equipment, infrastructure and technologies around me influence how I feel doing this?
How might using the tools and technologies I would need to do this make me feel?

Does it make sense?



RATIONAL

How do the benefits compare with the effort, costs & time involved?
How does this fit with how I think the world works (or should work)?

How much are others in my social group doing this? Does it make sense for me to do it too?
What do people I respect in my social group say and do about this?

What laws and regulations are relevant to my decision about this?
What is happening in the economy that might be relevant to my decision?
What future changes in policies and regulations might make it sensible to do this now or later?

How does the equipment I've already got, and spent money on, influence what makes sense to me?

Is it do-able?



ABILITY

What knowledge and practical skills are needed to do this? Do I have these?
Even if I have the knowledge and skills, do I have the confidence to do this?

Who do I know and trust who could help me do this?
What local groups and organisations that I trust could help me do this?

What national/regional organisations that I trust could help me do this?
What government, local authority and other schemes and initiatives could help me do this?

How accessible are tools, equipment or resources needed to do this?
How easily available or usable are the services, infrastructure and technologies needed to do this?

Does it fit into my day?



TIME & SCHEDULES

How might my existing habits make doing this difficult or easy?

How might this fit in with my routines with family, friends and colleagues?

How might the timetables for work, school, shopping, travel etc, help or hinder me doing this?

How might tools, equipment and technologies related to this influence my routines and how I spend my time?

Using the Four Questions and Four Zones framework to deliver effective projects

The Four Questions and Four Zones framework is designed to help community groups tackling climate change to maximise their success by taking account of how change happens when planning, carrying out and reviewing their activities. It can be helpful at all stages of a project, from developing initial ideas to final review and reporting. For example:

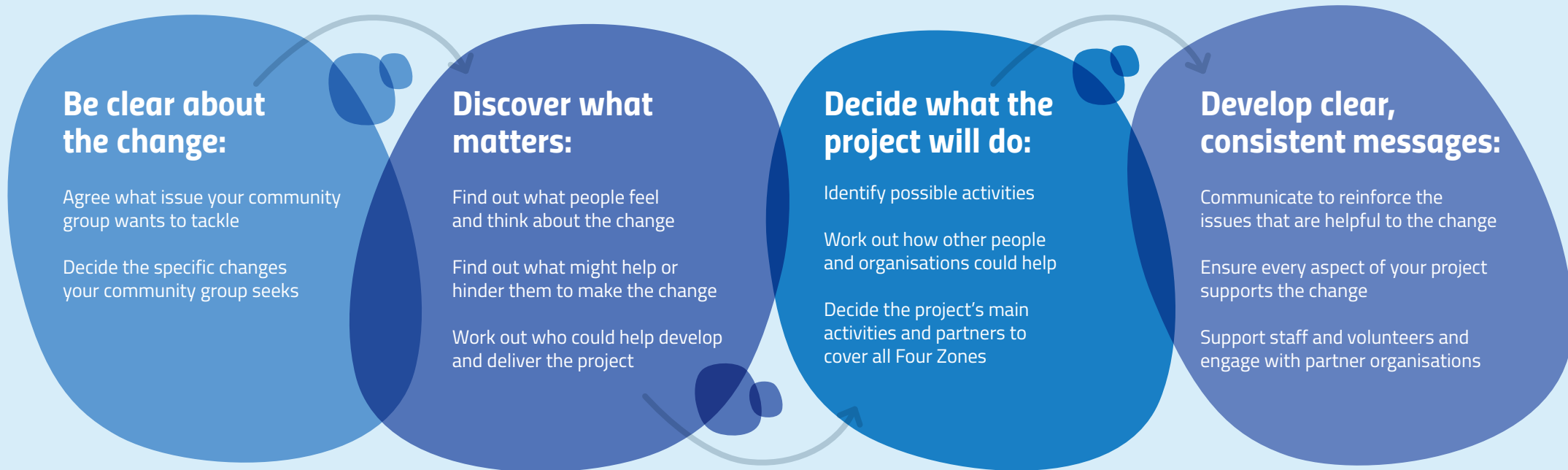
- **Initial scoping:** Once the issue you want to address has been identified, the framework can help you understand the current situation: what is holding back change and what might help move things forward. It can help to prioritise these issues and decide which the project could tackle directly and which may need the support and involvement of other community groups, the local authority, government agencies etc.
- **Funding applications:** The framework can be used to structure any funding applications, demonstrating that the community understands the issues and how the project will address them.
- **Project design:** At the start of the project use the framework to develop a project plan. The same process can be used to develop specific strands of the project, campaigns, events etc. Whatever you are asking people to do, make sure it's easy for them to answer 'yes' to all four questions and that all four zones are helping rather than hindering the activity.
- **Team briefing:** Use it in the briefing and training of the project team and any partner organisations so everyone understands what the project is trying to achieve and how it aims to do that.
- **Project reviews:** Either ongoing, or at the end of the project, you can use the framework to help understand what works and what could be done differently. How easy was it for everyone to answer 'yes' to all four questions? Were there differences between groups? Did the project activities support change across all four zones? This learning can inform the continuing project or any follow-up stages.

Designing projects with the Four Questions and Four Zones

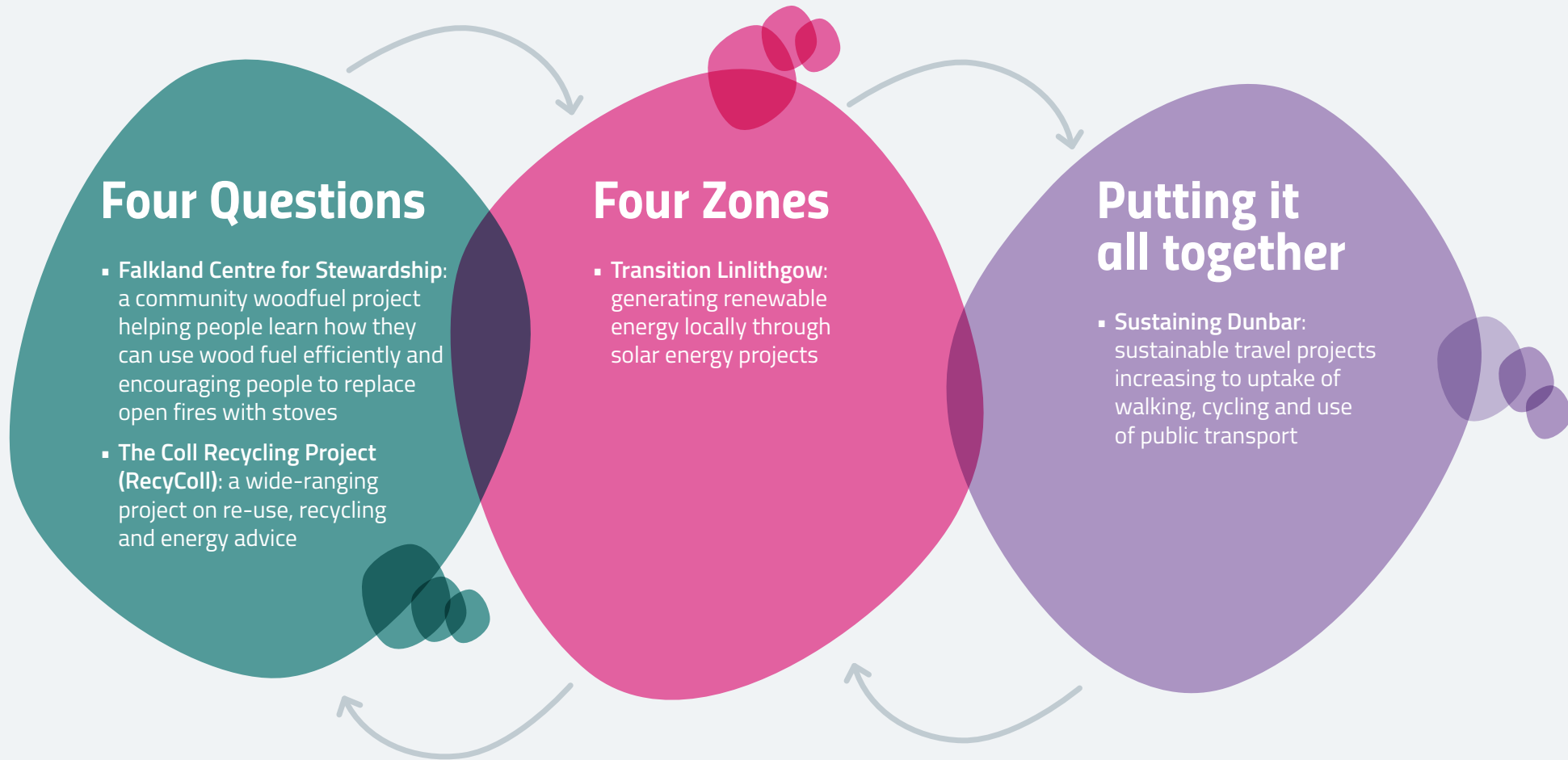


The most important thing is that your project makes it easier for more people answer 'yes' to all four questions. This is more likely if all four zones are helping rather than hindering the change your community wants to see.

Here, project design is broken down into four steps. Once you are clear about the change you want, use the Four Questions and Four Zones to discover what matters; then to help decide what the project will do, and finally use the Four Questions and Four Zones to develop clear, consistent messages.



Four Questions and Four Zones in action



To find out more about the framework, including case studies and workshop outlines, please visit:
www.gov.scot/LowCarbonBehaviours





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