ABOUT THE NETWORK

SDG NETWORK SCOTLAND

This short paper about SDG Network Scotland, known as our terms of reference, outlines why the network exists, what it aims to achieve, and the activities it undertakes. It also provides information about the structure of the network and how people can get involved

About SDG Network Scotland

Terms of reference summary

About us

SDG Network Scotland is the broad coalition of organisations and individuals in Scotland committed to engagement with, and practical implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The network came into formation in the summer of 2017. It is just one part of our current chapter in Scotland's commitment to sustainable development and was born from several other collaborative groups. Find out more about the [network](#) and our [backstory](#).

Purpose

Our vision is for Scotland to be a world leader in sustainable development. Our mission is to make Scotland a more sustainable nation by facilitating collaborative action towards the SDGs. The network's objectives range from providing space to debate and discuss the SDGs and sustainable development, to informing and influencing policy and decision making in Scotland, and to raising awareness of sustainable development.

Members

The network is open to any individual becoming a member by signing up to the online forum and [additional information](#) on joining is available. Members should support the key values outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.Members can be associated with an organisation by indicating this through their activities. Those taking part in the network's activities should be able to contribute to a culture of learning and action. We aspire to demonstrate a range of behaviours relating to members' perspectives, power, and participation within the network.

Structure

Our structure is evolving to further encourage broad participation and new energy and commitment to the SDGs in Scotland. It is experimental and is open for testing and evaluation. It consists of a [steering group](#), flexible collaboration groups, an online forum, and a secretariat role (where funding is available). Any documents, public statements or positions adopted by the network will clearly describe the basis on which they are made. Three main methods of decision making and public statement are network signatures, network consensus, and a coordinator's statement.

This summary was updated on 25th August 2020

Full terms of reference

1. Introduction

SDG Network Scotland is the broad coalition of organisations and individuals in Scotland committed to engagement with, and practical implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe in the value of a shared vision for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. This vision and the beginning of a strategy by which to achieve it are given in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At its heart are the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These terms of reference were approved on 7th September 2020 following publication on the SDG Network Scotland's online forum and a two week window for comments.

2. Background

In Scotland, many groups with an interest in sustainability and development have been engaging with national and local governments to explore ways of working and to undertake projects, programmes and initiatives.

SDG Network Scotland came into formation in the summer of 2017, but it is one part of our current chapter in Scotland's commitment to sustainable development and was born from a number of collaborations.

You can find out more about our network and its backstory on our website.

3. Purpose

To engage individuals and organisations in implementing the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland and globally.

Our **VISION** is for Scotland to be a world leader in sustainable development.

Our **MISSION** is to make Scotland a more sustainable nation by facilitating collaborative action towards the SDGs.

4. Objectives

- To provide an open and innovative collaborative platform for members to develop and exchange knowledge, skills and capacities to help implement the SDGs

- To generate debates and discussions that facilitate a practical action plan in pursuit of human and planetary wellbeing through the SDGs.

- To inform and influence policy and decision making in Scotland and beyond to help implement the SDGs

- To support communications and awareness raising of principles of sustainable development through activities on the SDGs
- To effectively contribute towards the regeneration of the interdependencies between society, economy and environment

5. Membership

The network invites any individual to join as a member, on the simple condition that they support the key values outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At present, individuals can join SDG Network Scotland by signing up to the network's online forum.

Members may choose to be associated with, and act as the representative of an organisation by indicating this on their online forum profile and in their statements in network activities. Click here for guidance on how to do so.

Membership rights include being on the network's forum, attending meetings, contributing to the network's work through online activities, and being involved in network-related planning, outreach, and communications.

6. Behaviours

In joining SDG Network Scotland, existing members invite those taking part in the activities of SDG Network Scotland to contribute to an emerging culture of learning and action - we want all members to nourish this culture.

In doing so, we hope that the following behaviours are demonstrated by the network (adapted from the Lankelly Chase model):

1. Members feel part of an interconnected network
2. Members are viewed as resourceful and bringing strengths
3. Members share the network's vision
4. Power is shared, equality of voice promoted, and diversity and inclusion actively supported
5. Decision-making is devolved
6. Accountability is mutual
7. Open and trusting relationships enable dialogue
8. Leadership is collaborative and promoted at all levels
9. Feedback and collective learning drive adaptation.

7. Structure

Our structure is evolving to further encourage broad participation and new energy and commitment to the SDGs in Scotland. It is experimental and is open for testing and evaluation, and should support strategy, tactics and operations:

- **Steering group**
- **Flexible collaboration groups**
- **Online forum**
- **Secretariat role**

Steering group (strategic direction)

- The steering group exists for those interested in overseeing and supporting the development and coordination of SDG Network Scotland to engage individuals and organisations in implementing the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland and globally. It will give strategic direction and support the delivery of network activities.
- The activity of the steering group will be shared on the Network forum, and the steering group will convene a meeting open to all members at least once every quarter.
- All steering group papers, agendas and notes will be stored for all members of the network to access.
- Members will also be able to observe meetings of the steering group. By joining a meeting you are not automatically on the steering group - elections and co-options must take place for this.
- Full terms for the steering group, including nomination and election process, can be found here.

Flexible collaboration groups (tactical direction)

- Our structure allows for flexible collaboration groups to be formed by those seeking to use their initiative and wanting to respond to a situation relevant to the network's mission and vision.
- The groups are flexible, in that they can be of any size and last for any length of time. A short-life group might be set up to respond to a consultation. A longer-life group might focus on a specific issue longitudinally, such as food security or gender equality.
- Any member can volunteer themselves to facilitate a flexible collaboration group. They should bring a proposal for establishing that group to the steering group for endorsement of being in line with the network's mission and vision. A short submission template will be available here (TBC by new steering group).
- Groups should report regularly on their topic to the steering group and wider forum to ensure transparency about their work and to engage with other working groups.
- Any external documents, public statements or positions adopted by a flexible collaboration group should be checked and approved by the steering group for relevance to the network's mission and vision before any network logo or network signature (see below) can be used.

Online forum (information sharing)

- An online forum enables members to contribute to discussions and activities.
- All members should follow our simple guidelines (TBC) for using the forum in line with network behaviours.

Secretariat (operational direction)

- A network secretariat (usually an organisation) will be appointed by the steering group to host the network.
- The secretariat, with support from the wider network and steering group, is responsible for securing the necessary funding to coordinate the network.
- Where funding is available, a coordinator will be appointed by the secretariat to support operational activities.
- The secretariat and coordinator have a responsibility to abide by and exhibit the network's behaviours.

8. Decision Making

Any documents, public statements or positions adopted by the network should clearly describe the basis on which they are made. Three main methods of decision making and public statement are:

Network signatures

- Where a text has been put forward, and network members are invited to add their signatures to that statement, either as individuals, or on behalf of their organisations. Texts of this form should be presented as coming from 'Members of SDG Network Scotland'.
- This process can be combined with network consensus, to allow for a text to be presented as 'A position of SDG Network Scotland' where no objections have been raised to the text.
- Where sub-groups are formed by facilitators, these groups should be clear that they are speaking as a working group of members of the Network, and not on behalf of the Network.

Network consensus

- Network consensus is not always necessary, but can be useful on given occasions.
- Where a text has been open for discussion by the network for at least two weeks, and the draft text itself has been posted to the network mailing list for not less than one week, with a clear statement to the effect that it is proposed as a network consensus decision.
- Consensus will be deemed to be reached in the event of (a) no objections or modifications to the text being suggested during that period; (b) all those who have raised objections or suggested modifications being satisfied that their views have been taken into account.
- We welcome objections where they can help improve a proposal. When considering whether to object, members should consider whether a proposal conflicts with the purpose of the network and whether it is good enough for now and safe enough to try.
- Network consensus should be used for any strategic decision making by the network.

Coordinator's statement

- Where they are implementing a policy or procedure / direction of travel that has already been discussed and adopted by the network the coordinator / coordinating organisation of the network may make such operational day-to-day decisions as are required for their role.
- The Coordinator should represent their actions as 'The Coordinator of SDG Network Scotland'.
- The Coordinator should provide a regular report to each steering group meeting and no less than annually, to the full Network, on their activities.

9. Amendment, Modification or Variation

These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation with members and agreement by the steering group. The steering group will review the Terms of Reference after each election of new steering group members.

Document History

Action	Contact Name + Working Group	Date
Initial draft		
Proposal circulated		
Discussion/adoption		
Review Date		