

Sustainable Development: A Review of Progress by the Scottish Government (2009)

Annexe Two: Scottish Government Indicator and Target Analysis

2 How Sustainable is Scotland?

2.1 Findings

- Overall there has been a modest improvement in many indicators since last year. The greatest negative trends are in Health indicators. Other areas of concerns relate to Economic Performance, and to some indicators of the Environment and Natural Heritage
- Greenhouse gas emissions dropped by 6.8% between 2006 and 2007. The underlying trend is for annual emissions reductions of 1.1%, well below the 3% per annum cuts that will be required to meet the aims of the Scottish Climate Change Act
- Purpose targets do in general show a positive trend – the area of most concern is the Solidarity Target where there has been no progress in narrowing the gap between poorer and more affluent areas. Other indicators only show a positive trend as a result of steeper declines in comparator states compared to Scotland and not as a result of improved performance figures here
- For a significant number of indicators in the national performance framework (NPF) baseline data has still not been made available; for others data has not been updated since last year. This makes assessment of progress difficult and lessens the usefulness of the NPF as a tool to guide Government. This issue must be addressed

2.2 Introduction

Sustainable Development requires an approach to Government that delivers positive economic, social and environmental outcomes together. Policy and strategy should be evidence-based and intended to address the core sustainable development challenges.

Indicators help show whether Scotland is moving towards or away from sustainability and should therefore underpin policy. This chapter reviews the Government's indicators and targets and identifies policy areas where action is required to reverse negative trends.

2.3 Indicators of Sustainable Development for Scotland

The core indicators in Scotland are those in the Government's **national performance framework** - both the Purpose target indicators and the 45 national indicators and targets.

Our analysis of the national performance framework in our Second Assessment showed that some important sustainable development issues are not at present covered by the framework. To provide a more balanced assessment of sustainable development trends we have therefore also drawn on other indicators that help provide a fuller picture for areas such as fuel poverty or transport.

2.4 Review of the national performance framework

The Commission's Second Assessment welcomed the development by Government of a clear framework for assessing performance.

We concluded that the Purpose Targets and National Indicators/Targets covered many, though not all, sustainable development issues. We did not feel all indicators selected were the most appropriate in illustrating the core sustainable development challenge.

In reviewing the national performance framework it is noticeable that for a significant number of indicators there is still a lack of baseline data. The Commission believes it is important that baseline data for all indicators be established as soon as is practical and that all indicators are updated regularly.

2.5 What the indicators show

Data, in the form of charts, of each of the national indicators and targets is provided in the accompanying online annexe (Annex 1). Trends in Purpose targets, national indicators and targets are summarised in Table 1 below.

Drawing on these indicators and others of relevance, the current situation for each of the sustainable development issues covered by this report is as follows.

2.5.1 A Wealthier and Fairer Scotland

Building a Sustainable Economy

Last year has seen GDP decline in Scotland as in most developed nations. In comparison to the UK as a whole and to other smaller European countries the decline in GDP has been less pronounced. Thus Scottish GDP growth, while negative, is now ahead of the mean for small nations and equivalent to the rest of the UK. The Government has therefore achieved its target although not in the way originally envisaged.

Employment rates in Scotland have declined as the recession has worsened but remain above those of other parts of the UK. Population growth has fallen back while remaining broadly in line with the EU15. Indicators of health and equality are mixed: life expectancy and healthy life expectancy have increased marginally. There has been a narrowing of the gap in employment rates between best and

worst performing local authorities (Cohesion target), albeit against a backdrop of rising unemployment overall.

However while overall income has grown, the proportion of income earned by the lowest 3 income deciles has not increased in line with overall income expansion (Solidarity Target). Latest data on greenhouse gas emissions (the Sustainability Purpose Target) shows emissions are now back on a downward trend after a rise in 2006, with a 6.8% improvement on the previous year. This is however significantly below the level required to meet the 2020 target in the Climate Change Act.

Taken together it is the Participation, Solidarity, Cohesion and Sustainability Targets that help show the sustainability of the economy in terms of outcomes. Overall these indicators show some progress being made, the exception being in terms of equality.

Other indicators within the wider set of 45 national indicators and targets also have a direct relevance to economic performance. In terms of Business Start-up Rates there has been a significant improvement between 2006 and 2007 although this partly reflects a change in tax rules. It should be noted that, with the most recent figures for 2007, the impact of the recession is not reflected in the current data. There was a real terms decline of 1.2% in the turnover of the social economy between 2007 and 2008.

Satisfaction with public services increased from 57.1% to 61.8% between 2007 and 2008. The indicator for public sector efficiency is still not available.

Ecological Footprint is a measure of the overall environmental sustainability of the economy. The Government's latest ecological footprint data shows that Scotland's ecological footprint grew by 14% and our carbon footprint by 13% between 1992 and 2006.

Transport and Travel

There are only two travel indicators in the National Performance Framework (NPF) – both show modest positive trends over the last year. The percentage of journeys affected by congestion fell from 14.2% in 2007 to 13.1% in 2008 although the trend from 2003 has been a generally upward one. The percentage of adults travelling to work by car or van decreased from 68.0% to 66.0% between 2007 and 2008 – longer term trends are generally stable. It is not clear why performance on these indicators improved in 2008 – it may be the result of higher fuel prices during that year.

While the NPF indicators are moderately positive, other transport indicators show negative trends. There is a long term trend for Scots to travel further, with an average Scot travelling 7,376 per year (excluding work mileage) in 2005/6 compared with 4,652 miles two decades before. The great majority of this travel is by car. In the last year for which data is available (2007), there was a 1% growth in car use and a 3% increase in air passenger numbers, although there was also growth in bus and rail passenger numbers. Rail and marine freight have declined (by 9% and 21% respectively) while road freight increased by 4%. The average distance walked has declined significantly (from 251 miles to 191 miles per annum) between 1985/6 and 2005/6.

Transport is the one major sector where greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise – international aviation and shipping emissions increased 1.4% and other transport emissions rose 1.3% between 2006 and 2007.

2.5.2 A Smarter Scotland

Education

There has been a continued fall in the proportion of the working age population with severe literacy and numeracy problems and the percentage of the population who fail to achieve SCQF level 4 qualifications. Since last year there has been an increase in the percentage of school leavers going to Higher and Further education but a decline in the percentage gaining employment or training. Overall there was a small fall in positive destinations for school leavers, from 87% (2007/8) to 84% (2008/9).

Other education indicators in the national performance framework - on knowledge transfer and the proportion of schools and pre-schools receiving positive inspection reports - remain under development.

The percentage of schools registered with Eco-schools continued to increase. As at September 2008, 94% of local authority schools were registered with the Eco-schools programme, with 23% of them having attained a Green Flag.

2.5.3 A Healthier Scotland

Health and well-being

Health indicators show a mixed picture overall but indicate some major areas of concern around alcohol, obesity and health inequality. The alcohol indicator continues to show a significant negative trend for both men and women with a 6.6% increase in hospital admissions for alcohol in 2006/7.

The Government's indicator on health inequality focuses on under 75 deaths from Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) in the 15% most deprived areas compared to Scotland as a whole. This indicator shows a negative trend with levels of mortality in deprived areas increasing from 110.2 per 100,000 in 2006 to 112.4 in 2007: an absolute as well as a relative decline in relation to the whole population.

Between 1998 and 2003 there was an increase in the percentage of children with unhealthy Body Mass Index (BMI) – figures for 2008 showed a further increase but the rate of increase was reduced. The indicator of healthy life expectancy in deprived areas shows a positive trend for males, though not females.

Dental health shows an improvement with 57.7% of 5 year olds showing no sign of decay in 2007/8 compared with 54.1% in 2005/6. The Government aim is that this figure should be 60% by 2010 and

this appears to be possible – it is worth noting that this will still mean that four out of every ten Scottish children suffer tooth decay at a young age.

Smoking levels in 2008 were 0.5% down on the previous year and are around 5% lower than levels in 1999. The mental health indicator shows a slight decline.

There are no indicators within the national performance framework of fuel poverty levels. Figures in the Scottish House Condition Survey for 2007 show a significant improvement in the percentage of the housing stock with a 'Good' NHER rating (from 31% in 2002 to 50% in 2007). However despite some improvement in thermal performance overall levels of fuel poverty have risen. In 2002/3 it affected 13% of Scots but by 2005/6 that figure had risen to 23.5% and by 2007 to 25.3%.ⁱ Much of this rise has been due to increases in fuel prices but demonstrates the link between inefficient energy use and vulnerability to price increases. Of most concern of all, 7% of Scotland's housing (172,000 homes) are in extreme fuel poverty where over 20% of income is used for energy.

Food

There is only one explicitly food related indicator/target in the National Performance Framework: namely to ensure 70% of key commercial fish stocks are at full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably by 2015. After several years of improvement, the indicator shows a negative trend between 2007 and 2008, declining from 75% to 70%. While the indicator is still at target level, the decline is of concern. It means that almost a third of key commercial fish stocks are not at sustainable levels.

Further food indicators are published in the Government booklet *Food and Drink in Scotland: Key Facts 2009*.ⁱⁱ These show that Scotland's food industry is growing although employment is stable and has actually declined since 2002. Consumption of fruit and vegetables in Scotland lags behind that of England and Wales and remained roughly stable between 2005/6 and 2007.

2.5.4 A Safer Scotland

The Built Environment

Progress towards the homelessness target has been made in recent years with almost 84% of homeless households assessed as a priority in 2008/9. This is welcome though the current rate of progress is not sufficient to deliver the Government's target for 2012.

The Government aim is that by the middle of next decade 35,000 units of new housing per year are provided. However house completions fell markedly in 2008/9 with only 22,600 - homes built or refurbished, the lowest figure for a decade. The fall was the result of the impact of the recession on private housebuilders; completions of new social and council housing increased modestly.

There is no data available yet on the Historic Buildings Indicator.

Sustainable Communities

The NPF indicators on communities present a mixed picture. On the plus side there has been a significant decline in the number of problem drug users. Residents perception of their area remains generally positive but has not improved since last year. Crime indicators are less encouraging – overall reconviction rates remain static while crime victimisation rates are showing a negative trend.

2.5.5 A Greener Scotland

Climate Change

After an increase in 2006 there was a decline of 6.8% in emissions between 2006 and 2007.. The total decline in emissions since 1990 (the base year for international negotiations) has been 18.7%. This represents an average annual cut of just over 1%.

This is far below the level of annual cuts that will be required to meet the 2020 target of a 42% cut; in addition many gains since 1990 have been related to structural changes in the economy that will not be easily replicated. Finally, while emissions in most sectors are falling, transport emissions continue to rise.

Natural Heritage and Resources

With regard to biodiversity one indicator used in the national performance framework, on terrestrial breeding birds, shows a modest positive trend. There is also a target to increase to 95% the proportion of protected nature sites in favourable condition. Currently 78.4% of sites are in favourable condition, a slight increase on the previous year but well short of target.

The wider set of biodiversity indicators published by the Government shows areas of concern. A review of the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) prepared for species present in Scotland shows that 22% of these species were classified as being in decline in 2008. For habitats, a third were in decline. Seabird numbers have been falling steadily since the early 1990s, with abundance 22% lower in 2008 than in 1986; wintering waterbird numbers have also fallen significantly since the mid-1990s.

Regarding bathing water quality, in 2008 91% of coastal bathing waters met the mandatory standard with just under half meeting the guideline standard. These figures are lower than those recorded a few years ago although fluctuating rainfall levels have contributed somewhat to annual variations. The most recent figures for river quality (for 2006) show a limited improvement over the preceding years.

Industrial air emissions of Sulphur Dioxide and Oxides of Nitrogen declined by 16% and 26% respectively between 2007 and 2008. Local air quality has not shown a similar improvement – in 2008, objectives for low level Ozone were not met at 8 of the ten monitoring sites; particulate levels do also not show a uniform downward trend across all monitoring sites.

Waste

Government has achieved its national target to reduce to 1.32 million tonnes the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill by 2010. Figures for 2008/9 also show that Scotland is now recycling and/or composting 34.3% of its municipal waste, an increase on the previous year and ahead of the 2008 target figure of 30%. Significant further action will however be required to meet the 40% recycling target for 2010.

2.6 Summary of Progress

Table 1 appraises the 45 National Indicators and Targets in terms of their trend over the last year.

Table 1: Summary of progress on national indicators and targets

Indicator Description	Performance against indicator
At least halve the gap in total research and development spending compared with EU average by 2011	● ● ● ● ○
Increase the business start up rate	● ● ● ● ○
Grow exports at a faster average rate than GDP	● ● ● ● ○
Improve public sector efficiency through the generation of 2% cash releasing efficiency savings per annum	No data
Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered	● ● ● ● ○
Reduce the number of Scottish public bodies by 25% by 2011	● ● ● ● ○

Reduce the proportion of driver journeys delayed due to traffic congestion	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Increase the percentage of Scottish domiciled graduates from Scottish Higher Education Institutions in positive destinations	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Improve knowledge transfer from research activity in universities	No data
Increase the proportion of school leavers (from Scottish publicly funded schools) in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, employment and training)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports	No data
Reduce number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Child protection inspection findings: increase the overall proportion of local authority areas receiving positive inspection reports	No data
Decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
60% of school children in primary 1 will have no signs of dental disease by 2010	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Improve the quality of healthcare experience	No data
Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports	No data
Increase the social economy turnover	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Reduce the rate of increase in the proportion of children with their Body Mass Index (BMI) outwith a healthy range by 2018	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

Increase the average score of adults on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental wellbeing Scale by 2011	● ● ○ ○ ○
Increase healthy life expectancy at birth in the most deprived areas	● ● ○ ○ ○
Reduce the percentage of the adult population who smoke to 22% by 2010	● ● ● ○ ○
Reduce hospital related alcohol admissions by 2011	● ○ ○ ○ ○
Achieve annual milestones for reducing inpatient or day case waiting times culminating in the delivery of an 18 week referral to treatment time from December 2011	● ● ● ● ○
Reduce proportion of people aged 65 and over admitted as emergency inpatients 2 or more times in a single year	● ● ○ ○ ○
Reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among the under 75s in deprived areas	● ● ○ ○ ○
Increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home	● ● ● ● ○
All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012	● ● ● ● ○
Reduce overall re-conviction rates by two percent by 2011	● ● ● ○ ○
Reduce overall crime victimisation rates by two percent by 2011	● ● ○ ○ ○
Increase the percentage of criminal cases dealt with within 26 weeks by three percentage points by 2011	● ● ● ● ○
Increase the rate of new house building	● ○ ○ ○ ○
Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live	

	● ● ● ○ ○
Decrease the estimated number of problem drug users in Scotland by 2011	● ● ● ● ○
Increase positive public perception of the general crime rate in local area	● ● ● ● ○
Reduce overall ecological footprint	● ○ ○ ○ ○
Increase to 95% the proportion of protected nature sites in favourable condition	● ● ● ● ○
Improve the state of Scotland's Historic Buildings, monuments and environment	No data
Biodiversity: increase the abundance of terrestrial breeding birds	● ● ● ● ○
Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport	● ● ● ● ○
Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week	No data
50% of electricity generated in Scotland to come from renewable sources by 2020 (interim target of 31% by 2011)	● ● ● ● ●
Reduce to 1.32 million tonnes waste sent to landfill by 2010	● ● ● ● ○
Ensure 70% of key commercial fish stocks at full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably by 2015	● ○ ○ ○ ○
Improve people's perceptions, attitudes and awareness of Scotland's reputation	No data

ⁱ Scottish Homes Condition Survey Revised Key Findings 2007 (2009)
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0079066.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/277133/0083215.pdf>