

Learning for Sustainability Scotland (LfS Scotland):

Scotland's United Nations Recognised Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Education for Sustainable Development

Strategic Plan 2013-2015

1. BACKGROUND

There is an undeniable need for a world that is sustainable: where people and communities value and are engaged with the natural environment; societies are inclusive, equitable and peaceful; and a vibrant economy contributes to flourishing ecosystems and social justice. In our interdependent world full of change and uncertainty, learning – in all its multitude of forms – has a key role in building the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence that people need to live more sustainable lives and contribute to sustainability - locally, nationally and globally.

Within UN processes, this form of learning is called Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In Scotland, the term Learning for Sustainability (LfS) has been adopted to reflect an extended concept that weaves together the three fields of Sustainable Development Education, Global Citizenship and Outdoor Learning. When LfS reaches its fullest potential, it is a transformative experience: changing our understanding of the world, our place in it and our interactions with it. LfS is a developing field and the form learning must adopt to reach its full transformative potential is not yet fully understood.

Scotland has a long-standing commitment to Learning for Sustainability involving all aspects of learning: formal (e.g. schools, colleges, universities), non-formal (e.g. youth, adult, community, business) and informal (e.g. home, leisure). The UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14) has catalysed activity in all sectors through two Action Plans¹ co-ordinated by the Scottish Government. As the Decade comes to its end, the LfS community in Scotland considered that the establishment of a Scotland-wide United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) was the most appropriate way to continue the work of promoting and supporting the concept and practice of LfS in Scotland. An RCE is a network of education organisations mobilised to deliver Education for Sustainable Development at local and regional scale; recognised through the United Nations University.

The proposal to create Scotland's United Nations University RCE, the product of the work of a broad and committed community of interest (see Appendix 1), was accepted unconditionally by the United Nations University in December 2012. Scotland's UN University RCE - Learning for Sustainability Scotland, is hosted by the University of Edinburgh and part of an extensive and growing global network of more than 125 RCEs, allowing regions to share and learn from each other, and establish or strengthen international partnerships and collaboration.

¹ Scottish Government (2006) *Learning for Our Future: Scotland's First Action Plan for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* and (2010), *Learning for Change: Scotland's Second Action Plan for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Vision

Our vision is for Learning for Sustainability to infuse the whole of Scottish society, building our capacity to contribute to sustainability – locally, nationally and globally.

2.2 Mission

Our mission is to work co-operatively to harness the transformative potential of Learning for Sustainability to support a sustainable world: where people and communities value and are engaged with the natural environment; societies are inclusive and equitable; and a vibrant economy contributes to flourishing ecosystems and social justice.

2.3 Objectives

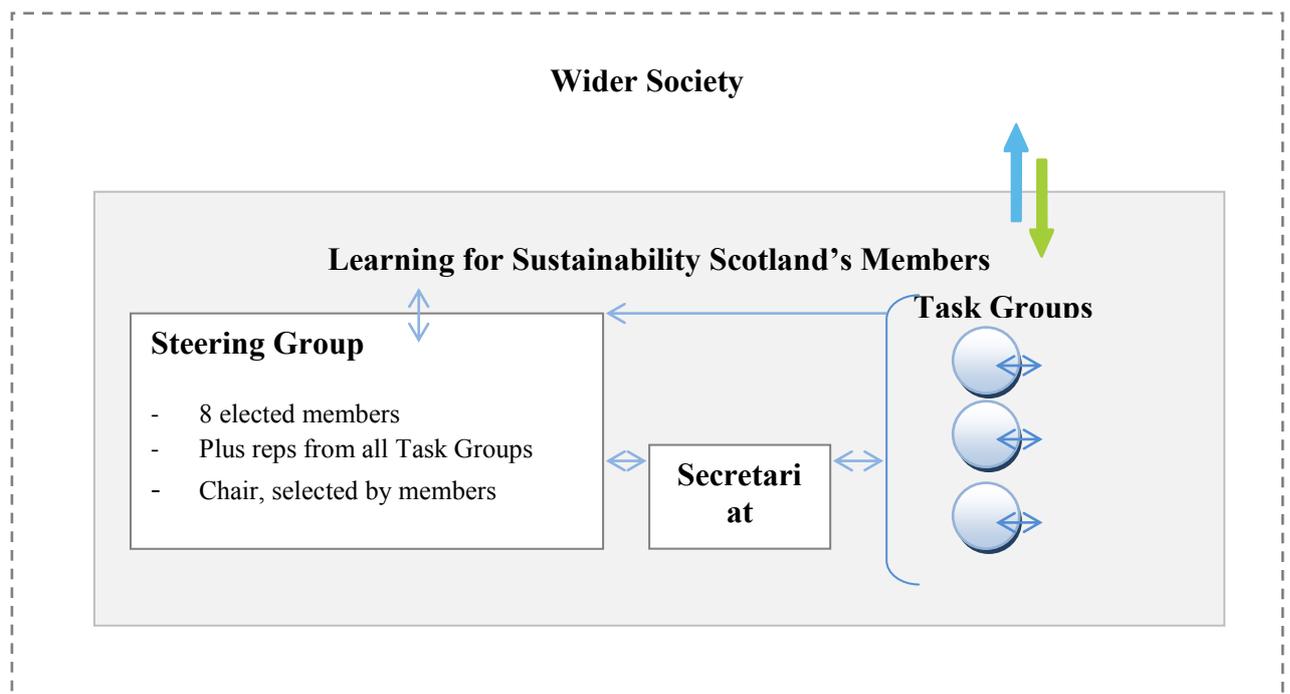
Learning for Sustainability Scotland will work actively and co-operatively across all aspects of learning: formal (e.g. schools, colleges, universities); non-formal (e.g. youth, adult, community, business) and informal (e.g. home, leisure); to advance the understanding and practice of Learning for Sustainability in Scotland so it reaches its full transformative potential for change by:

1. **Identifying and sharing existing knowledge, expertise and lessons learned** between Scotland's educators, institutions and communities
2. **Actively generating new knowledge and approaches** to Learning for Sustainability through cooperative partnerships, projects, initiatives and research
3. Undertaking **monitoring, evaluating, international comparison and gap analysis of progress** on Learning for Sustainability in Scotland
4. **Providing Learning for Sustainability advice to practitioners, policy- and decision-makers**
5. **Sharing our learning internationally** and providing a mechanism for members to learn from others around the world as part of the UNU RCE Network.
6. **Ensuring the long-term future of Learning for Sustainability Scotland**

3. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Learning for Sustainability Scotland (LfS Scotland) is shaped collectively by the Learning for Sustainability (LfS) community in Scotland. Its work is underpinned by the principles of equity, openness, co-operation and transparency.

The governance and management structure that has been established is intended to enable members, no matter what their organisational size or working sector, to come together on an equitable basis to work co-operatively to advance LfS knowledge and practice, sharing learning nationally and internationally. The structure is also intended to ensure that all viewpoints can be heard, all perspectives considered and that policy-making is based on the best available expertise. The structure will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the aspirations of LfS Scotland are being met.



Visual representation of the LfS Scotland governance structure, with interactions between elements represented in blue.

3.1 Members

Membership of LfS Scotland is open to individuals and organisations in Scotland that contribute to Learning for Sustainability in Scotland, adhering to the organisation's Vision, Mission and Objectives.

Members complete an application form and pay an annual membership subscription. The level of the membership subscription will be reviewed from time to time by LfS Scotland members. Membership subscription levels will be based on the principle that finances should never be a barrier to membership of the LfS Scotland. The purpose of subscription payment is to make it clear when membership is established and when membership lapses.

Members of the LfS Scotland are entitled to attend LfS Scotland events, participate in initiatives and vote in the decision-making processes of the LfS Scotland including the Annual Meeting of members at which the Steering Group will be elected. Members will be given at least 21 days' notice of the date of the Annual Meeting. The quorum at an Annual Meeting shall be at least 8 members. This number may be reviewed at an Annual Meeting. All questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority vote of those present. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting will have a casting vote. However, it will be a principle of all decision-making that consensus will be sought wherever possible.

3.2 Steering Group

The purpose of the LfS Scotland Steering Group is to represent members, providing strategic advice and direction to support Learning for Sustainability Scotland's Vision, Mission and Objectives by:

- Ensuring that activities undertaken by Learning for Sustainability Scotland meet with its agreed Vision, Mission and Objectives

- Providing expertise, advice and support to the Secretariat² in delivering the Vision, Mission and Objectives
- Contributing to the development of the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plans
- Signing off the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plans on behalf of members
- Encouraging and approving Task Group initiation and receiving Task Group reports
- Receiving and reviewing progress and financial reports as appropriate
- Helping to strengthen and extend the membership of LfS Scotland
- Helping to build the profile of LfS Scotland nationally and internationally
- Providing expertise, advice and support to secure the organisational and financial sustainability of LfS Scotland

3.2.1 Steering Group - Membership

The Steering Group is responsible to the members and will normally meet at least 4 times a year. The Steering Group will consist of elected members and Task Group representatives.

At the Annual Meeting members will elect a maximum of 8 representatives from the membership, for a 2 year term, to steer LfS Scotland on their behalf. Should the number of members willing to serve on the Steering Group exceed 8, selection will be by secret ballot. Members willing to serve on the Steering Group should inform the Secretariat of their intention at least 7 days before the Annual Meeting.

Each Task Group will also elect one member to represent them on the Steering Group. Steering Group members will elect one of their number as Chair and one as Vice Chair of the Group.

All questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority vote of those present. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting will have a casting vote. However it will be a principle of all decision making that consensus will be sought wherever possible.

Members of the Secretariat will participate in the Steering Group as non-voting members. Additional non-voting members will be invited to attend Steering Group meetings and may be co-opted onto the Group to provide expertise as required.

3.2.2 Steering Group Chair - Role

The role of the Steering Group Chair is to:

- Act as principal contact between the Steering Group and the Secretariat
- Create meeting agendas, in association with the Secretariat
- Chair meetings of the Steering Group, LfS Scotland Conference and other appropriate meetings
- Sign off draft minutes of Steering Group meetings before circulation
- Sign off communications, statements and decisions such as policy consultation responses, briefings and statements to the media, made by LfS Scotland on behalf of its members.
- Sign letters on behalf of LfS Scotland

² The Secretariat comprises staff and co-opted Members of LfS Scotland with specific skills. The Secretariat is managed by the Director of LfS Scotland, who will be drawn from the host organisation staff.

- Act as primary media spokesperson for LfS Scotland.

The Vice Chair will represent the Chair in this role when required.

3.3 Task Groups

The purpose of LfS Scotland's Task Groups is to enable members to work individually or together to carry out specific pieces of work or projects that relate to the Vision, Mission and Objectives of LfS Scotland.

3.3.1 Task Group Ways of Working

Task Groups will be initiated by members according to need and interest. They are likely to be short-lived and action-orientated with a well-defined purpose.

The LfS Scotland Steering Group will receive and approve applications to initiate a Task Group to ensure that the work of the Task Groups is aligned with the Vision, Mission and Objectives of LfS Scotland. Task Groups may be commissioned by the Steering Group for specific strategic purposes. Each Task Group will appoint one of its members to represent it on the Steering Group and attend LfS Scotland Steering Group meetings. This representative will report on the work of their Task Group to other Steering Group members to ensure continued alignment with the Vision, Mission and Objectives of LfS Scotland and the on-going co-ordination of work across Task Groups.

A nominated contact person from the LfS Scotland Secretariat will liaise with a nominated contact person from each Task Group assisting with the development of their Work Plans and funding proposals. This will ensure Task Group plans are presented in a consistent manner and LfS Scotland fundraising activities are coordinated.

A Communications Protocol will be agreed between each Task Group and the Secretariat setting out how general communications between group members will take place, how external communications (e.g. with government, media and funders) will take place and who will take responsibility for these. The Communications Protocol will also include an agreement on the use of logos and LfS Scotland letterhead. All Communication Protocols will be subject to the agreement and sign off of the Steering Group.

3.3.2 Task Group Responsibilities

Each Task Group will be responsible for:

- Identifying the LfS Scotland members involved in the Task Group and communicating this to the LfS Scotland Steering Group via the Secretariat
- Appointing a person to represent the Task Group on the LfS Scotland Steering Group
- Appointing a nominated contact person to take responsibility for liaising with the Secretariat
- With support from the Secretariat, developing a Work Plan for the Task Group identifying:
 - how the Group's work will contribute to LfS Scotland objectives
 - the Group's objectives, the activities that will be carried out, the intended results and timescale
 - the resources (people, funding or other) needed to carry out the work and how these will be secured
- In liaison with the Secretariat, develop funding proposals and funding applications to secure resources required

- Reporting to funders where required
- Undertaking the proposed activities to the agreed budget and timescale
- Agreeing a Communications Protocol to be approved by the Steering Group
- Providing quarterly financial and progress reports for LfS Scotland Steering Group meetings
- Contributing to the LfS Scotland Annual Work Plan

3.4 Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible to members through the Steering Group, and comprises staff and members of LfS Scotland, with specific skills, who are co-opted through the Steering Group. The Secretariat will be managed by the Director of LfS Scotland, who will be drawn from the host organisation staff. The Director of LfS Scotland will be responsible for ensuring that the running of LfS Scotland complies with the legal, financial and charitable standards of the host organisation.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Host organisation

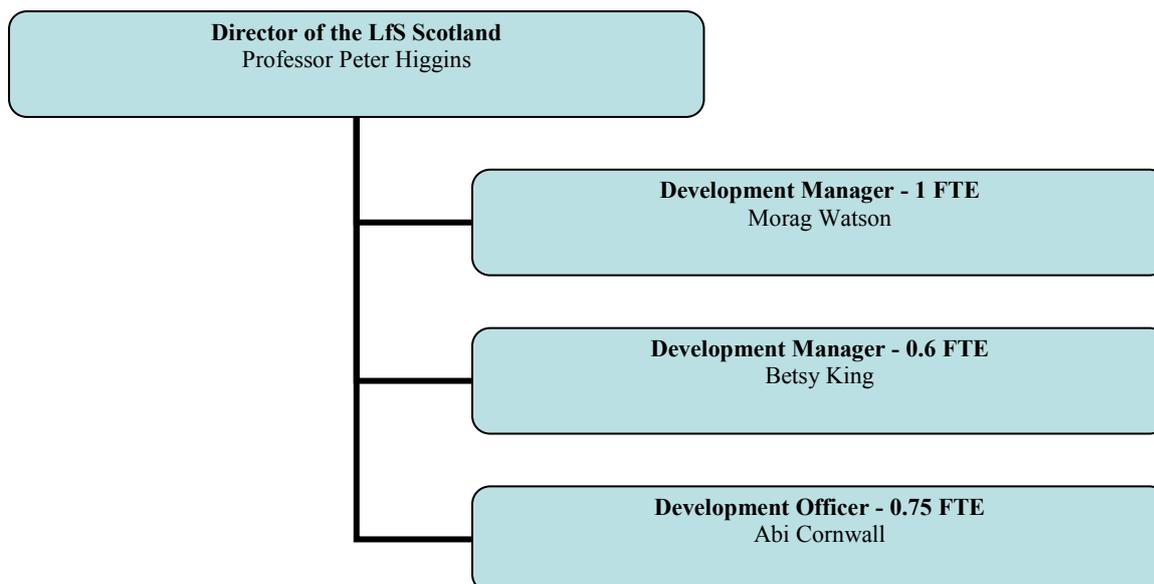
In the two years prior to the establishment of LfS Scotland, the University of Edinburgh provided financial and administrative support for the development of the LfS Scotland application. Now that LfS Scotland has been established, the University of Edinburgh has offered to host LfS Scotland and provide administrative support as an in-kind contribution.

The in-kind support from the University of Edinburgh includes the provision of office accommodation for the LfS Scotland staff within the Moray House School of Education Campus, Edinburgh and full servicing for the Centre including payroll, HR, telephone and internet, IT support and the use of University meeting spaces.

LfS Scotland will also operate under the University of Edinburgh's charitable status. This will avoid the need for LfS Scotland to audit and report its activities separately to meet the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulators (OSCR). Instead, the activities and financial transactions of LfS Scotland will be included in the University of Edinburgh OSCR return, removing a significant financial and administrative burden from LfS Scotland.

Whilst LfS Scotland will be housed within the University of Edinburgh, it will be an autonomous body, with its own Vision, Mission, Objectives and strategic decision-making power. As part of the hosting agreement with the University of Edinburgh, and as a condition of LfS Scotland operating under the University's charitable status, LfS Scotland is expected to operate in a manner compliant with the University's internal HR and accounting procedures, policies and regulations.

4.2 Staff



The current LfS Scotland Secretariat comprises:

Director of Learning for Sustainability Scotland - Professor Peter Higgins (from 1st April 2013)

The Director is appointed by the host organisation, and will be responsible for managing LfS Scotland staff and ensuring that the running of LfS Scotland complies with the legal, financial and charitable standards of the host organisation.

- The Director's post is supported by the University of Edinburgh, allowing Professor Higgins to give time to LfS Scotland.

Learning for Sustainability Scotland Development Manager - Betsy King (0.6 FTE) (from 1st Oct 2013) - Morag Watson (1 FTE) (from 1st Oct 2013)

The Development Manager posts will take the lead on working with members to develop and coordinate LfS Scotland initiatives and will support the development of core LfS Scotland business.

- The Development Manager posts are supported from 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2014 by WWF Scotland. Plans for further support beyond 30th September 2014 are in development.

Learning for Sustainability Scotland Development Officer - Abi Cornwall (0.75 FTE) (from 1st April 2013)

The Development Officer will take the lead in organising the LfS Scotland office and delivering services to members. The Development Officer will also be responsible for project management and support and implementing LfS Scotland policy.

- The Development Officer post is supported from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2015 by grants from the Scottish Government grant and SDE Network.

Appendix 1 - Learning for Sustainability Scotland Members, May 2014

Aberdeen Urban Studies Trust
Arac
Betterteam Ltd
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Centre for Human Ecology
Centre for Stewardship, Falkland
Changeworks
Christian Aid
CIFAL Scotland
City of Edinburgh Council
Community Learning and Development Standards Council for Scotland
Creative STAR Learning Company
Crichton Carbon Centre
Dalmally Community Company
DMc Environmental Solutions
Dumfries and Galloway College
Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC)
Eco Drama
Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation
Edinburgh College
Edinburgh Forest Education Initiative
Education Scotland
Eigg box
Edinburgh University Student Association
Falkirk Council
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Findhorn Foundation College
Forest Education Initiative/ Living Classrooms
Forestry Commission Scotland
Glasgow City Council
GO WILD Fieldwork
Grounds for Learning
General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
Heriot-Watt University
Highland One World
Historic Scotland
Hoda Productions/ Braidwood Bikepark Group
IAB Sustainability Consultants
Institute of Physics
John Muir Trust
Keep Scotland Beautiful
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority
Moray Primary School
Moss Webster Ltd
Mull and Iona Ranger Service
Napier University
National Union of Students
Natural Change Ltd
Nourish Scotland
Dundee One World Centre
Open Ground
The Open University in Scotland
Our Dynamic Earth

Outdoor Woodland Learning Project
Papa Westray School
Permaculture Scotland and Transition Scotland
Perth & Kinross Council
Planning Aid Scotland
Primary Science on Toast
Queen Margaret University
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
REAP Scotland
RSPB Scotland
Scottish Environmental and Outdoor Education Centres Association
Scottish Government
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Seabird Centre
Soil Association Scotland
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
St Andrews Primary School
SUSTRANS Scotland
Talamh Housing Co-op
The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
The CADISPA Trust
The Melting Pot
The National Trust for Scotland
The Outward Bound Trust
The Surefoot Effect
Tighnabruaich Primary School
Transition Black Isle
Uncommon Sense (Scotland) Ltd
University of Aberdeen
University of Dundee
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of St Andrews
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde
University of the Highlands and Islands
Urban Roots
Vento Ludens
Woodcraft Folk
Young Scot
Youth Scotland
Zero Waste Scotland