

# *Responding to Scotland's Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill*



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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# Introductions and housekeeping...



- *Please introduce yourself by adding your name and organization in the chat*
- *Please mute yourself unless speaking*
- *Add questions and comments in the chat*
- *We are recording!*



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# Introduction

Rehema White,  
University of St Andrews  
Learning for Sustainability Scotland  
and SDG Network Scotland



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# Agenda



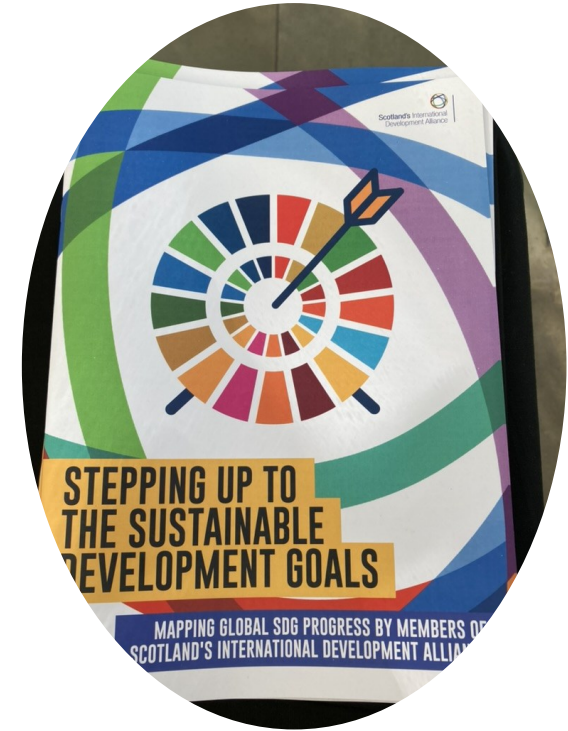
Time	Activity	Speaker
12:30	Welcome and <b><i>Introductions</i></b> <b><i>Comments in chat</i></b> About Learning for Sustainability Scotland	Rehema White, University of St Andrews, Learning for Sustainability Scotland and SDG Network Scotland
12:35	Setting the scene	Frances Guy, Scotland's International Development Alliance and SDG Network Scotland
12:45	Explaining the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill	Sarah Boyack, MSP
13:05	<b><i>Questions and answers</i></b>	
13:20	Next steps, summary, and conclusions	Rehema White
13:30	End	



# Aims of this webinar



- to raise awareness about the SDGs and the proposed Bill
- to generate discussion on policy coherence and preferences
- to collate input from participants to generate consultation for the proposed Bill
- to encourage others to submit informed, independent contributions to the consultation



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# Learning for Sustainability Scotland

Rehema White,  
University of St Andrews  
Learning for Sustainability Scotland  
and SDG Network Scotland



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# Who are we?

**Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Scotland is a UN University- recognised Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Education for Sustainable Development**

We are an open network in which members and partners come together to undertake collaborative projects, research and advocacy that advance and embed Learning for Sustainability practice and policy in Scotland.





# What we do

1. We **weave connections across sectors** within Scotland and with our international partners
2. We **co-produce, pioneer and practise new knowledge** and approaches and **curate materials and resources** with and for educators, organisations and communities
3. We **advocate and provide strategic advice** for effective learning for sustainability policy
4. We **lead, monitor and evaluate projects** and programmes locally and internationally, often in partnership





# SDG Network Scotland



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- **SDG Network Scotland is an open and independent coalition** for anyone committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland. Scotland was one of the first nations to sign up to the SDGs. We are a volunteer-led coalition that is built on an active membership of over 200 people and organisations including charities, universities, schools, public sector bodies, and businesses.
- **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.
- **Our membership** is completely open. All you need to do is share our vision and mission!

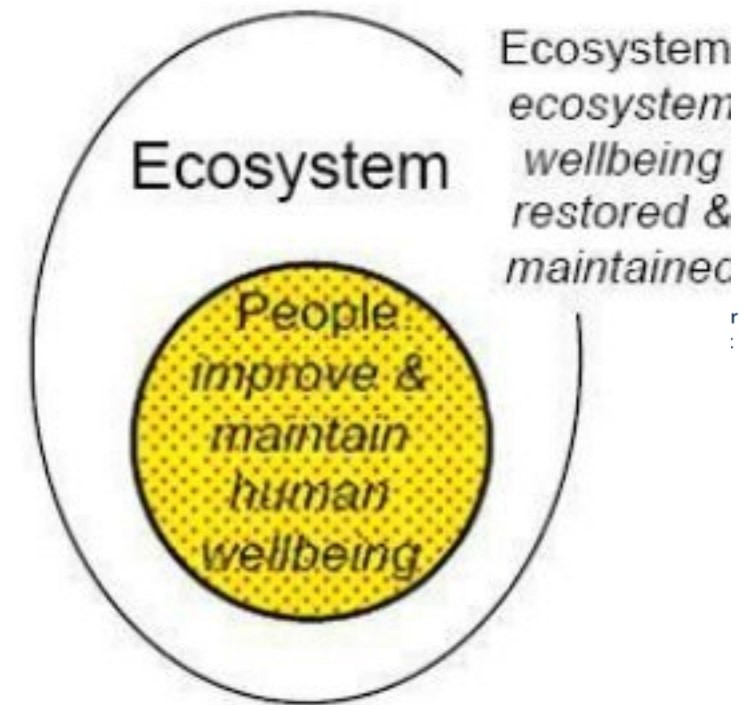




# What is wellbeing?



- Well-being is a **positive state experienced by individuals and societies** (WHO) – an experience of happiness, health and life meaning in different contexts
- Eudaimonic well-being recognises a person's need for potential and self-realization, whilst hedonic well-being focuses more on the pursuit of pleasure and avoiding pain.
- Planetary wellbeing – environmental and human wellbeing



# What is sustainable development?

“Sustainable development is an aspiration and an organising principle for local and global development that supports the wellbeing of both people and the planet, and is a journey rather than a destination”

(UN 2015; UNESCO 2016).

Price and White (2025)





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



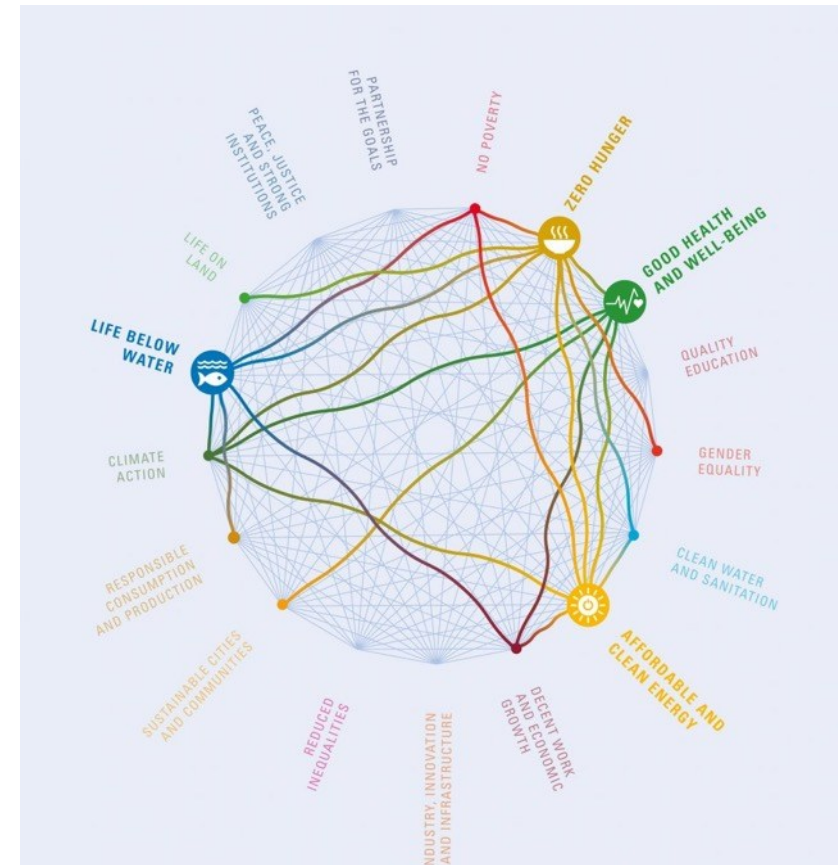
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# Policy coherence

Policy coherence for sustainable development seeks to maximise synergies across different goals whilst minimising negative trade-offs.

Sachs et al 2019; Koff 2021; Ross 2021

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/80/SUIIProgrammes/Falkland%20Estate/Folk%20Place%20Work%20-%20Interactivity%20of%20SDGs%20Brief.pdf>



<https://council.science/publications/a-guide-to-sdg-interactions-from-science-to-implementation/>



# National Performance Framework



*Currently in review*



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# Examples elsewhere



- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill 2014
- Gross National Happiness Index Bhutan
- *Buen vivir* Ecuador (Indigenous voice, environmental justice and rights of nature)
- *Ubuntu* South Africa



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# Setting the scene

Frances Guy,  
Scotland's International Development Alliance  
SDG Network Scotland



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## Context

- SDGs
- a framework for sustainable development
  - a route to policy coherence

in Scotland:

- National performance framework
  - Outcomes not a duty
- indicators insufficient – spillovers





# The path to legislation



- **May 2021:** SIDA and other organisations succeed in securing a commitment to legislation in most party manifestos and from the new SNP government.
- **September 2021:** Programme for Government states: “We will bring forward a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill, putting duties on public bodies and local government to take account of the impact of their decisions on sustainable development, in Scotland and internationally”.
- **June 2022:** Scotland’s International Development Alliance publish a [report](#) making recommendations for inclusion in the new legislation.
- **December 2022:** Sarah Boyack MSP opens [consultation](#) on a members bill for a Wellbeing & Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill.
- **June 2023:** Scottish Government consult on National Outcomes review.
- **September 2023:** Programme for Government states: “We will continue to explore the development of legislative proposals on a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill, to support greater implementation of the NPF, and to ensure the interests of future generations are taken into account in decisions made today”. (but not included in legislative programme)
- **December 2023:** Sarah Boyack MSP proposes members bill to Parliament. The right to introduce a members bill is secured.
- **December 2023:** Scottish Government open consultation on a potential Bill: [Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill: consultation – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- **September 2024:** No mention of a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill in the Programme for Government.



## The path to legislation

- Private members bill lodged March 25
- Consultation opened by social security and social justice committee – open for comments by 24 August.





## Why a bill is important

- Statutory public duties can only be amended/created by legislation.
- Legislation is an important tool for societal change. It can require and encourage compliance but also shift societal norms in a much wider range of ways.
- it can clarify the meanings of important terms, and so move public debate on



# Current context

- NPF review
- Commissioners.
- Duties
- timescales



# Introducing the Bill

Sarah Boyack, MSP



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# WELLBEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL

SARAH BOYACK MSP



13 August 2025



# THE BILL

WELLBEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SCOTLAND)



## 3 Main Aims

1. Develop a clear and **legal definition** of Wellbeing and Sustainable Development and embed these into **decision-making**
2. Establish a **Future Generations Commissioner**
3. Strengthen Accountability for **National Outcomes**



# WHY WE NEED THIS BILL

SARAH BOYACK MSP

For too long, we have seen successive governments prioritise short term gain over the long-term impact.

This bill seeks to rectify this. We need a clear definition of sustainability so that future legislation has clear goals to meet and ideals to strive towards.

There is a need for a more joined-up approach across our public sector, to ensure it is delivering for all of Scotland.



# WHAT THIS BILL WILL ACHIEVE



This bill represents a major leap in generational wellbeing and sustainability. It will ensure that governments can no longer just pursue short term interests without any consideration for long term consequences.

By establishing a Future Generations Commissioner, we will have someone who will ensure these principles are embedded and respected across the public sector.

Create a legal definition of sustainable development & wellbeing

Establish a Future Generation Commissioner

Ensure public bodies are meeting these requirements

Embed the principles of sustainability and wellbeing into policy development



# HOW DOES THIS BILL MEET THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR SCOTLAND?



The bill supports the majority of the SDGs,  
especially:

SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing

SDG 4- Quality Education

SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities

SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 13- Climate Action

SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals

# OUR PROGRESS

»» Stage 1 Scrutiny Underway

»» Social Justice Committee to lead

»» Consultation open: Closes 24 August

»» Stakeholder Roundtable Complete



The call for views for my Bill closes on **24 August**, respond here:

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/sjssc/wellbeing-and-sustainable-development-bill/>



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT; I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BILL, OR TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION:

[HTTPS://YOURVIEWS.PARLIAMENT.SCOT/SJSSC/WELLBEING-  
AND-SUSTAINABLE-DEVELOPMENT-BILL/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/sjssc/wellbeing-and-sustainable-development-bill/)

## IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, EMAIL ME! :

[SARAH.BOYACK.MSP@PARLIAMENT.SCOT](mailto:SARAH.BOYACK.MSP@PARLIAMENT.SCOT)



# *Questions and answers*



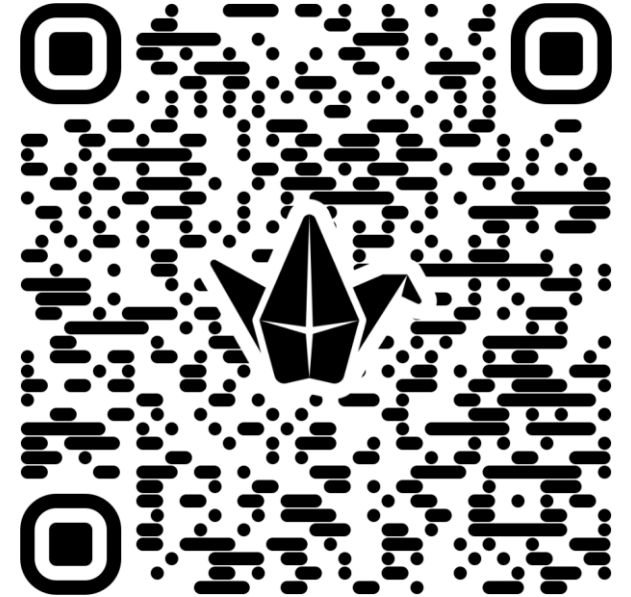
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# Discussion



- Comments or questions in chat
- Raise hand
- Contribute to the padlet
- Share ideas
- Submit your own consultation!

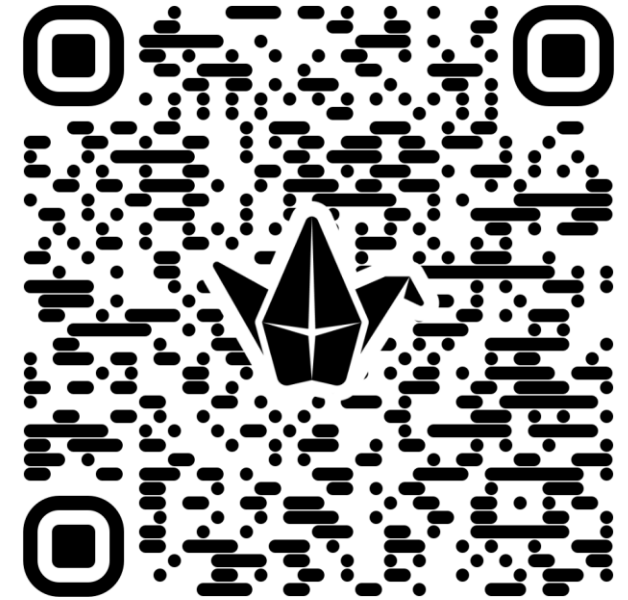


<https://padlet.com/LfSScotland/exploring-the-wellbeing-and-sustainable-development-bill-13--kww14ej5qdp5v9jr>

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# Discussion

1. How do you feel about a Bill of this kind?
2. Do you think legislation is required? In what other ways could the aims of a Bill of this kind be achieved?
3. What impact would a Bill of this kind have on society, environment, and economy if it became law?
4. Do you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns about a Bill of this kind?



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# Next steps

Rehema White,  
University of St Andrews  
Learning for Sustainability Scotland  
and SDG Network Scotland



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# Next steps for Learning for Sustainability Scotland and for SDG Network Scotland

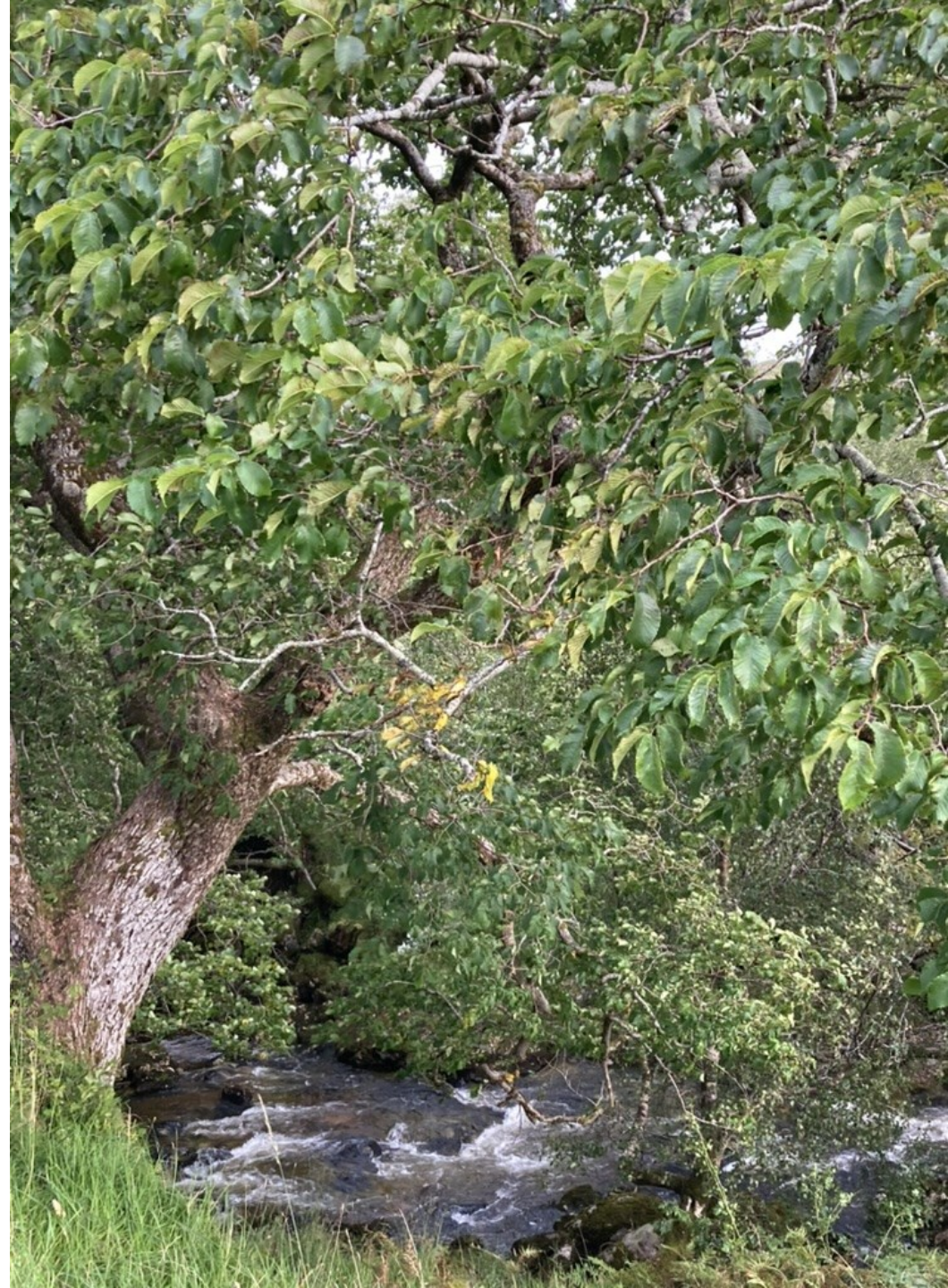
- Share and submit consultation notes and consultation text with participants and others
- Continue to advocate for sustainable development and for wellbeing
- Continue to work with Scottish Government on SDGs and other relevant areas





# What can we do individually?

- Share the consultation link
- Continue to debate these issues
- Submit an independent consultation on the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill
- Join SDG Network and join Learning for Sustainability Scotland – LinkedIn and membership on websites
- Take an active role! Action groups and steering groups





# Summary and conclusions

**Rehema White,  
University of St Andrews  
Learning for Sustainability Scotland  
and SDG Network Scotland**

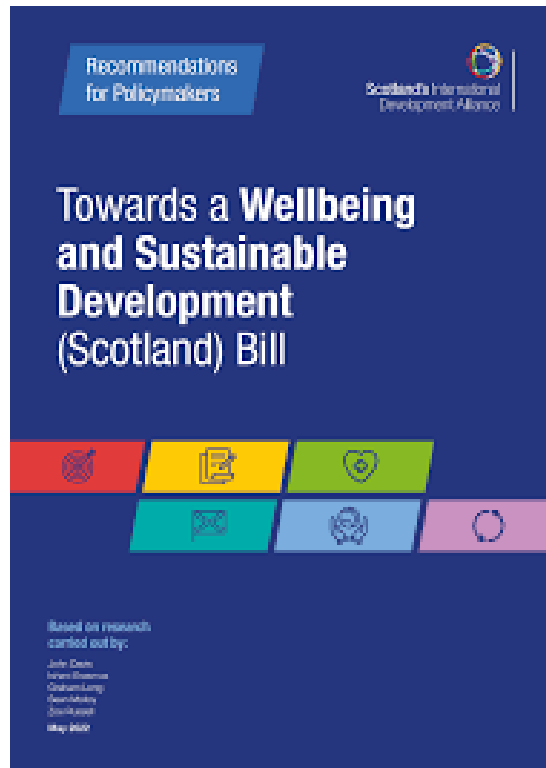


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# Advocacy, action and academia for sustainable development



# Watch out for next Learning for Sustainability Scotland Critical Sustainability Conversations (CSC) webinars



## **CSC #1: Scotland's SDG Network: mapping the terrain**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

In partnership with SDG Network Scotland

## **CSC #2: Education, sustainability, and decolonialism: moving beyond the 'greenwash'**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

In partnership with Queen Margaret University



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## **CSC #3: Peace education: fighting for the future**

**10<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

In partnership with University of West of Scotland





# Additional information and guidance



- [250812-WSDJointResponseGuidance-WithLogos-ForPDF.pdf](#)
- [Towards a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development \(Scotland\) Bill - Scotland's International Development Alliance](#) – 2022 report
- [Briefing on Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill](#) (2024)
- [Accountability-Mechanisms-Options-Paper-Final-v2.pdf](#) (2025)
- [Measuring Scotland's Global Impact in the National Performance Framework - Scotland's International Development Alliance](#) (spillover research)
- [SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review](#)

# Thank you!

Sign up to **SDG Network Scotland**

Sign up to **Learning for Sustainability Scotland**



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