Ipsos MORI

Conducting public discussions about the environment - a toolkit

Prepared for the Scotland's Environment Web Project, supported by the European LIFE+ programme, by Ipsos MORI Scotland

Internal Use Only

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

One of the key objectives of the SEWeb LIFE+ project is to engage Scotland's people to help and support them to enjoy, understand, protect and improve Scotland's environment. There are a number of actions in the SEWeb LIFE+ project that are designed to deliver this public engagement objective. These include identifying public interest; public monitoring or 'citizen science'; and public discussion on the key issues for Scotland's environment.

In spring 2013, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), on behalf of The SEWeb LIFE+ Partnership, commissioned Ipsos MORI Scotland to deliver the public discussion element of the public engagement objective.

The project comprised two main phases (hereafter 'Phase 1' and 'Phase 2'), each of which had distinct objectives. The Phase 1 objectives were to explore public views, in both a deliberative and an online setting, on the key issues for Scotland's environment; and to evaluate the methodologies and resources used[1]. The Phase 2 objective was to draw on the Phase 1 analysis and evaluation to design a methodology for continued public discussion, which could be rolled out by SEWeb partners. This toolkit represents the output of the Phase 2 work. The reports from Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be used in conjunction to provide further insight into the methodologies employed, their respective strengths and weaknesses, and the resulting outputs.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the toolkit

The toolkit sets out recommended steps for replicating the two methodologies that were used for the 2013 public discussion of the key issues for Scotland's environment; namely, **deliberative events** and an **online forum**. It provides an introduction to the methodologies and describes in detail how to approach each for optimum results.

Specifically, the toolkit is structured around the following headings:

- Deliberative events
    - Timescales
    - Logistical planning

[1] *Public Priorities for Scotland's Environment* Final Report submitted to SEWeb on 17th January 2014

    - Participant recruitment
    - Developing the scope and structure of an event
    - Running an event
- Online forum
    - Timescales
    - Logistical planning
    - Designing the forum
    - Recruitment
    - Conducting the online discussion

Queries about the toolkit should be addressed, in the first instance, to Paul Griffiths, SEWeb Public Engagement, SEPA on 01349 860 313 or by email at paul.griffiths@sepa.org.uk

2 Before you begin

Before embarking on a public discussion, it is important to think carefully about the aims and objectives of the work. The UK Government's Central Office of Information (COI) suggest the following five questions as being helpful for establishing the aims of any public engagement exercise:

- Why are you carrying out public engagement?
- What is the role you want audiences to play in the process?
- What are you asking them to participate in?
- What will change as a result of the engagement?
- What are the benefits of participating in engagement? Why should the participant get involved?'

These questions are elaborated upon in INVOLVE's nine stages for planning public engagement activities[2], which have been helpfully summarised elsewhere[3] as:

Defining the scope: In this initial stage important questions to ask include: How much can really change? Is participation appropriate at all? What are the risks? What level of participation is being sought?

Defining the purpose: INVOLVE suggest that this is a crucial step since: 'Establishing a clear purpose and getting agreement on it within the commissioning body is the single most important stage of any engagement process […] A measure of a good purpose is its ability to create a commonly shared understanding of the potential impact of the project. […] a purpose must be easy to understand and an accurate reflection of what is going to happen'.

Deciding who to involve: Important questions to ask at this stage include: Who is directly responsible for the decisions on the issues? Who is influential in the area, community and/or organisation? Who will be affected by any decisions on the issue (individuals and organisations)? Who runs organisations with relevant interests? Who is influential on this

[2] INVOLVE (2005) People and Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making. http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk/Downloads/involve_publication.pdf
[3] Scottish Health Informatics Programme (2010), *Public Engagement: Why, What and How and Implications for SHIP*. (University of Edinburgh paper)

issue? Who can obstruct a decision if not involved? Who has been involved in this issue in the past? Who has not been involved, but should have been?

Deciding what the outputs will be: INVOLVE suggest that in the preparation stage it is important to determine what the outputs of the exercise are expected to be. ‘Outputs can be seen as the building blocks that help to create the desired outcomes’.

Deciding what the outcomes will be: In the preparation stage it is also important to decide what is expected in terms of outcomes. ‘Outcomes are the fundamental difference that a process makes. Its overall results and impacts. Outcomes are more specific than ‘purpose’ and are the clear statement of exactly what is sought from the process.

Considering the context: In the preparation stage it is important to consider the wider context in order to ensure that the exercise: ‘Links with other relevant activities going on at the same time; builds on previous experience and learns lessons from the past; and does not duplicate other activities.

Final design of the process: The last element of the preparation stage is coming up with the final design: ‘When all the key issues have been broadly considered a detailed design will be needed for the whole participatory process. It is at this stage that the decisions about timing, numbers, costs, techniques, use of results etc. will finally be made’.

Institutional response: ‘An institutional response can be the most significant change that occurs following a participation process. It might be a policy change […] or a reaction’. INVOLVE maintain that it is important to determine early on what the scope for institutional response is and how this might occur as this: ‘requires agreement to change from the institution itself and preparation within the institution. It is essential that explicit links are made between the participatory process and the location of the decision that will affect future action’.

Review: Finally, given that ‘Participation is an emerging field, evaluation and review of practice is very important’. INVOLVE suggest that the review of the public engagement process should be planned for from an early stage.

Aspects of the above process will be returned to over subsequent section of this document but, initially, the nine stage model should be viewed as a planning framework that can help you to establish: a) whether a public discussion is appropriate and feasible and, if so, what the most appropriate methodology is; and b) to make early decisions around specific aspects of the design, analysis and reporting of the discussion. In essence, it will enable you to proceed with the discussion with a clear picture in your mind of what you wish to achieve and why; how you are going to implement this; and what outputs and outcomes you envisage.

3 Deliberative events

3.1 Introduction

A deliberative event or workshop can be defined as a mechanism for involving the public in decision making. There are two key features of deliberative events that distinguish them from other qualitative research techniques (e.g. focus groups). Firstly, they tend to be used for subject areas that are relatively complex or where there are a range of concepts, options (e.g. policy responses), scenarios or trade-offs to be considered. Secondly, and related to the previous points, deliberative events involve an element of information provision in order that participants can learn more about the issue/themes being discussed, consider any relevant evidence and discuss this with others. Following information provision, they may be asked for their views on what they have heard or to arrive at some form of conclusion. This might involve identifying preferred options, ranking options, and so on.

A standard deliberative event might involve around 20-30 participants but this can be increased to up to 100 provided the ratio of facilitators to participants remains at approximately 1 for every 8. Each of the three deliberative events conducted during phase 1 of this project in 2013 involved around 25 participants.

Deliberative events are usually run over the course of a day (10am-5pm would be typical) or, as was the case in the 2013 project, half a day (for example, 10am-2pm). **It is strongly recommended that events are held on a weekend to minimise the likelihood of people being unable to attend because they are working.**

The number of events you conduct will largely depend on the budget you have available for the work, the nature of the issues you wish to explore and the range of people you wish to invite to take part – for example, if your aim is to compare the views of people who live in urban and rural settings, you would need to conduct a minimum of two events – one in an urban and one in a rural setting. If, as in the 2013 project, your aim is to obtain a snapshot of the views of the Scottish public as a whole, 3-4 events in a mixture of areas would be appropriate.

The planning, design and execution of deliberative events is time consuming and resource intensive. This, together with the need to ensure objectivity in research, leads many organisations to appoint independent contractors to organise and run events (or elements thereof) on their behalf. This toolkit is written primarily to assist those who choose to organise and run deliberative events themselves but it also provides some guidance on contracting out such work (see sections 3.4 and 6.4).

3.2 Timescales

A deliberative research project can be seen as having six sequential stages involving: logistical planning; participant recruitment; developing the structure and scope of the events; fieldwork (conducting the events); analysis; and reporting. The table below provides an indication of the minimum timescales required for each of these stages.

Table 1: Stages of a deliberative research project

Stage	Timescales
1. Logistical planning	1-2 weeks
2. Participant recruitment	2-3 weeks
3. Developing the scope & structure of the events	2 weeks
4. Conducting the events	Depends on the number of events, the days of the week on which these are being run and whether they are being run concurrently or one after the other. Allow 1 day per event.
5. Analysis	Depends on the number of events. As a rough guide, allow 1 week per event for transcription, 1 week to create a code frame and 1 week to read and code transcripts
6. Reporting	Depends on the number of events. As a rough guide, allow 2 weeks for 1-2 events and 3 for 3-4 events

The remainder of this chapter describes stages 1-4 in greater detail. Stage 5 and 6 are covered in chapter 5.

3.3 Logistical planning

Choosing locations

As noted above, the locations you choose for events will depend on the type of people you wish to involve and the nature of the questions you wish to put to them.

A degree of pragmatism is required when selecting rural locations in order to avoid asking participants to travel long distances to an event. A sensible strategy is to select a semi-rural centre (for example, Oban or Peebles) and recruit participants from both that centre and from more rural locations within a 10 mile radius.

Choosing venues

It is important to begin looking for venues at least a few weeks in advance of an event to maximise your chances of identifying somewhere suitable and available.

For an event comprising 25 participants, you will require a venue that has a room large enough to hold a group of that size, plus two, preferably adjacent, smaller rooms that can serve as additional break-out areas (As is discussed more fully in section 3.5, it is standard practice at a deliberative event to divide participants into smaller groups of around 8-10 people for key parts of the discussion).

Other factors you should take into account when selecting a venue are:

- ☑ how centrally located it is and how easily it can be reached by both public transport and private means
- ☑ how easy it is to find
- ☑ whether it is sufficiently comfortable for a day or half-day long event – for example, whether it has air conditioning and suitable furniture
- ☑ whether it is accessible to those with physical disabilities
- ☑ whether it can accommodate other special needs; for example, a loop hearing system
- ☑ whether it can accommodate any IT requirements e.g. for PowerPoint presentations or website demonstrations
- ☑ whether refreshments can be provided – it is good practice to provide participants with tea, coffee and a snack on arrival then at regular intervals throughout the day. Lunch should also be provided at half-day morning events or day-long events

As long as it meets the above criteria, the venue might be a conference centre, a hotel, a town hall, a community centre or similar.

Staffing

An event comprising 25 participants should be staffed by at least three trained facilitators; one for each break-out group. It can also be useful to have additional staff present to take notes and perform other administrative/organisational tasks as required, such as meeting and greeting participants, ensuring the venue provides refreshments on time, and so on.

3.4 Participant recruitment

Ideally, recruitment should take place around two weeks in advance of an event; which is long enough to give prospective participants sufficient notice that is it taking place, but not so long that those recruited may lose interest in the idea and make alternative arrangements.

It is important that participants are broadly representative of the population of interest; whether that be the population of Scotland as a whole or, for example, the population of a particular region or local authority area. The Scrol (Scotland's Census Results Online) website provides population profile information at a range of geographic levels, which can inform the setting of quotas for recruitment (for example, the numbers of men and women you wish to recruit). At a minimum, quotas should be set on sex, age, working status and social grade.

In addition to demographic quotas, you may wish to recruit participants on the basis of a particular attitudinal measure. In the 2013 public discussion, only people who stated on recruitment they had at least some interest in the environment were invited to take part.

Recruitment methods

There are two main ways to recruit a representative sample of the public for the purposes of a deliberative event: sampling people from the electoral roll or appointing a contractor to carry out the recruitment door to door or in street – the approach adopted for the 2013 events.

It is important to consult your data protection officer before embarking on any recruitment to ensure that all correspondence with prospective participants is in keeping with Data Protection Act requirements.

Sampling participants from the electoral roll

This is essentially a five stage process, during which you will need to:

1) buy sample from relevant edited electoral registers

2) send an initial letter to everyone in the sample to check whether or not they would wish to be considered for the event. The letter should incorporate an opt-in form to be

completed and returned by those who *do* wish to be considered, along with a short questionnaire to collect relevant quota information (e.g. their age, working status etc.).

3) allow two weeks for the return of opt-in forms and questionnaires

4) compile a database of people who return the opt-in form and questionnaire

5) contact and recruit a sample of those people (ensuring that the sample is representative in terms of your quota variables).

There are some disadvantages with using the electoral register as a sampling frame that you should be aware of. Firstly, the electoral register does not include details of people who are not entitled to vote or who have not registered to vote. Secondly, coverage of the edited register can be low as some people are reluctant to have their details passed on to companies for marketing purposes. Thirdly, asking people to opt into the research introduces self-selection into the process, which can potentially bias the sample towards those who are more civically engaged and those who hold particularly strong views. Fourthly, it is easy for people to simply ignore the initial letter (you should assume that only around 10% of people at most will return the form and questionnaire).

Taken together, these factors mean that you will need to send the initial letter and opt-in form to a substantial number of people to achieve the desired turnout on the day of the event. As a rough guide, for an event comprising 25 participants, you should send the initial letter to around 1,000 people. Subsequently, from your database of those willing to be considered for the event, you should recruit around double the number of participants you require on the day as a significant proportion may drop out in advance.

Appointing a contractor to carry out the recruitment

With this approach, most of the burden of recruitment (including the setting and meeting of quotas) is assumed by the contracted organisation, rather than your own organisation. Upon commissioning, the contractor will request from you a specification of the work you require (including the locations of the events and

the number of people you wish to recruit, as well as any thoughts you have on quotas). They will then send specially trained recruiters to the relevant locations to recruit participants as per the specification. Depending on the nature of the quotas, the recruitment will be carried out door to door and/or in street.

The main advantage of this approach to recruitment (aside from the fact that it reduces the burden on your own organisation) is that it invariably results in high participant attendance rates because of the face-to-face commitment they have made to the recruiter. This in turn means that a narrower degree of over-recruitment is required (it is standard practice for contractors to over-recruit by just 25%). Another advantage is that participants tend to be more representative of the population because they are less self-selecting than those recruited through the electoral roll.

As part of the recruitment work they undertake for you, most contractors will be happy to suggest locations for events and arrange venues on your behalf.

Encouraging participation

Introducing the research

When introducing the research to prospective participants, it is important to give them sufficient information that they understand what is being asked of them but not so much that they may feel that the event will be hard work, difficult or ’over their heads’. It is also important to avoid a situation whereby those who agree to take part are told so much about the topic in advance that they are able to ‘read up’ on it and effectively arrive at the event as experts. This would result in the research eliciting a false picture of public awareness and attitudes on the topic to be discussed.

Therefore, it is best to introduce the research in fairly generally terms, whilst making use of ‘hooks’ that are likely to appeal to people – for example, most people are relatively receptive to the idea of taking part in research that is about ‘important issues affecting their area’ or ‘Scotland’.

The 2013 study was introduced to prospective participants as follows:

“Good morning/afternoon/evening, we are inviting a group of local people to take part in a discussion group about issues facing Scotland… I would stress that you do not need to have any prior knowledge of any particular topics to take part. We are just interested in getting a range of views on some specific issues.”

Incentives

Incentives should be paid only at the end of an event to avoid a situation whereby participants turn up simply to collect the money and then leave again before the event had begun or mid-way through.

Regardless of how a study is introduced, it is highly unlikely that most people will agree to take part in the absence of a financial incentive. For a full day event it is advisable to offer each prospective participant an incentive of at least £60, preferably in cash. For a half-day event, £40 is an appropriate level. Incentives not only maximise the pool of participants willing to attend but reduce the risk of the event being biased by those most readily inclined to take part – which might be those who have a particular interest in the topic, those who feel most strongly and/or those with more free time. It also ensures that the research does not exclude those least able to afford transport, babysitting etc.

Confirmation letter

People recruited to an event should be provided with a confirmation letter that includes:

- a brief description of what will be involved in the event
- the date, timing and location
- a map to the venue and any relevant public transport information
- reassurances that the event will not be overly formal or hard work
- contact details for the project manager

In the event that you appoint a contractor to carry out the recruitment on your behalf, they will draft the confirmation letter and hand it to participants immediately on recruitment. If you opt to recruit from the electoral roll, you will need to remember to draft and send the letter to all recruits yourself. The letter used for the 2013 events is provided in Appendix A.

Reminder calls

All recruited participants should be re-contacted a couple of days before the event to check whether they are still planning to attend. If anyone cancels at this stage, additional top up recruitment can be carried out to make up for the shortfall. A contractor will undertake all reminder calls and top up recruitment on your behalf as standard.

3.5 Developing the scope and structure of an event

In developing the scope and structure of a deliberative event, it is important to refer back to your aims and objectives. This will help to keep you focused and ensure that the research is directly geared towards meeting your information needs.

In general, deliberative events tend to comprise three main phases (although there may be more than one cycle of these depending on the length of the event and the number and complexity of the issues you wish to explore):

1. ***A 'pre-information phase'***, the purpose of which is to establish participants' unprompted awareness of, and attitudes in respect of, the topic(s) to be discussed, including any misconceptions they may hold. Throughout this phase, it is important that questions are asked in a very open-ended way so that participants are able to identify and define issues in their own terms *before* the facilitator probes or prompts on key aspects.
2. ***An information provision phase*** aimed at giving participants a fuller understanding of the issue(s) of interest (or aspects thereof). Information can be provided in any of a number of ways; for example, through a PowerPoint presentation, video footage or printed materials that participants are invited to read. Whatever format is used, it is important to give participants the opportunity to ask questions so that they can clarify anything they have not understood or obtain further information on aspects that particularly interest them.
3. ***A post-information phase*** in which participants are given the opportunity to discuss the information with which they have been presented and, if appropriate, to arrive at some conclusion or preferred option(s). It can also be interesting during this phase to explore the extent to which people's views have changed over the course of the event and in light of the information provided.

The table below outlines the structure of the 2013 events.

Table 2: Structure of the 2013 deliberative events

Phase	Session	Content/purpose
Pre-information phase	Plenary session 1: Welcome & orientation. *(10 minutes)*	To welcome participants, introduce the research, provide an overview of the day and deal with housekeeping issues (e.g. location of toilets and fire exits, switching off mobile phones etc.) To outline the context and objectives of the day, the purpose of engaging with the public and how the findings will be used.
	Break-out groups 1 *(60 minutes)*	An initial unprompted discussions to explore: the perceived key environmental issues for local areas, Scotland and the World; the relative salience of the environment in participants' minds; and views on who should be responsible for tackling key issues.
Information provision phase	Plenary session 2: Presentation, Q&A *(40 minutes)*	To introduce the SEWeb partners' key issue set, along with the underlying rationale for this and to provide examples of specific government, business and individual action to tackle these issues. To give participants the opportunity to ask questions of the presenter and give some immediate reactions to what they had heard.
Lunch break *(40 minutes)*		
Post-information phase	Break-out groups 2 *(60 minutes)*	To explore participants' reactions to the presentation and specifically to gauge: their views on the SEWeb partners' choice of issues; the extent to which the provision of information impacted on their views; and their attitudes towards the example actions outlined. At the end of the session, participants' were asked to provide a ranking of their top five environmental issues, drawing on both the SEWeb partners' issues and any other issues discussed over the course of the day.
	Plenary session *(10 minutes)*	An opportunity to thank participants for attending and to distribute the incentives and post-event questionnaire (see below for further information on post event questionnaires).

As is usual in deliberative research exercises, the 2013 events comprised a mixture of plenary sessions and smaller break-out group discussions. Plenary sessions were used for the purposes of welcoming participants to the events and delivering the informational presentation. The break-out groups were used for the detailed discussion of issues before and after the presentation.

Planning break-out groups

In advance of an event, it is important to decide how you are going to segment participants for the purposes of any break-out groups. At the 2013 events, participants were divided into three age groups (18-34, 35-49 and 50+) to allow for the identification of any variation in views by life stage, but there are many other possible options – for example, you might divide people on the basis of their social class, family structure (e.g. whether or not they have children) or their pre-existing level of interest in the issue(s) to be discussed. In the case of an event aimed at exploring views on a particular development (e.g. a wind farm development), you might consider segmenting participants based on how closely they live to the development.

If you are unsure on what basis to segment participants, it can be useful to review any previous attitudinal research on the issue(s) to be discussed as this may point towards variation in views along particular socio-demographic or attitudinal lines.

Event materials

The main materials you will need to develop for an event are: a discussion guide; the information you wish to present to participants; any additional 'stimulus' materials you wish to draw on; and, if desired, a post-event questionnaire.

Discussion guides

A discussion guide lists all of the main questions to be put to participants over the course of an event. The guide effectively serves as an aide memoire for facilitators and helps to ensure consistency across break-out groups.

The guide should be designed to ensure that it will generate the information required to meet the aims and objectives of the research. It is essential that the language used throughout is clear and concise to ensure that the question do not seem overly complex or in any way ambiguous from a participant perspective. This means taking care to avoid the use of technical language and jargon in favour of more colloquial or descriptive terms.

The discussion guide used in the 2013 study is provided in Appendix B.

Informational material

The outcomes of deliberative events are highly dependent on the quality of information given to participants. If the information is not pitched at the right level or is in any way unbalanced, then this will be reflected in the findings.

As noted previously, information can be presented in a variety of formats. In the 2013 study, a PowerPoint presentation was used to outline the SEWeb partners' key issue set. A copy of the presentation is provided in Appendix C.

It is important not to provide too much information so that participants do not feel over-burdened and are able to grasp and retain key messages. A presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes and any written materials, no longer than five pages

There are some key principles that should be followed when producing informational materials for a general public audience. In particular, the materials must be:

- clear and concise to ensure that the information is easy to understand. As with the discussion guide, this means avoiding technical language and jargon
- balanced so as not to unduly influence participants' views or imply that there is a 'correct' way to think about the issue(s) being discussed.
- visually attractive and stimulating
- professionally produced to reinforce the importance of the public discussion

Exercises and activities

During break-out group discussions, it is a good idea to employ a range of exercises and activities to help participants engage with the issues and to retain their interest throughout. These exercises and activities should be easy to understand, enjoyable and designed to stimulate thought and creativity. The main exercises and activities used in the 2013 events (and described in the topic guide) comprised:

- *A flip-chart-based brainstorming exercise:* This was used in the first set of break-out groups to stimulate participants' thinking around the key environmental issues facing their local area, Scotland and the World. During the second set of break out groups, participants were encouraged to refer back to the findings of the flip chart exercise in order to identify similarities and differences between the issues they had come up with and the SEWeb key issues set.

- *A discussion of the presentation based around a printed summary of the slides used in the presentation* (A copy of the summary is provided in Appendix D): The summary served to remind participants of the main points made in the presentation, enabling them to reflect on these points, discuss them with their fellow participants and ask questions.
- *A ranking exercise:* At the end of the second set of break out-groups, participants were asked to rank, on a pre-printed grid, their top five environmental issues, taking into account the various issues discussed over the course of the events (again, a copy of the grid is provided in Appendix E).

There are many others types of exercises and activities that can be employed at a deliberative event, depending on the aims and objectives of the discussion, and the nature of the themes to be explored. Some examples include:

- *Card sort exercises:* participants can be given some cards that have issues, problems, policy options or other solutions printed on them. They can then be asked to work in small groups to prioritise or rank these according to their preferences. Such tasks encourage participants to discuss what's on the cards and to make trade-offs between different cards (which can be very useful in revealing how they think and feel about the issues concerned).
- *'sticky walls' or 'thought boxes':* these allow participants to record their thoughts and/or keywords using Post-It notes, which they can stick on a designated board. For example, participants might be asked to write down their initial thoughts (whether this be in a single word, a phrase or even a question) following any presentation they are given and asked to discuss what they have written and why. Similarly, they can be invited to write down words or aspects of issues discussed at the event that they don't understand and put these in a box. This helps to counter any social desirability issues where participants may be worried about discussing their lack of understanding with a wider group.
- *Scenarios:* Participants can be presented with a number of scenarios and asked how they think they would react in the event of each. For example, they might be given scenarios describing different ways of encouraging people to reduce, reuse or recycle then asked which of these they would most favour and why – and, if appropriate, what aspect(s) of the scenario would need to change to make them more favourable towards it. The scenarios can reflect real policy proposals or hypothetical proposals.

- *Market testing or demonstrations:* This might include showing participants public information materials and asking for their opinions on these, or giving them a demonstration of a particular website or online service and obtaining their feedback on it.

Post-event questionnaire

At the end of an event it can be helpful to ask participants to complete a short questionnaire designed to measure any changes in their attitudes over the course of the event. The questionnaire can also be used to collect feedback on the event, which in turn can inform the design of future events. The post-event questionnaire used at the 2013 events is provided in Appendix F.

3.6 On the day: running an event

Welcoming participants and introducing an event

It is important that facilitators arrive at an event at least half an hour before participants have been asked to arrive in case any participants turn up early. On arrival, all participants should be provided with a name badge and offered tea/coffee with a biscuit or other light snack.

As set out in table 2 above, an event should begin with a brief introduction, given by the lead facilitator. The introduction should:

☑ welcome participant to the event and thank them for attending

☑ introduce the facilitators, their organisation and (if different) the commissioning organisation

☑ introduce the research, taking care to be up front about the overall aims and objectives, and to explain that not all of participants' views will be reflected in future policy or decisions. This level of honesty is crucial in terms of setting an appropriate 'tone' for the day and managing expectations

☑ provide a very brief overview of the day, including what will be required of participants

☑ deal with 'housekeeping' issues such as the location of toilets and fire-exits, and the venue's fire evacuation procedures

Facilitating group discussions

It is crucial that facilitation is of the highest standards, both to ensure high quality findings and to reinforce to participants that they are taking part in something important and worthwhile. Therefore, all facilitation should be undertaken by trained and experienced researchers.

At the start of each group discussion, the facilitator should:

- ☑ provide a brief overview of what the discussion will cover and how long it will last
- ☑ ask participants to introduce themselves, one by one, to the rest of the group. (It can be useful to ask participants to cover aspects of their background or circumstances that might have relevance for the topic to be discussed – for example, whether they have children or what their hobbies are – as this may provide vital context for any views they go on to express)
- ☑ request permission to digitally record the discussion
- ☑ provide reassurances about the confidentiality and anonymity of comments made during the discussion

Following this introduction, the facilitator should work their way through the discussion guide, ensuring that they cover off all of the key questions, whilst pursuing any interesting new lines of enquiry that participants themselves raise.

Denscombe (1998)[4] highlights a number of characteristics of a good facilitator that should be borne in mind when running any qualitative research exercise:

- *They are attentive:* This is trickier than it sounds as the facilitator has to do several things at once during a discussion, including listening closely to what individuals have to say, looking for relevant non-verbal communication, following the topic guide and keeping a close eye on time
- *They are sensitive to participants feelings:* An ability to empathize and gauge the feelings of participants is crucial to eliciting high quality information from a discussion
- *They are adept at using prompts*: This means knowing when it is necessary to spur participants to speak; for example by repeating or rephrasing a question or offering

---

[4] Denscombe (1998) The Good Research Guide. Philadelphia: Open University Press

specific examples. The idea is to nudge participants gently into giving their views and ideas, rather than pressurising them to contribute

- *They are adept at using probes*: This means being able to identify points in a discussion that should be explored in more detail (even if this means departing from the discussion guide for a while) and knowing how to elicit that detail; for example, by asking for clarification or asking participants to expand on their comments

- *They are adept at using checks*: This might include presenting participants with a summary of what they think the participants have said, which the participants can then confirm as an accurate understanding or can correct if it doesn't quite reflect what they were trying to say

- *They ensure everyone in a group has the chance to speak*: It is not uncommon in group discussions for a particularly vociferous participant to hog the discussion and have an undue influence on others' opinions or lead those others to feel reluctant to express a different opinion. The facilitator needs to be able to handle such individuals tactfully, whist encouraging quieter members of the group to contribute

- *They are non-judgemental*: This means suspending personal values and adopting a neutral stance in relation to the issues being discussed. For example, in the 2013 research it was important that the facilitators did not convey a message to participants that it was a good or a bad thing to be concerned about the environment as this may have influenced the views the participants felt able to express

For an in-depth discussion of good facilitation practice, see Oliver Escobar's e-book, *Public Dialogue: A communication perspective for public engagement practitioners.*

Presenting information

As noted in section 3.5, it is crucial that any presentations, video footage or printed materials used to inform participants are carefully designed to be as concise, clear, balanced and visually appealing as possible. The person presenting the information must ensure that their delivery style is similarly oriented. In particular they should:

- not assume that participants have any prior knowledge of the topics or issues being presented
- avoid using technical language and jargon

- remain as objective as possible, presenting factual information only rather than opinions or beliefs
- allow participants plenty of opportunity to ask questions

Concluding an event

It is important to conclude an event with a short plenary session in which you:

☑ thank participants again for attending and for their contribution over the course of the event

☑ reiterate how the findings will be used

☑ (if appropriate) tell them when and where the findings will be published. You might want to offer the option of emailing or posting a copy of the findings to interested participants, in which case you will need to collect their email or postal addresses

☑ distribute the post-event questionnaire for participants to complete before they leave

☑ distribute the incentives, ensuring that participants sign for these to confirm receipt

Checklist: materials and equipment needed for a deliberative event

☑ Map to the venue
☑ Participant list
☑ Name badges
☑ Introductory slides
☑ Discussion guides
☑ Information to be presented (any PowerPoint slides, video footage etc.)
☑ Any other stimulus materials to be used
☑ Flipcharts and felt pens for facilitators
☑ Pens and paper for participants
☑ Incentives
☑ Incentive confirmation sheets
☑ Post-event questionnaires
☑ Digital recorders
☑ Laptop, projector and any other IT required

4 Online forum

4.1 Introduction

There are a number of ways to conduct a public discussion online, including forums, chat rooms, social media and specially designed platforms. Your choice of approach will depend on the type of audience you wish to reach and the subject to be discussed. The table below provides a guide to when each approach might be applied.

Table 3: Methods for conducting an online discussion

Type of discussion	Example purpose	Example audience
Online forum – participants are invited to take part in a discussion conducted via an online forum or bulletin board (see Phase 1 report and subsequent sections of this report for more detail).	To explore the views of local residents towards a new wind farm development	Residents living in the area around the proposed development (see table 5 for further details on selecting a target audience)
Chat rooms – participants are invited to take part in a discussion via a chat room at a scheduled date and time.	To obtain feedback on the ways in which visitors to the SEWeb website are using the information on the site	SEWeb website users (see table 5 for further details on selecting a target audience)
Social media – participants take part in the discussion via Facebook or Twitter with conversations linked using mechanisms such as hashtags.	To explore public attitudes towards fracking	Social media users (see table 5 for further details on selecting a target audience)
Specially designed platforms – many research contractors can offer the use of platforms that are specially designed for qualitative research, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups.	To obtain feedback on stimulus materials, such as information sheets or marketing materials	Members of the public recruited from an online panel (see table 5 for further details on selecting a target audience)

The remainder of this chapter provides a guide to conducting an online discussion via an online forum, which was the approach adopted in the 2013 research. Regardless of the method you choose to adopt for your online discussion, you should consider the issues and principles outlined in this section.

For the 2013 public discussion, the online forum was designed and managed by Ipsos MORI.

An online forum takes the form of a structured conversation organised around topic 'threads' and enables participants to post responses to questions and comments made by the facilitator or other participants. The facilitator in turn can ask supplementary questions, probe for more responses and encourage participants to comment on each other's views.

Definition of an online forum
A website that provides an online exchange of information between people about a particular topic. It provides a venue for questions and answers and may be monitored to keep the content appropriate. Forums can be entirely anonymous or require registration with username and password. Messages may be displayed in chronological order of posting or in question-answer order where all related answers are displayed under the question.

Source: PC Magazine

However, it is important to consider whether an online forum is a feasible and appropriate method for conducting your particular public discussion. At present, online forums are seldom used for conducting public discussions for research purposes. The reasons for this are three-fold: firstly, there are concerns that findings from discussions conducted online may not be representative of the general public due to variations in internet usage among different groups of the population. Secondly, there a number of practical factors that can act as a barrier to effective public discussion, including variable levels of computer literacy among participants and differences in internet connection speeds. Thirdly, participation rates in online discussions are very unpredictable, which can result in having too many or too few participants: for example, in the 2013 research, 89 participants registered on the forum but only 13 contributed by posting comments.

A number of methods can be employed to attempt to boost participation in an online discussion; for example, marketing activities. However, the potential advantages provided by such methods have to be weighed against issues of representativeness, resources and risk, which are discussed elsewhere this document.

An online forum, therefore, is unlikely to be an effective method for gauging public opinion on an issue of interest (for example, it will not enable you to obtain views from a representative spread of the population). However, online forums may be more suitable for discussions conducted among smaller, more targeted audiences as these audiences may be easier to recruit and may be more interested in discussing issues in which they have a pre-existing interest. The case study below provides an example of how an online forum could be used for a smaller-scale discussion.

Case study example of an online discussion among a targeted audience:

Public discussion about the future of a local conservation project

Say you wanted to conduct a public discussion about the future of a local conservation project in order to develop plans for the future of the project. To begin with, it would be important to consider the potential reputational risk of conducting such as discussion. Some questions to ask would include: Is the project controversial? Are there competing interest groups involved? What role does your organisation play in the project? Answering these questions will help you to determine your approach and the resources you will need (see section 4.3). For example, if you think the issue will be controversial, you may want to consider placing restrictions on the way in which participants can contribute to the discussion by ensuring all contributors register or by pre-approving posts before they appear on the forum (see section 4.4).

Once you have evaluated the risk and have resources in place, the next thing to consider is how to recruit a representative spread of local residents to take part. It is important to try and recruit a mix of people from the local area according to factors such as gender, age and interest in the conservation project. Depending on the size of the local area, you may wish to recruit local residents via an online panel or use offline methods, such as door-to-door or postal recruitment. Residents expressing an interest in participating should be given a link to the forum and clear instructions on how to register (see section 4.5). Given that the conservation project is local, it is likely that residents will be more engaged and willing to participate than they would in the case of a national project.

When inviting participants to take part in the discussion, you should make clear the purpose of the discussion, both in the invitations and on the main forum page. This will help to manage participants' expectations of the forum and what will happen as a result, and also negate the risk of participants using the forum to voice grievances or discuss tangential issues. It may be worth highlighting that abusive language will result in participants being banned from participating (see section 4.4).

You may wish to structure the discussion around specific aspects of the project; for example, the benefits and challenges of the project (see section 4.6). Keeping the discussion focussed on the important issues will help to maintain engagement among participants.

As with deliberative events, it is important to consider the purpose of the public discussion and your target audience as this will be vital in informing your approach to the online forum. In addition, you will need to consider the potential reputational risk posed by conducting a public discussion online. Comments made online, particularly via public platforms, are permanent and can be shared quickly and easily through social media networks. Consequently, there is the potential for reputational damage to your organisation if abusive comments are made on an online forum, particularly if such comments are picked up by the news media. Assessing the potential for reputational damage prior to embarking on a public discussion should, therefore, form a key element of your preliminary planning.

4.2 Timescales

Similar to deliberative events, the process of conducting an online forum can be seen as having six stages, involving: logistical planning; setting up and designing the forum; recruitment; conducting the online discussion; analysis; and reporting. However, the sequence of these stages differs from deliberative research and an online discussion allows greater flexibility in timescales. For example, and as is discussed more fully over later sections, recruitment can be conducted over a short period of time or may be ongoing throughout the discussion depending on the specific approach you adopt. The table below provides an indication of the minimum timescales required for each of the main stages.

Table 4: Stages of an online forum

Stage	Timescales
1. Logistical planning	1-2 weeks
2. Designing the forum	3 weeks
3. Recruitment	At least 1 week, though can be continuous throughout the discussion
4. Conducting the discussion	This can vary depending on a number of factors, such as your target audience, recruitment approach and the nature of the discussion. In the 2013 research, the discussion was open for a month.
5. Analysis	Depends on the length of the discussion and the number of contributions. As a rough guide, allow 1 day per week of discussion to read and code contributions
6. Reporting	Depends on the length of the discussion. As a rough guide, allow 2 weeks for a 1 month long discussion and 3 weeks for a 2-3 month discussion

4.3 Logistical planning

Technical requirements

The main technical requirement you need to consider is where you plan to host the online forum. If you plan to host it on your organisation's website, you will need to contact your website provider, who will be able to advise on the feasibility of hosting the forum and may be able to design the forum for you. If you would prefer not to host the forum on your organisation's website, you will need to identify a suitable alternative platform. Most contractors will be able to provide hosting services via their own platforms and there are a number of forum hosting providers available online, many of whom offer free services.

Before choosing an online forum host service, make sure you check the provider's terms and conditions to ensure that you do not breach any copyright or licensing laws in the use of the forum.

Resources

It is important to consider the resources available to you for conducting the online forum. Depending on the nature of the public discussion, you may need:

- **technical expertise to design and maintain the forum** – creating and designing online forums, particularly if you are seeking a professional look, will require specialist expertise in online coding and design. This may be available within your organisation and most contractors will provide their own in-house experts as part of their service

- **staff resources to monitor and facilitate** – the extent to which the forum is monitored and facilitated will depend on the staffing resources available. You will need to consider the hours that the forum will be monitored; for example, will it be monitored only during office hours or at evenings and weekends as well? It is important to make this clear to participants as well to manage expectations of when they are likely to receive a response. Given that participation levels can be difficult to predict, some flexibility of resources may be required

- **public relations and communications expertise** – as mentioned above, there can be a potential reputational risk to hosting a discussion online, particularly if the forum is public. Therefore, you may need to have public relations professionals ready to deal with any negative publicity as it arises. Further, depending on the recruitment approach adopted, you may need to utilise communications professionals to help promote the discussion; for example, through your organisation's social media platforms and website

- **subject-specific expertise** – depending on the topic under discussion, participants may use the forum to ask questions that the facilitator is not qualified to answer. As such, you may need to involve a topic expert to respond to such questions

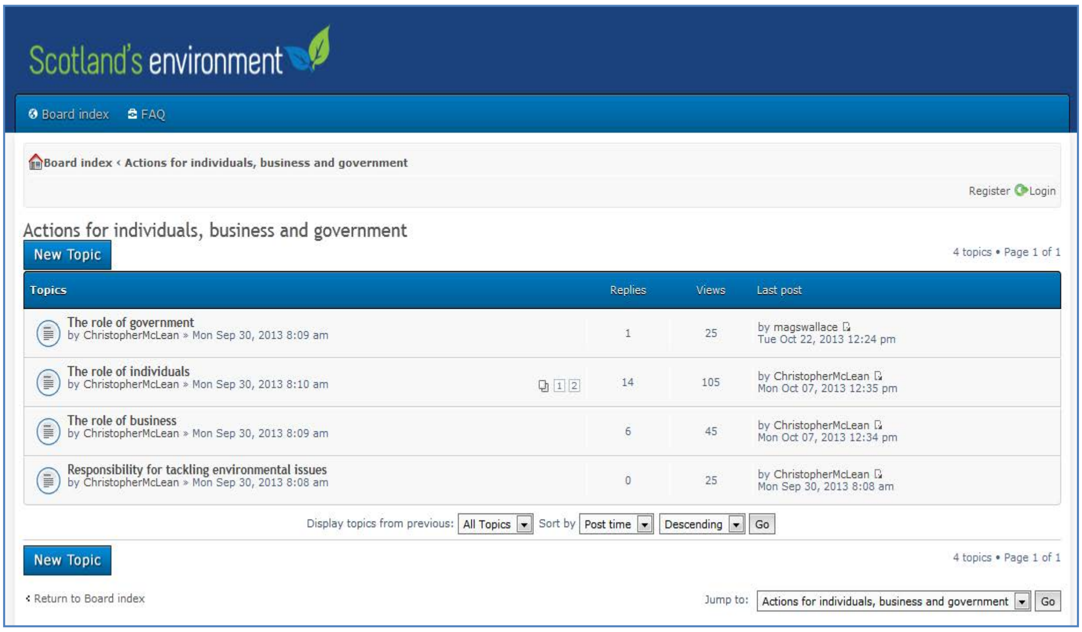
4.4 Designing the forum

It is important to ensure that the forum is set up and designed to suit your research requirements. As such, you will need to consider the look and layout of the forum and practical administrative aspects that enable participants to contribute.

The look of the forum is important in reassuring participants that the discussion is a serious, important exercise, which, in turn, will help to encourage participation. Therefore, the forum should incorporate your organisation's branding and use colours and fonts that match your organisation's website. That said, if you choose to contract out the running of the forum so that it can be described as an independent piece of research, you may wish to use the contractor's branding, or a more neutral branding, instead.

The layout of the forum is important in ensuring that participants can locate and navigate it with ease. As such, the forum and any accompanying materials should be clearly labelled and signposted, placed in areas that are easy for participants to find and contain clear instructions. For example, on the 2013 forum, there were separate threads for discussions about local, national and global environmental issues, as well as actions to tackle environmental issues and participants' reaction to the SEWeb key issues set. Within the actions board, there were separate threads for individual, government and business actions (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Screenshot of discussion threads from the 2013 research



Beyond these considerations, you will need to think about the ways you would like participants to be able to interact and contribute to the forum. This should be guided by your assessment of reputational risk; for example, if you perceive that the risk to your organisation is high, you may wish to be more restrictive. There are three aspects to address, namely:

- **access to the forum** – will the forum be publically available so that anyone can view the discussion or will it only be open to those who are invited or registered to participate? Some participants may be more reluctant to air their views if these are to be publically available, while others may be encouraged to participate if they can get a feel for the discussion before committing. In the 2013 research, the forum was open for anyone to read comments

- **participant registration** – do you want participants to register before contributing or can anyone post on the forum? Ensuring participants register first will provide you with a greater degree of control over who posts comments as you will be able to block participants who are abusive. The registration process will also enable you to collect some basic information about participants, such as their email address, gender, age, motivation for participating and where they found out about the discussion; all of which can be useful during the analysis stage. However, an open

A registration form should be short and simple to complete, with a maximum of five or six questions. Participants may be put off if they feel the questionnaire is being too obtrusive or burdensome.

forum may encourage higher levels of participation among participants who don't want to provide their details. In the 2013 research, participants had to register before being able to post on the forum

- **the process for posting comments** – you will need to consider whether or not you would like to screen participants' contributions before these are displayed on the forum. Screening will prevent abusive posts from appearing on the forum but can break the flow of the discussion, particularly if posts are made outwith facilitation hours. Abusive or unsavoury posts can be removed from the forum at a later time by a facilitator if required. In the 2013 research, posts were not pre-approved before appearing on the board and we did not have to delete any posts or block any users.

4.5 Recruitment

Before embarking on recruitment, you should try to estimate how many people you want to take part in the forum. An insufficient number of participants will make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the research, while too many will make it difficult to facilitate the discussion effectively or probe participants' views in sufficient depth. For the 2013 forum, we sought to recruit 50 participants.

There are number of recruitment approaches that can be adopted for an online forum. These range from controlled recruitment approaches, where participation is open only to those invited to take part, to uncontrolled recruitment approaches, where participation is open to anyone who wishes to take part. Examples of these approaches are outlined in table 5.

When deciding on the most appropriate recruitment method, you will need to consider a number of factors, namely: your target audience; how representative you wish the findings to be; the timescales and resources you have available; and potential risk factors.

A combination of approaches can also be adopted, as was the case in the 2013 discussion, which involved panel-based recruitment, social media recruitment and open link recruitment.

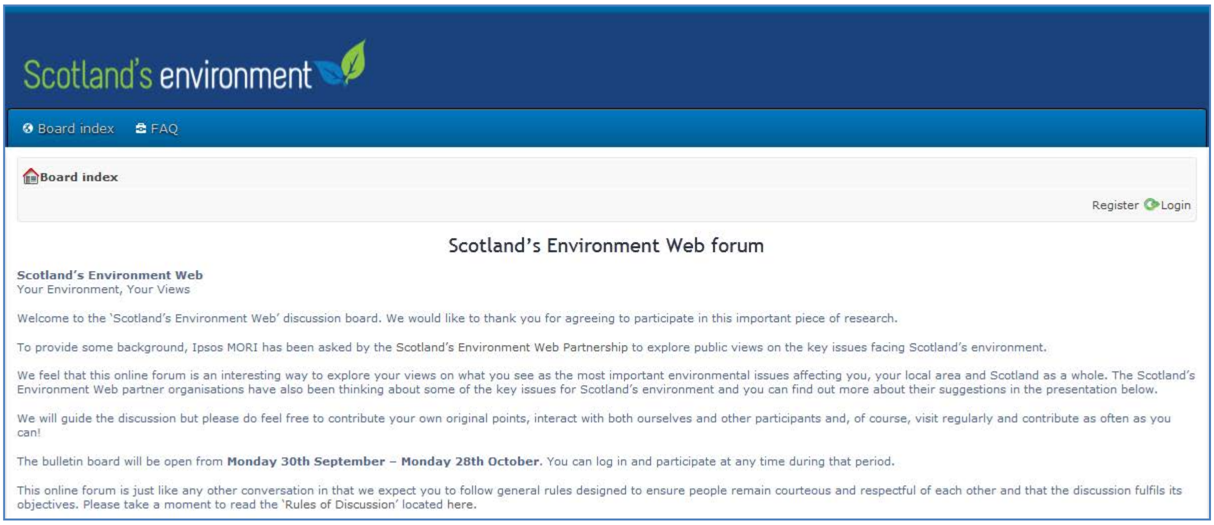
Table 5: Summary of recruitment approaches

Method	Panel-based recruitment	Email recruitment	Social media recruitment	Open link
Description	Participants who are members of an online panel are invited to participate. Many contractors will have their own online panel from which they can recruit and there are also a number of organisations that provide panel samples for research.	Participants are identified from a database (for example, website users; interest groups; or people who have contacted your organisation with a query or complaint) then contacted via email and invited to participate.	Participants are recruited via invitations posted on social media platforms. Posts should contain a link to the online forum.	Participants are recruited via invitations placed on your organisation's website with a link to the online forum. This approach can be supported by communications activities to encourage participation.
Level of control over participation	High	Medium	Low	None
Target audience	General public – either a cross-section or specific segment(s).	Specific groups for which you have a database of email addresses.	General public – initially, your organisation's followers on social media, then other social media users with whom the link is shared by your followers.	People with a pre-existing interest in your organisation's activities or topic area.
Representativeness	Online panellists usually provide demographic, behavioural and attitudinal data upon registering with an online panel. As with recruitment for deliberative events, this means you will be able to set quotas to ensure your sample represents a cross-section of the general public or the specific segment you are targeting. However, it is important to remember that online panellists have chosen to take part in online research and may hold systematically different attitudes from the general public; for example,	The nature of this approach means that participants will not be representative of the general public. However, you can take measures to ensure that participants represent a cross-section of your target group; for example, by inviting people from a range of different interest groups. Sending reminder emails to those who haven't taken part or offering an incentive can help to boost participation.	As participation is restricted to those who use social media and follow either your organisation or one of your followers, participants are unlikely to be representative of the wider population. They are likely to have a distinct demographic profile (for example, Twitter users tend to be younger and more affluent) or have a pre-existing interest in the subject being discussed or higher than average awareness/knowledge of it. Posting social media invitations at different times of day will	Although this is the most 'open' approach, it is unlikely that those who participate will be representative of the general public. Participation is dependent on people finding the link and choosing to participate. Again, therefore, those who participate are likely to have a pre-existing interest in the subject and, potentially, a higher level of awareness/knowledge of it than the general public. Again, a prize draw may go some way towards encouraging participation and broadening

	they may be more interested in, and knowledgeable about, current affairs. Over-recruiting particular groups who are less likely to participate, sending reminder emails and offering an incentive can help to improve participation and representativeness.		help to widen the potential for participants to receive an invitation. You may also wish to consider operating a prize draw to encourage participation (see the Market Research Society instructions on operating a prize draw).	the profile of participants.
Timescales	Short (1-2 weeks)	Medium (at least 3 weeks)	Medium to long (at least 3 weeks)	Long (at least 4 weeks)

Whichever recruitment approach is adopted, the purpose of the online forum and how the findings will be used should be clearly stated on all communications about the exercise, as well as on your organisation's website and the landing page of the forum (figure 2 below shows the landing page of the 2013 forum). This will help to negate the risk of people using the forum inappropriately – for example, to raise questions about specific issues outwith the scope of the discussion – and, will help to manage participants' expectations about what will happen as a result of the research. Further, in all communications, you should provide a link to the forum, the start and end dates of the discussion and details of times during which the forum will be facilitated.

Figure 2: Screenshot showing the introductory text of the 2013 forum



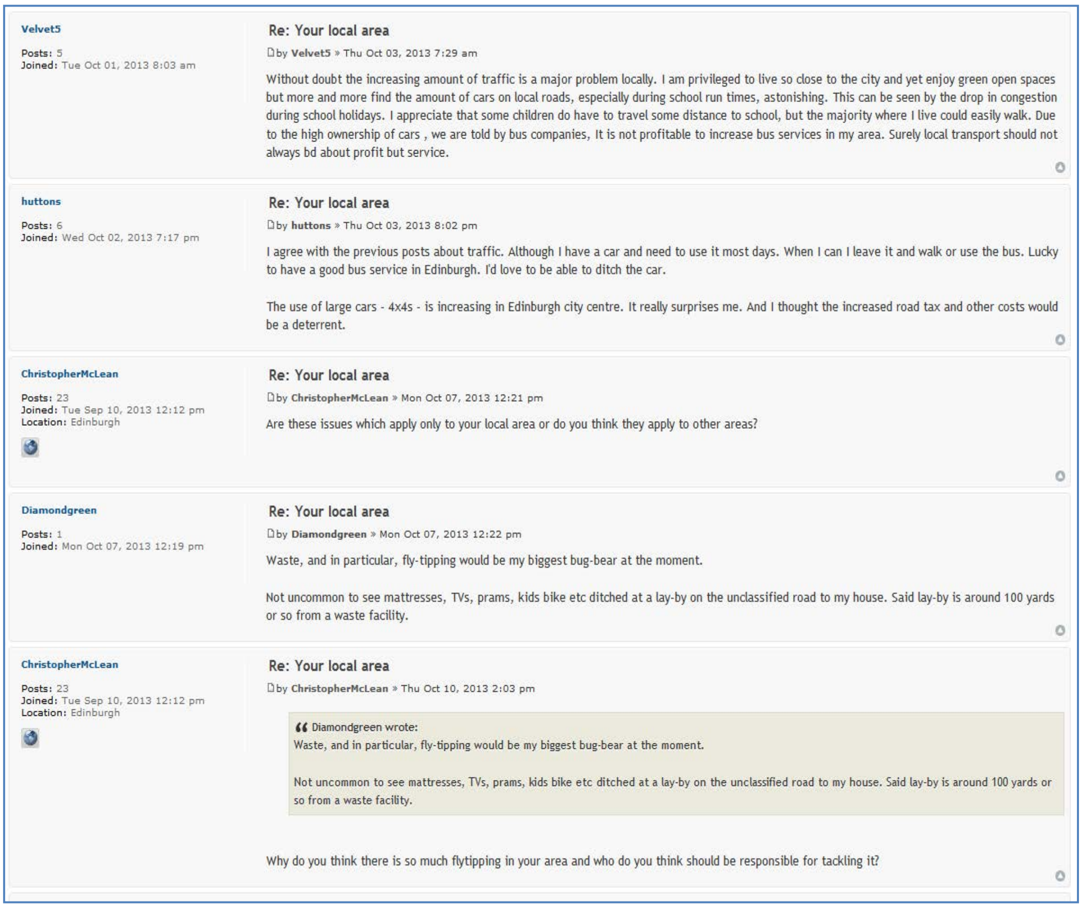
4.6 Conducting the online discussion

Online facilitation should follow the same basic principles as traditional qualitative facilitation (see section 3.6). However, there are some key differences to facilitating an online discussion, particularly with regards to the structure and 'flow' of the discussion, the materials that can be used and the activities that can be undertaken.

Structure of the discussion

An online discussion tends to be less structured than a group discussion at a deliberative event. Instead of a discussion guide, the questions and topics of interest are usually structured around discussion threads, meaning several conversations can run concurrently. As demonstrated in figure 3, the facilitator can use a thread to ask a broad question then, once a participant has responded, post on the thread to probe for more information or encourage others to give their views.

Figure 3: Screenshot of a discussion thread from the 2013 forum



The nature of participation in online forums means that there will often be a time delay between questions and responses; either because participants have time to think about their responses due to a lack of time pressure or because they are online at different times of day from the facilitator. As mentioned previously, the forum may only be monitored during office hours due to the resources required, which means that a comment made by a participant in the evening is unlikely to receive a response until the following morning and, subsequently, the participant may not respond again until the evening. This can make it difficult to generate a flow to the discussion or to probe for further information as participants may not return to the forum to respond. To encourage participants to continue responding, the facilitator can respond directly to their comments, for example, by using the quote function (see figure 3 above) or change the forum setting so that participants receive an email when the facilitator or other participants respond to their comment.

Informational materials

Informational materials can be uploaded to an online forum. In the 2013 forum, we uploaded the same SEWeb Key Issues presentation used in the deliberative events. As noted in section 3.5, it is crucial that any presentations, video footage or printed materials used to inform participants are carefully designed so as to be as concise, clear, balanced and visually appealing as possible. This is especially important when producing materials for an online forum as, in many cases, it will be difficult for participants to seek clarification to the same degree as they can at deliberative events. Further, when uploading materials for participants to view or access online, it is important to ensure that the materials are:

- **positioned** on an appropriate section of the forum; for example, the landing page or within a specific discussion thread related to the material, to make it easy for participants to locate

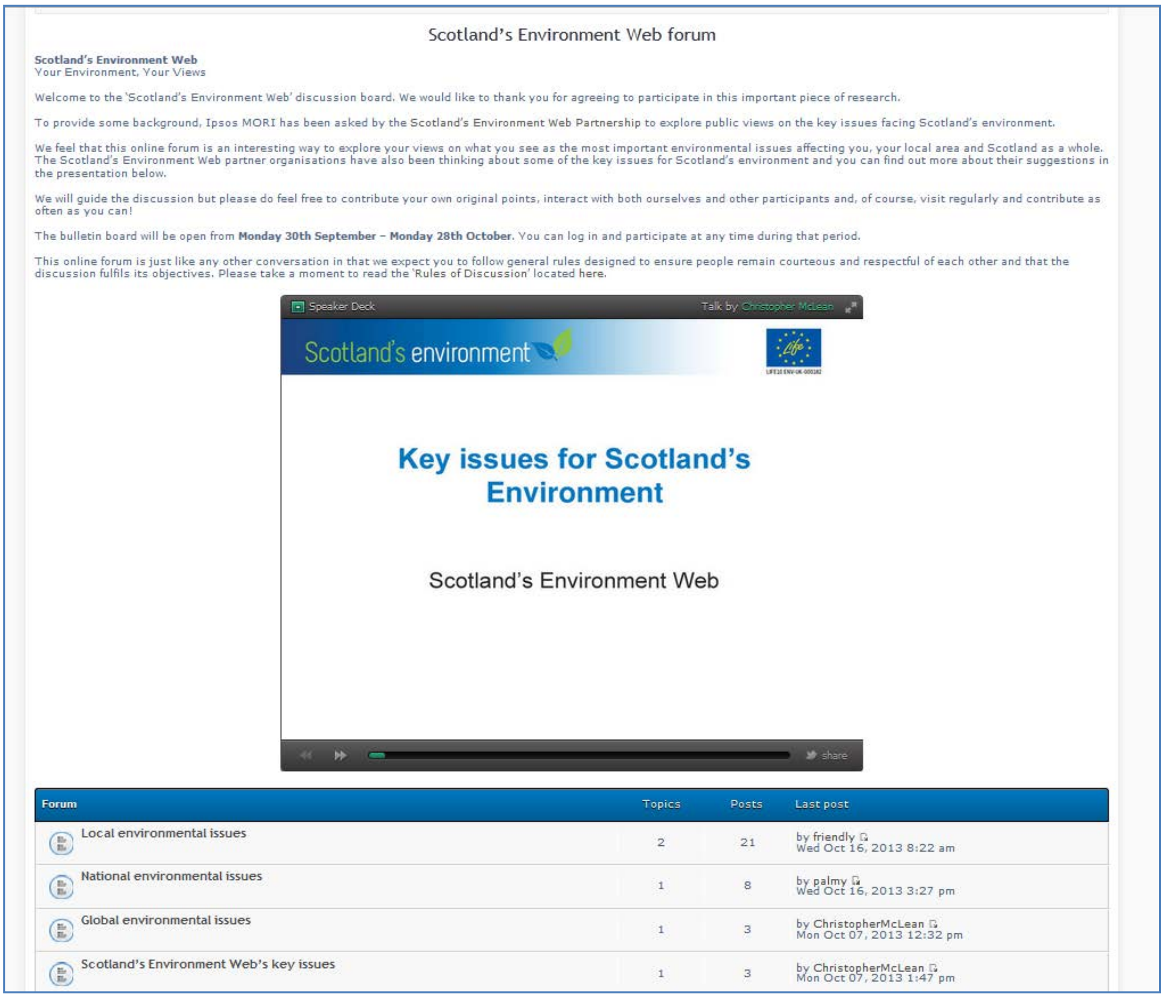
- clearly **signposted** to make it as easy as possible for participants to locate. For example, links to the material might be included throughout the forum and discussion threads, rather than just in one location

- clearly **labelled** so that participants understand what the materials are and why they have been displayed

- **easy to use** so that all participants can access the material. For example, navigation buttons on slideshows should be as clearly visible as possible

Figure 4 below shows the placement of the SEWeb key issues presentation slides on the 2013 forum.

Figure 4: Placement of the presentation slides on the 2013 forum



Activities

As in the case of deliberative research events, it is a good idea to employ a range of exercises and activities to help participants engage with the issues and to retain their interest. Although the online forum setting makes it more difficult to conduct some activities compared to the deliberative setting, there are activities that work well online, particularly:

- *Ranking exercises:* Within a discussion thread, the facilitator can provide a list of issues or other aspects (for example, important features of a website) and ask participants to rank them in order of priority or preference
- *Voting exercises*: Many forums have voting functions within discussion threads, enabling you to present a list of options and ask participants to vote for their favourite or preferred option
- *Market testing or demonstrations:* This might include showing participants public information materials and asking for their opinions on these

Further, online forums can provide opportunities for participants to upload photos or videos to illustrate or provide evidence for their opinion. For example, participants could be asked to provide photos of environmental issues affecting their local area, such as flooding or fly-tipping.

5 Analysis and reporting of findings

5.1 Analysing qualitative data

Qualitative research tends to produce vast amounts of unstructured data as it represents participants' views in their own words, rather than pre-defined response options as found in quantitative research. The main aim of qualitative analysis, therefore, is to provide enough structure to review and interpret the wealth of qualitative data produced while remaining faithful to the original accounts and meanings intended by the participants. Therefore, it is important to adopt a systematic and rigorous approach to analysis. This section describes an analysis process and methods for coding data.

The analysis process

The analysis approach can be considered as a cycle of collecting, analysing and theorising, in which the data analysis and interpretation is an ongoing process involving continual reflection and brainstorming about the data. It typically involves:

- facilitators producing field notes after each deliberative event or during an online forum – these should include key details on the findings as they emerged in the discussions, as well as the initial thoughts, feelings and reflections of the facilitators

- regular internal meetings where the facilitators compare field notes and contribute to on-going analysis to draw together emerging findings. This approach helps ensure rigour in the interpretation of the data as new insights and alternative interpretations can be raised and debated by the team

- bringing together all facilitators once all fieldwork has been completed for an extended analysis session. This brainstorming session will allow the team to identify the top level findings and implications and develop key themes, and sub-themes, for the analysis. A code frame (see figure 5, below) can then be drawn up to include these themes and sub-themes

- each facilitator after the extended analysis session, individually immersing themselves in notes and transcripts from the events and/or online discussion to obtain an overall sense of the information, and code up the transcripts into the analytical themes that address the research questions

- a second analysis meeting, where the facilitators discuss the findings from the thematic coding and how best to present the findings in a meaningful and engaging way

Materials from exercises and activities, such as flipcharts, card ranking and sticky notes, should also be collected and reviewed as part of the analysis process.

Coding the data

There are a number of approaches that can be adopted to distil qualitative data for analysis, known as 'coding'. In the 2013 research, the data was analysed using a thematic indexing and charting system called 'Framework'. This involved creating a code frame of substantive themes and sub-themes, which was determined by the research objectives, the structure of the discussion guide and notes from fieldwork and brainstorming sessions. Transcripts and online content were then systematically analysed for key points and illustrative verbatim comments. Any new sub-themes which emerged at this stage were integrated into the code frame.

There are a number of software packages available that can help in using the Framework method, and other methods, such as NVivo and XSight. However, you can also create a code frame using a basic spreadsheet. Begin by opening a blank spreadsheet and listing the substantive analysis themes in the first column. Under each theme, list any sub-themes that are relevant then, in the top row of the spreadsheet, create separate columns for all the event breakout groups or the online discussion threads. As you read through each transcript, you can record occurrences of views by placing a mark in the spreadsheet under the appropriate theme or sub-theme. You can also add new themes and sub-themes as these emerge in the transcripts and record verbatim comments. Figure 5 below displays an excerpt from the code frame used in the 2013 research, in which the findings are ordered by age group to allow for the easy identification of age-based variation in views.

Figure 5: Example of the codeframe used in the 2013 research

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1		Young			Middle			Old
2		Dumfries	Inverness	Edinburgh	Dumfries	Inverness	Edinburgh	Dumfries
3	**FIRST SESSION**							
4								
5	**Top of the mind thoughts re: the environment**							
6								
7	***General***							
8	Recycling	x	x	x	x		x	
9	Pollution	x	x	x			x	x
10	Litter	x	x	x	x		x	
11	Health	x						
12	Political parties want to be seen	x						
13	Wildlife		x				x	x
14	Forestry							x
15	Green							x
16	Wind turbines/farms						x	x
17	Farming						x	x
18	Water		x					x
19	Climate change/global warming		x		x			x

Following the Framework method will help to ensure that analysis and reporting of the data is rigorous, balanced and accurate, and that key messages or concepts are brought out. One of the main advantages of the Framework approach is that it enables you to conduct both a *thematic analysis* of the range of views recorded and a *case analysis* by comparing views across different groups. Further, it is also flexible enough to allow for links and connections across different themes or sub-themes to be made, and for moments of interpretive insight and inspiration to be recorded.

Try to be as specific as possible when creating sub-themes – for example, by recording positive and negative views separately – as this will ensure that the nuances of discussions aren't lost in the coding phase.

5.2 Reporting the data

Unlike large surveys, qualitative social research does not aim to produce a quantifiable or generalisable summary of population attitudes, but to develop a deeper understanding of the range of factors that shape views, as well as identifying key attitudinal tendencies that are likely to be prevalent across the population of interest.

Consequently, qualitative research requires a different approach to reporting, particularly with regards to the language used to describe the findings. Unlike quantitative research, the purpose of qualitative research is not to count responses or discuss the data in terms of proportions or percentages. Instead, qualitative reporting should:

- focus on the nature of the phenomena – ‘what’ is being explained?
- provide explanatory evidence – why do participants hold the views they do?
- display the divergence of views, such as differences in opinion between participants or groups
- provide illustration of views, such as specific examples given by participants
- avoid using quantitative language or presenting numerical data

Qualitative reporting, therefore, should focus on describing and interpreting the range of views held by participants, rather than the prevalence of views. For example, it is appropriate to say: “a common view held by participants was…” or “a dominant theme of the discussion was…” rather than “a third of participants said x” or “the majority of participants agreed with x”.

As far as possible, the report should be written or presented by the staff who facilitated the events or online forum as they will be immersed in the research and best place to draw out key messages and accurately reflect the views of participants.

Further reading

For an in-depth discussion of good analysis and reporting practice, see Brymen, A, (2012) *Social Research Methods (4th Edition),* Oxford: Oxford University Press

6 Other considerations

When planning and organising a public discussion, there are a number of additional factors to consider to ensure the smooth running of the exercise. These include undertaking a risk assessment, considering ethical and equality issues and ensuring data protection and security. This chapter provides a brief guide to some of the main issues you will need to consider in these respects. It also offers some guidance on contracting out a public discussion (or elements thereof).

6.1 Risk assessment

Prior to embarking on a public discussion, it is important to conduct a risk assessment in order to identify the potential for your objectives to be adversely affected by issues related to the implementation of the discussion or particular aspects of it.

The aim of the risk assessment is to identify where risks might arise, what impact they might have on the discussion, what might be done to avoid them and what would be done should they occur. You should consider all aspects of the public discussion, including: the availability of facilitators to undertake the discussion; potential impacts on timescales; issues affecting recruitment; the effectiveness of materials; and data security.

The table below summarises common risks associated with public discussions, measures that can be adopted to reduce the likelihood of these arising and recovery methods.

Table 6: Risks commonly associated with a public discussion

Risk	Mitigating Action(s)	Recovery
Team discontinuity (caused by illness, resignation etc.)	Having a large enough team, with tasks and experience spread across the team. Involving two or more people in key tasks	In the event of a team member leaving, they should be replaced by a suitably experienced team member and brought up to speed.
Problems recruiting the target number of participants	Careful planning of the discussion design to achieve the balance of obtaining the information necessary to meet the aims and objectives of the work, while minimising the burden on participants. Starting recruitment early enough so you can approach other potential participants if necessary. Holding deliberative events at a suitable time, such as weekends. Holding the online discussion over a suitable period of time (e.g. several weeks) to give people ample opportunity to participate. Offering incentives.	Consider increasing incentives Consider extending the recruitment period.

Insufficient participants attending the event or taking part in an online discussion	Over-recruiting by c25% Providing event recruits with clear, written information on the date, time and location of an event and how to get to the venue. Reminding participants the day before the event or throughout an online discussion.	Running another deliberative event at a later date. Extending the fieldwork period of the online discussion.
Timescale slippage	Careful planning, regular progress review, large enough team and team commitment.	Rescheduling tasks and working overtime.
The effectiveness of the research materials in exploring the relevant issues	Close liaison with relevant partners or policy makers to ensure the research materials address all relevant issues and meet key objectives. Ensuring the team is experienced in developing research materials.	Amending the materials after the first event or early in the online discussion.
Loss of personal data	Involving your data protection officer at the planning stage. Establishing policies and procedures to ensure that data is stored and transferred securely. These policies and procedures should be applied fully throughout the project.	In the event of any failure of information security policy or procedure, you should follow your organisation's guidance and procedures.
Adverse media coverage	Involve public relations or communications colleagues and agree procedures for dealing with media enquiries. This might involve writing a brief description of the project, outlining its nature and scope, that can be sent to journalists. Adopt a restrictive approach to the recruitment and registration of participants to the online discussion and screen comments before these appear on the forum (see section 4.5). Ensure that reports and outputs are written sensitively with an awareness of how findings and recommendations can be misrepresented by sections of the media.	Working with public relations or communications colleagues to produce a statement of clarification of the purpose of the research or clarifying the findings and implications, which can be sent to journalists.

6.2 Ethics and equalities

Public discussions should follow the same guidelines as social research studies with regards to good ethical practice in the development, undertaking, analysis and dissemination of research. The Market Research Society's code of conduct and the ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association provide clear guidelines that researchers should follow to ensure their research is ethically sound. These ethical commitments are best summarised by the GSR 'key principles' that all staff commissioning or conducting social research for government have a responsibility to uphold:

- Principle 1: Sound application and conduct of social research methods and appropriate dissemination and utilisation of the findings
- Principle 2: Participation based on valid informed consent
- Principle 3: Enabling participation
- Principle 4: Avoidance of personal and social harm
- Principle 5: Non-disclosure of identity and personal information

The following sections provide an explanation of each of these principles and guidance on some of the key issues to consider.

Principle 1: Sound application and conduct of social research methods and appropriate dissemination and utilisation of the findings

A public discussion should be based on sound research methods that are appropriate to the aims and objectives of the exercise and carried out to the highest standards. Those responsible for conducting or commissioning a public discussion should avoid placing an unnecessary burden on participants. The evidence emerging from the public discussion should be brought to the attention of policy makers and other users in a way that is clear and accessible, as well as conforming to professional and ethical standards to protect against distortion and bias in the interpretation of findings.

Principle 2: Participation based on valid informed consent

Participation in a public discussion should be based on voluntary informed consent. The MRS code of conduct makes it clear that the principles of honesty and transparency must be reflected when gaining participants' co-operation. Specific requirements set out in the code are that:

- participants must not be misled when being asked for co-operation to participate
- a participant’s right to withdraw from a research project at any stage must be respected
- participants must be able to check without difficulty the identity and authority of any individual and/or their employer conducting a project (including any contractors)

- participants should be clearly informed of the name of the facilitators, the purpose of the discussion, the subject matter and the length of their involvement (for example, the length of an event or online discussion)

Principle 3: Enabling participation

You should give considerable thought to potential barriers to participation and assess the extent to which you might promote equal opportunities for individuals who might otherwise be excluded for reasons of communication, disability, or comprehension.

The following measures can be taken to ensure the opportunity to participate in a public discussion is open to all those who meet the outlined characteristics:

- holding deliberative events on Saturdays and ensuring the online discussion is open for a sufficient time period to maximise the number of people who are able to participate

- ensuring the online forum is easy to access and doesn't require advanced technical knowledge or hardware to use

- ensuring that all venues used for events are accessible to those with physical disabilities and are convenient for participants to travel to, both by public transport and private means

- asking all those recruited if they have any other special needs which might affect their ability to participate. This might include facilities for the deaf or hard of hearing, or large print text for those with vision problems

- offering an appropriate financial incentive to take part in the research can encourage participation from individuals who might not normally take part in social research because they feel disengaged from the policy process. It also ensures that potential participants are not discriminated against because of worries about travel expenses or dependent care expenses

- ensuring that all information materials for participants are written in Plain English

Principle 4: Avoidance of personal and social harm

Ethical guidelines state that participants should not be harmed or otherwise adversely affected as a consequence of participating in a public discussion. Adverse effects could include anything from feeling unduly pressurised to take part, to feeling the discussion is intrusive (in terms of method, relevance, time commitment required or manner in which questions are posed) to distress over the subject matter.

You should only use highly trained, highly experienced recruiters who are schooled in the most appropriate ways of approaching prospective participants. It should be made clear to the recruiters that they must respect people’s right to opt out of research and refrain from trying to pressurise them into taking part if they do not wish to.

The events should be designed to place as little burden (physically and cognitively) on respondents as possible. For example a number of breaks, (including lunch) should be built into each day and the overall duration should be minimised. Further, all materials should be produced in Plain English and participants should be given extensive opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification on issues.

Principle 5: Non-disclosure of identity

All public discussions should be conducted on the basis of respondents being given an absolute guarantee that they will remain anonymous and their responses will be confidential. Ensuring this commitment will require the strict application of data protection procedures. These mean that information collected cannot be linked to individuals, and that data collected for one purpose (in this case ‘research’) is not used for any other purpose, such as marketing.

With regards to the online forum, participants should be made aware that comments made will be publicly available (if this is the case). To protect confidentiality and anonymity, participants should be allowed to post anonymously using a ‘username’ which they can select upon registration.

6.3 Data protection and security

It is important to ensure that public discussions comply with data protection and security laws.

The following policies and procedures are commonly adopted to ensure data security:

- restricting access to project files – files containing personal data should be stored in an appropriate project directory and protected by a passphrase

When contracting out a public discussion, you should check the data security accreditations of the contractor to ensure they comply with data protection and security laws.

- encrypting personal data – all personal data and files containing potentially disclosive data should be stored using encryption
- secure transfer of data – personal data should be transferred using secure methods, such as encrypted data sticks or FTP data exchange sites
- all files with personal identifiers or which are otherwise potentially disclosive should be stored in an encrypted volume. Access should be restricted to only those people who will process the data

6.4 Contracting out research: key considerations

When you put a public discussion out to tender, you ideally want to receive as many high quality tenders back as you can. There are a number of ways to identify suitable contractors to invite to tender for a discussion. including:

- conducting internet searches to identify contractors who offer the services you require then contacting them directly
- uploading an invitation to tender on the Public Contracts Scotland e-procurement portal or other procurement portal, such as Delta eSourcing
- using the knowledge and contacts of colleagues within your organisation who may have previously worked with, or be aware of, suitable contractors

Once you have identified a list of prospective contracts, you should conduct some basic checks to ensure that they are able to provide you with the service you require, such as the size of the company, the range of work they undertake, previous clients and quality accreditations they hold.

In order to invite contractors to tender, you will need to produce a specification of your requirements. It can be difficult to decide exactly what, and how much, information to include in a project specification. But the better your specification, the better quality proposals you'll get back – and, ultimately, your discussion will be more successful. Guidance on the research commissioning process is available in the Social Research Associations' "Commissioning Social Research: A Good Practice Guide".

The following provides a checklist of the information you will need to provide the contractor with so that they can design an approach and provide costs.

☑ **What is it that you don't know?** This is arguably one of the most important pieces of information. It is useful to set out what you do already know, such as previous research you have conducted, but it's even more important to try and succinctly summarise what it is that you want to find out or achieve by conducting a public discussion.

☑ **What will your organisation do with the information?** You may not know what the actions will be until you have the findings, but giving the contractor an indication of what you anticipate doing helps the contractor gauge what is required.

☑ **What is the budget? (And does that include or exclude VAT?)** Contractors will have a limited amount of time to spend on the research design so specifying the budget (or even just giving an indication of the range) enables them to focus their efforts on the design that best addresses your aims and objectives. This, in turn, will result in your receiving a more thoughtful and creative design.

☑ **Do you have a particular methodology in mind?** This is your chance to get a range of experienced researchers thinking about your aims and objectives and coming up with creative and cost-effective ways to address these, so it's usually better to focus the brief on the problem rather than the methods. Specifying a methodology will turn the exercise into costing a methodology rather than solving a research problem. There may be circumstances where you do want to specify the methodology. If you do already have a methodology in mind, it's helpful to understand the thinking behind this and how open you are to alternatives.

☑ **What are the timescales for the public discussion?** And is this just a guide or is there a definite deadline? If there is a definite deadline, it's useful to explain what's driving it (e.g. a meeting of senior officials) so that contractors can plan accordingly.

☑ **What resources are you able to provide during the project?** If you are able to provide resources (the possibilities are wide-ranging but this might include sample, contact lists, expert advice, materials, venues), putting this in the specification will save the contractor costing for things that you might be able to provide.

☑ **What outputs do you want?** What outputs will be most useful to you? A presentation? A bullet point summary of key findings? A detailed report? Who is the main audience for the outputs? Who else will see them?

6.4 Alternative approaches

Finally, it is worth remembering that there are a range of approaches to gauging public opinion, other than deliberative events and online forums, that you may wish to consider, (either individually or as part of a mixed methods study) depending on your aims. The table below lists a range of possible research aims and sets out the most suitable approach(es) in each case.

Table 7: Alternative approaches to gauging public opinion

Aim	Approach	Method
To obtain a robust measure of public opinion among a representative sample of the population where you want to show respondents stimulus materials	Quantitative	Face-to-face survey Online survey
To obtain a robust measure of public opinion among a representative sample of the population where you don't need to show respondents stimulus materials	Quantitative	Telephone survey
To measure opinions and/or experiences among visitors to a specific location (for example, a national park)	Quantitative	Mobile phone survey Face to face survey
To explore public attitudes towards a particular issue in depth	Qualitative	Focus group(s)
To understand individual experiences of a service or problem (for example, household recycling)	Qualitative	In-depth interviews Ethnographic research
To understand the impact of information provision on people's attitudes	Qualitative	Reconvened focus group(s) Deliberative event(s)
To understand research already conducted on a topic and identify knowledge gaps	Secondary research	Literature review

Appendix A: Example confirmation letter

August 2013

Dumfries Discussion Event
Saturday 24th August 2013, 10.00am - 2.15pm

Cairndale Hotel, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DF

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Ipsos MORI discussion event on Saturday 24th August 2013.

The discussion event will be divided into three main sessions which will cover some important issues facing Scotland. The sessions will be relaxed and informal, they will not be 'hard work' and you do not have to be an 'expert' on anything! Refreshments and lunch will be provided. As a 'thank you' for your time and to cover any expenses incurred, you will receive £40 at the end of the event.

The discussion event will take place at the Cairndale Hotel, English Street, Dumfries. I have enclosed a map showing the location of the venue. Please arrive by 9.45am on Saturday 24th August. The event will be finished by 2:15pm.

During the event, there may be some information for you to read so, if appropriate, please don't forget to bring your reading glasses. I look forward to meeting you on the day and hope that you will enjoy the discussion. Please do not hesitate to call me, on 0131 240 3264, if you want to confirm any details, or if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely

Chris McLean
Senior Research Executive

Appendix B: Example Topic Guide

SEWeb LIFE+ Partnership
Deliberative Workshop Discussion Guide
FINAL

9:30am – 10am: Arrival

Registration, provide participants with name badge indicating which of the small groups they will be in

Workshop facilitators and presenters to mingle

Poster boards with agenda and purpose of the event

Teas and coffees

10:00-10:10: Initial Plenary

Thank participants for attending

Introduce Ipsos MORI and the SEWeb LIFE+ Partnership and the people involved and their roles during the event

Explain, why they were invited, briefly explain the background to the study and emphasise that the focus is on identifying and discussing the priorities for Scotland's environment. Briefly outline agenda for the day.

Emphasise: confidentiality, no right or wrong answers, give everyone opportunity to speak, important to hear public views and involve public in these issues.

Explain that SEWeb are interested in the range of views that people have but will not be able to act on all the issues raised during the discussion

Permission to record discussions

Housekeeping: toilets, fire exits, refreshments, mobile phones switched off

---

10:15-11:15: Breakout groups 1 (60 minutes)

Objectives of this section are to explore participants':
- general attitudes towards the environment in relation to other issues

- views on the key issues for the environment at a global, national and local level
- views on specific government, business and individual actions to tackle and resolve environmental issues
- priorities for the environment

What are the first things that come into your head when you think about environmental issues or environmental problems? Anything else?

PROBE:

What about issues facing…

- the world?
- Scotland?
- your local area?

[RECORD ANSWERS ON FLIP CHART]

In general, how much of a priority is the environment compared with other issues...?

...to you personally?
...to Scotland?
...to the world?

PROBE:

- Why do think the environment is more/less important to you/Scotland/the world?

LAYOUT FLIPCHART PAPER WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ON THE TABLE

Thinking about all of the environmental issues you have mentioned – global, national and local - , which do you think are the most important to tackle? [MODERATOR TO LOOK FOR AND HIGHLIGHT LINKAGE BEWEEN GLOBAL/NATIONAL/LOCAL ISSUES]

PROBE:

- Why do you think these are more important than other issues?
- Do other people agree?
- What about... [SEWeb issues not mentioned: Climate change; Built environment; land management; freshwater; marine environment]?

Who do you think should have responsibility for tackling environmental issues? Why do you say that?

PROBE:

- What role, if any, do you think the government has in tackling environmental issues?

- What role, if any, do you think businesses have in tackling environmental issues?
- What role, if any, do you think individuals have in tackling environmental issues?
- Are there any other groups or organisations who have a role in tackling environmental issues?

EXPLAIN: We have covered a wide range of issues that are important to Scotland's environment. SEWeb have also been having similar discussion to try to identify the most important issues and the actions that can be taken to address these. We are going to return to the full group and xxxx is going to talk about the issues they have come up with then we will come back into the smaller groups to discuss your views on SEWeb's issues and how they compare to the issues you have identified.

11:15-12:00: Presentation (20 minutes) and Q&A session (25 minutes)

The presentation will provide participants with information on SEWeb's key issues for Scotland's environment and explain the reasoning behind the choice of issues

The Q&A session will enable us to answer initial questions from participants and obtain some immediate reactions

---

12:00-12:40: Lunch (40 minutes)

This will enable participants to consider the information provided and discuss the issues with each other.

12:40-13:40: Breakout groups 2 (60 minutes)

Objectives of this section are to explore participants':

- reaction to the information provided in the presentation
- perceptions of SEWeb's key issues for Scotland's environment
- the extent to which participants feel these are the priorities for Scotland's environment or whether greater priority should be given to their own priorities identified in the first breakout groups
- perceptions of the acceptability of specific government, business and individual actions to tackle key environmental issues
- attitudes towards further public engagement

I'm interested in getting your initial reactions to what you've just heard. What did everyone think of the presentation?

Was there anything that you were surprised to hear?

- Why do you say that?

Was there anything that you found particularly interesting?

- What was it?
- Why did you find it interesting?

Have you changed your mind about what issues are most important, or not?

- Which issue(s)?
- In what way have you changed your mind?
- Why have you changed your mind?

[PUT FLIPCHART PAPER BACK ON THE TABLE]

Let's just take some time to compare SEWeb's issues with the ones you identified as important earlier. How do you think the SEWeb issues compared with the issues you identified earlier?

PROBE:

- Do any of the issues overlap or fit well together?
- What do other people think?

Thinking specifically about the issue discussed in the presentation, were there any that you didn't think should be included?

PROBE:

- Why do you say that?
- What do other people think?
- Did you think the reasons given for each were strong enough to make them priorities?

FOR EACH ISSUE, HAND OUT BRIEIFNG MATERIALS AND DISCUSS:

Was there anything you didn't understand?

IF YES PROBE:

- What do you think would help you understand it better?

Do you think this issue affects you or your local area?

PROBE:

- In what way?
- Does that make it more or less important to you? Why/not?

Moving on, what did you think of the actions proposed for government, business and individuals?

PROBE:

- Was the emphasis on government/business/individuals right or should government/business/individuals be expected to do more/less?
- Was there anything you didn't think government/business/individuals couldn't do?
- Was there anything you didn't think government/business/individuals shouldn't do?
- Were there any actions you felt were missing?

Do you think these actions will be undertaken?

- Why do you say that?
- Do you think government/business/individuals will be willing to undertake these actions?
- Are there any barriers to undertaking these actions?

CARD SORTING EXERCISE: ASK PARTICIPANTS TO INDIVIDUALLY RANK THE FIVE KEY ISSUES IN ORDER OF PRIORITY TO THEM. GIVE PARTICIPANTS BLANK CARDS AND ALLOW THEM TO WRITE DOWN AND RANK PRIORITY ISSUES FROM FIRST SESSION. MODERATOR TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST THEN PROBE:

- Why did you rank them in that way?

13:40-13:50: Breakout groups 2 – public engagement (10 minutes)

Just to finish up this discussion, SEWeb would like to continue holding discussions with the public about these issues. Do you think the public should be more involved in discussions about key environmental issues for Scotland?

IF YES PROBE:

- In what ways? Workshops? Online discussion? Consultation? Communications?
- How often should these discussions take place?
- Where should these discussions take place?
- How can these discussions be best used to inform decision-making?
- How likely or unlikely would you be to get involved in further discussions?

IF NO PROBE:

- Who should be involved in the discussions?

How likely or unlikely would you be to get involved in an online discussion about key environmental issues for Scotland?

PROBE:

- Do you think an online discussion would work? In what format? What would encourage you to take part in an online discussion?
- Would there be any barriers to holding an online discussion about these issues? If so, what?

FINISH AND REPORT BACK TO WHOLE GROUP

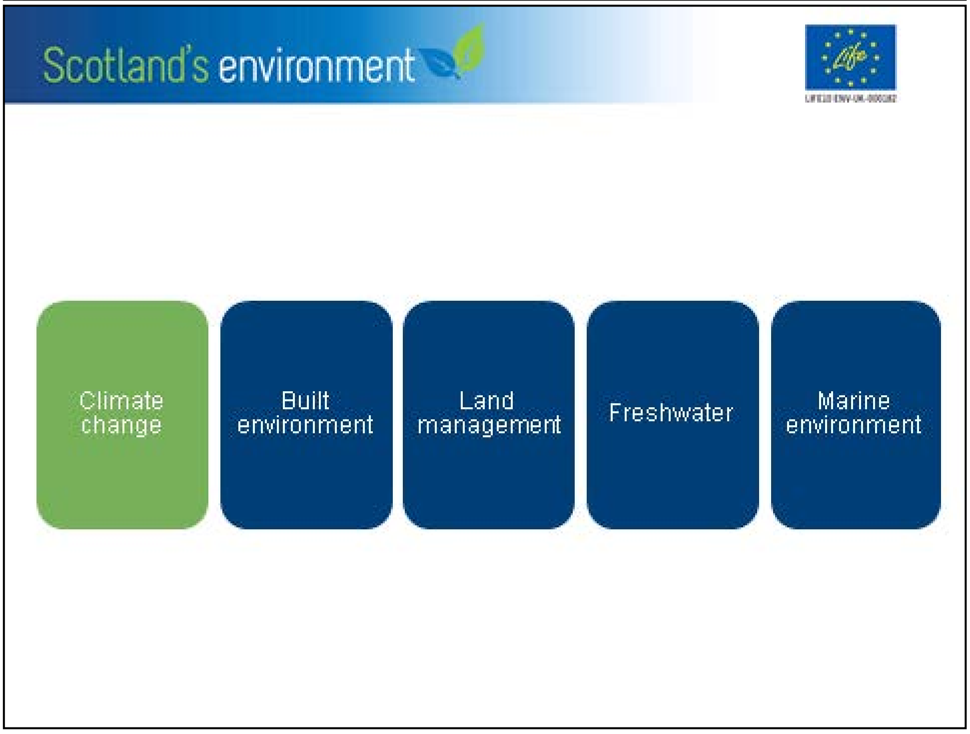
13:50-14:15: Plenary Session (25 min)

Summarise key messages from the day and ensure agreements and disagreements noted

Thank participants for their input and discuss next steps

Distribute post-event questionnaire and incentives

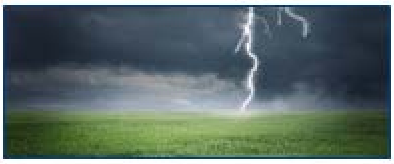
Appendix C: Key Issues Presentation



Scotland's environment

What is climate change?

Climate change is the change in the world's climate. It is widely accepted that climate change is caused by greenhouse gas emissions from industry, land use, and travel and energy use in our homes



How has climate change affected Scotland?

Record temperatures

Extreme weather events

Longer growing season

Shorter snow season

More heavy rainfall in winter

Scotland's environment

How might further climate change affect Scotland in the future?

- Higher temperatures
- Increased and heavier rainfall
- Rise in sea levels
- Increases in flooding
- Impact on wildlife and habitats
- Longer tourist seasons
- Increased risks of pests and diseases in farming and forestry
- Extreme weather events
- International impacts on Scotland, e.g. changes in food prices

Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

Scotland's Environment Web believe that tackling climate change should be a priority because...

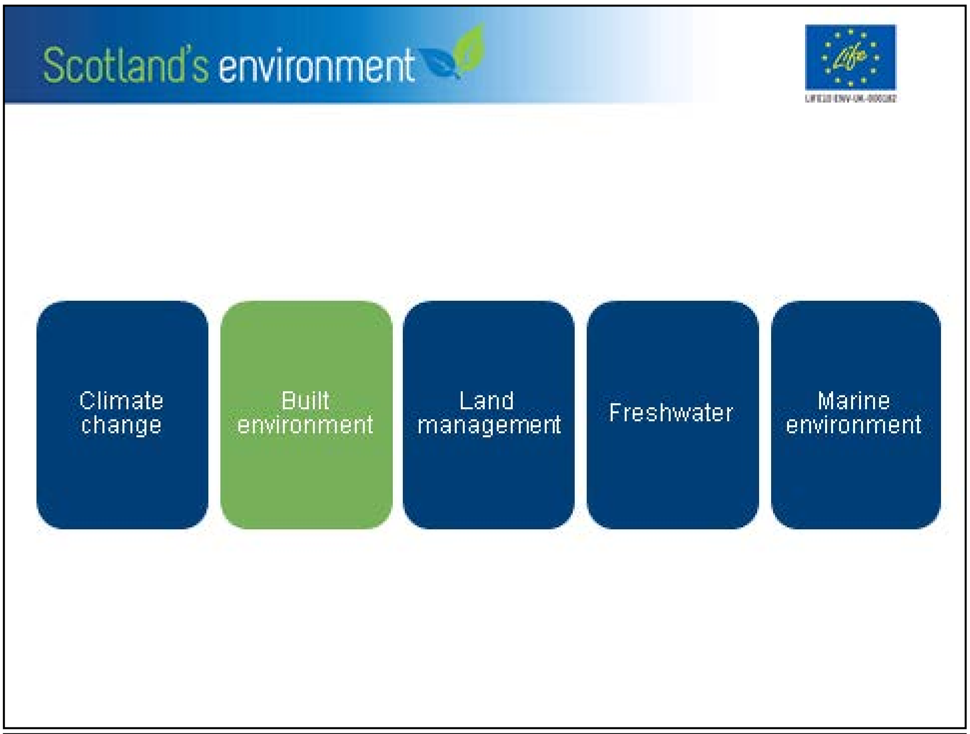
Action is needed now to avoid higher costs and negative impacts on everyone in the future.

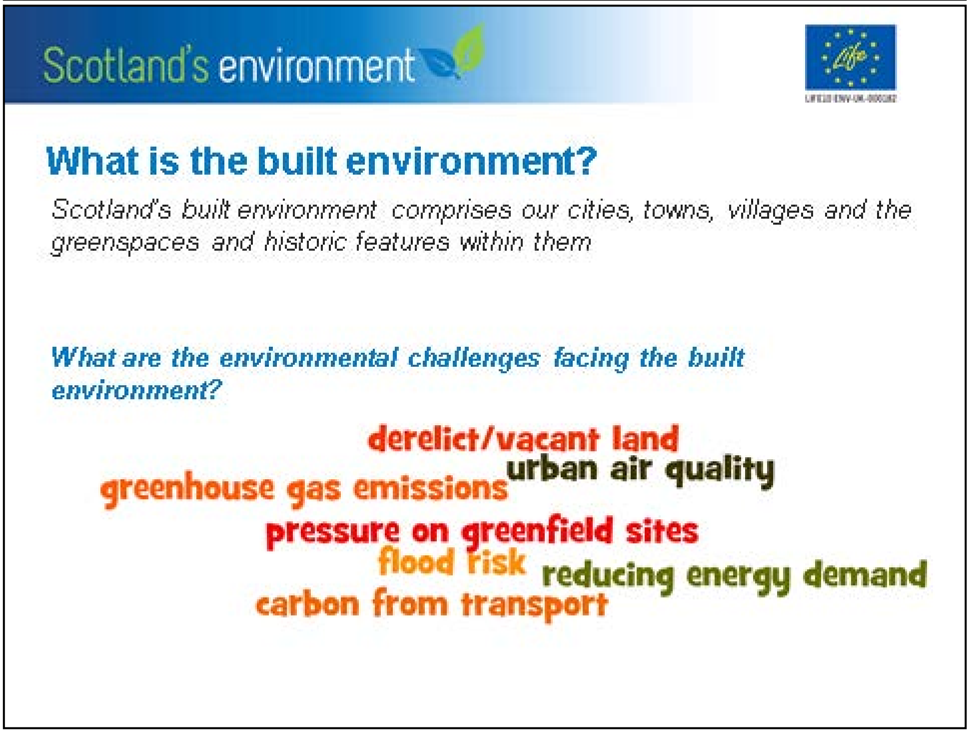
Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

What can government, business and individuals do to help?

Government	Business	Individuals
Set ambitious climate change targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Invest in renewable energy generation	Use less energy in the home (e.g. install loft insulation to keep the heat in, washing clothes at 30c)
Invest in and support greener forms of transport (e.g. cycle lanes, charging points for electric vehicles)	Reduce business travel (e.g. use of video conference instead) and support employees to use greener forms of transport to work	Walk, cycle or take public transport instead of taking the car
Set building standards so that homes are more energy efficient	Improve energy efficiency of products and services and reduce waste	Reduce food waste


Scotland's environment
Climate change
Built environment
Land management
Freshwater
Marine environment


Scotland's environment
What is the built environment?
Scotland's built environment comprises our cities, towns, villages and the greenspaces and historic features within them
What are the environmental challenges facing the built environment?
derelict/vacant land
urban air quality
greenhouse gas emissions
pressure on greenfield sites
flood risk
reducing energy demand
carbon from transport

Scotland's environment

How do pressures on the built environment affect the environment?

- Population growth and change
- Air quality and transport
- Waste and litter
- Industrial legacy
  (e.g. derelict factories)

Scotland's environment

Scotland's Environment Web believe that maintaining and improving the built environment should be a priority so that...

Scotland's towns, cities and villages are healthy and attractive places for people to live, work and play, and are attractive to investors and visitors

Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

What can government, business and individuals do to help?

Government	Business	Individuals
Ensure planning system delivers high quality environments	Invest in high quality places to live, work and visit	Get involved in local area planning consultations
Provide advice and guidance to reduce energy use in buildings	Design buildings that use less energy	Use less energy, recycle and use public transport more often
Work to reduce inequalities between different areas of Scotland	Invest in derelict and vacant areas of towns and cities	Get involved in projects to improve local areas

Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

Climate change

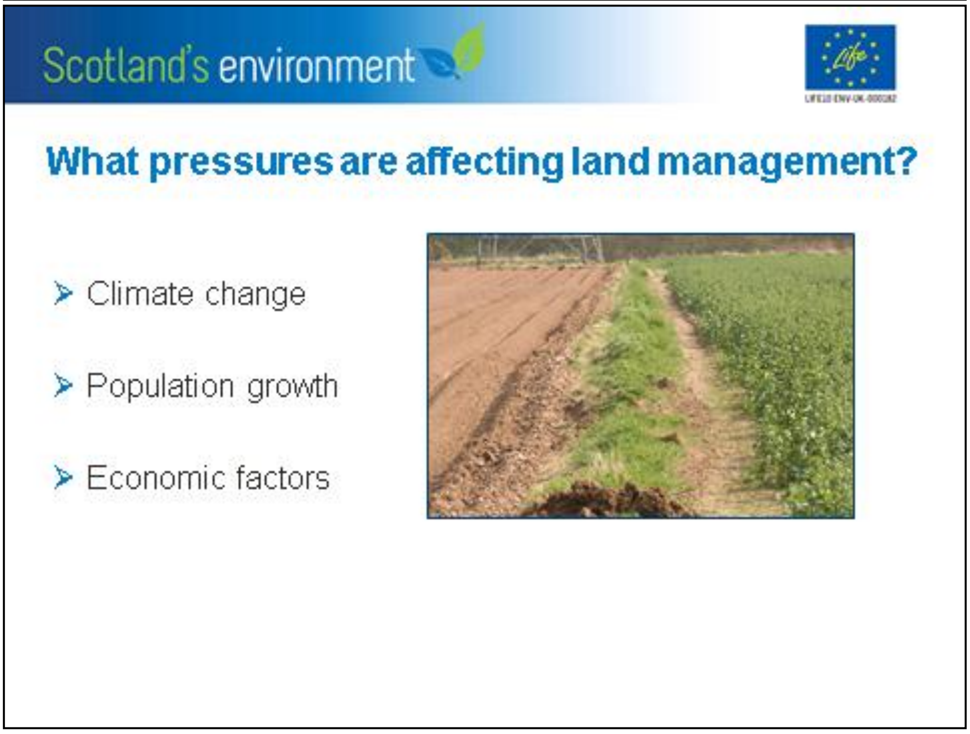
Built environment

Land management

Freshwater

Marine environment


Scotland's environment
What do we mean by land management?
Scotland's land is used to grow trees and food to feed people, as well as providing unspoilt countryside for local people and visitors to enjoy
Changes in the way we manage the countryside can be important in reducing climate change impacts. For example, restoring peat bogs can help trap carbon


Scotland's environment
What pressures are affecting land management?
Climate change
Population growth
Economic factors

Scotland's environment

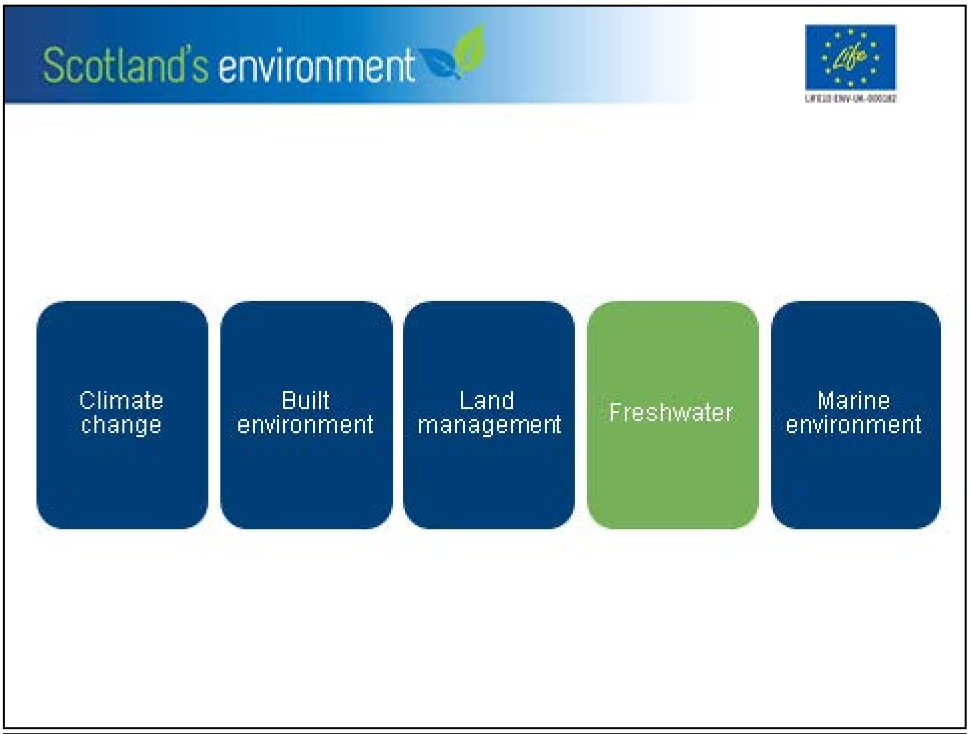
Scotland's Environment Web believe that tackling land management issues should be a priority because…

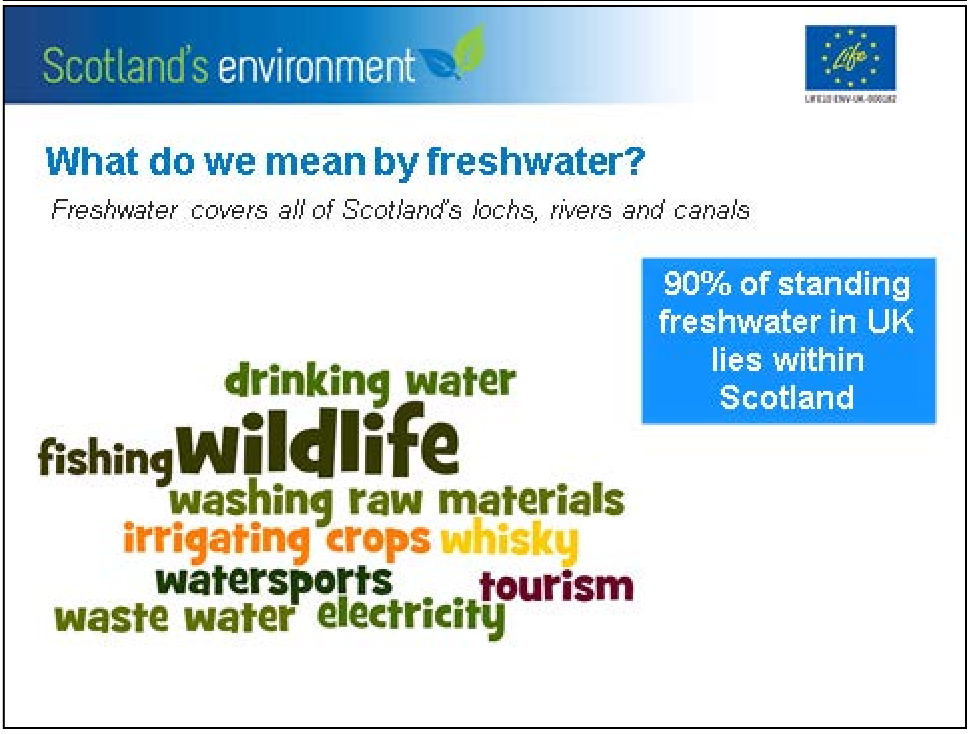
The way we manage our land has a significant impact on Scotland's countryside and the people, plants and animals that live here

Scotland's environment

What can government, business and individuals do to help?

Government	Business	Individuals
Support land managers to deliver greater environmental benefits	When using fertiliser, maximise the benefits	Buy local food produce
Encourage sharing of land for different uses	Encourage local food production and consumption	Support local conservation projects
Encourage woodland expansion	Maintain sustainable levels of grazing animals	Avoid buying non-native tress and plants that could spread and become invasive


Scotland's environment
Climate change
Built environment
Land management
Freshwater
Marine environment


Scotland's environment
What do we mean by freshwater?
Freshwater covers all of Scotland's lochs, rivers and canals
90% of standing freshwater in UK lies within Scotland
drinking water
fishing
wildlife
washing raw materials
irrigating crops
whisky
watersports
tourism
waste water
electricity

Scotland's environment

What pressures are affecting freshwater?

- Hydro-electric power
- Farming
- Pollution
- Changes to habitats

Scotland's environment

Scotland's Environment Web believe that safeguarding freshwater should be a priority because...

A healthy freshwater environment protects wildlife, is good for the economy and supports our quality of life

Scotland's environment

What can government, business and individuals do to help?

Government	Business	Individuals
Ensure that the quality of lochs and rivers is maintained or continues to improve	Use water more efficiently	Use water more efficiently
Work towards meeting climate change targets by promoting more use of renewable energy	Follow land management guidelines to reduce pollution	Reduce use of polluting detergents
Work with others to reduce impact of flooding	Consider impact of building developments on the water environment	Get involved in activities to protect and improve the environment

Scotland's environment

Climate change

Built environment

Land management

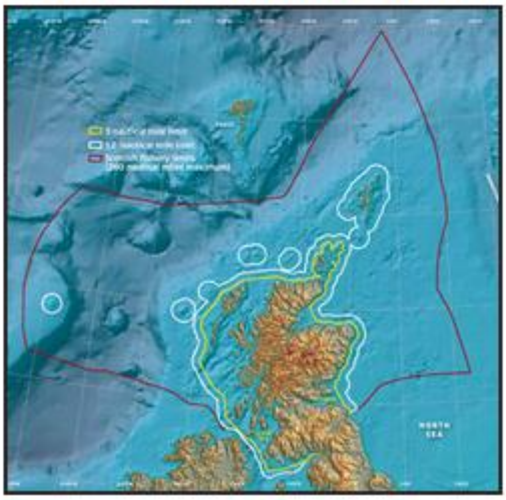
Freshwater

Marine environment

Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

What do we mean by the marine environment?



Scotland's seas support...	
Habitats & species	Transport
Food (fishing & aquaculture)	Energy (oil & gas; & renewables)
Weather & climate patterns	Leisure & recreation

Scotland's environment

LIFE10 ENV-UK-000182

What pressures are affecting Scotland's marine environment?

- *Human activity*
- *Fishing*
- *Pollution*
- *Offshore renewable energy*
- *Oil and gas*
- *Fish farming*
- *Noise*

Competition for sea space

Changes in sea temperature, level and storminess

Changes to species and habitat diversity

Impact on quality of water and sea bed

Scotland's environment

Scotland's Environment Web believe that protecting the marine environment should be a priority because…

Seas provide food, energy, transport and recreational space. We need to balance these uses to protect seas for future generations

Scotland's environment

What can government, business and individuals do to help?

Government	Business	Individuals
Set objectives for everyone to use the seas responsibly in a National Marine Plan	Consider other sea users when developing new proposals	Use appropriately licensed boat operators when taking wildlife watching trips
Monitor the seas for natural and man-made change	Participate in local marine planning initiatives	Consider your impact e.g. don't litter beaches, respect sensitive coastal habitats
Fund research into how different activities impact on the seas	Reduce effect of business on the seas e.g. reduce pollution / litter and disturbance to wildlife	Shop responsibly e.g. buy fish from sustainable sources


Scotland's environment
Life
Any questions?

Appendix D: Example presentation summary document

Scotland's environment

Climate Change

What is climate change?

Climate change is the change in the world's climate. It is widely accepted that climate change is caused by greenhouse gas emissions from industry, land use, and travel and energy use in our homes

How might further climate change affect Scotland in the future?

- Higher temperatures
- Increased and heavier rainfall
- Rise in sea levels
- Increases in flooding
- Impact on wildlife and habitats
- Longer tourist seasons
- Increased risks of pests and diseases in farming and forestry
- Extreme weather events
- International impacts on Scotland, e.g. changes in food prices

Action is needed now to avoid higher costs and negative impacts on everyone in the future

Government	Business	Individuals

Set ambitious climate change targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Invest in renewable energy generation	Use less energy in the home (e.g. install loft insulation to keep the heat in, washing clothes at 30c)
Invest in and support greener forms of transport (e.g. cycle lanes, charging points for electric vehicles)	Reduce business travel (e.g. use of video conference instead) and support employees to use greener forms of transport to work	Walk, cycle or take public transport instead of taking the car
Set building standards so that homes are more energy efficient	Improve energy efficiency of products and services and reduce waste	Reduce food waste

Appendix E: Example ranking exercise grid

Key issues for Scotland's environment

First most important issue...

Second most important issue...

Third most important issue...

Fourth most important issue...

Fifth most important issue...

Appendix F: Example post-event feedback questionnaire

Scotland's Environment Discussion Event
Feedback Form

We are interested in your opinion of today's event. Please take a few minutes to complete this short questionnaire.

Q1 How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY FOR EACH ROW

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a)	I found the event enjoyable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	The presentation was informative and interesting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	The opportunity to ask questions was useful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	Overall I feel better informed about the material discussed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	The design of the event was stimulating	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	There was enough time to hear the views of others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	There was enough time to share my views with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q2 What, if anything, did you enjoy most about the event?
PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

Q3 What, if anything, did you enjoy least about the event?
PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

Q4 What, if anything, would have made the event better?
PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

PLEASE TURN OVER

Q5 Is there anything you would have liked to have said but didn't?
PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

Q6 Did this event change your views about any of the environmental issues facing Scotland?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Yes	No
☐	☐

If **yes**, please tell us how your views have changed? **PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW**

Q7 Thinking about everything that has been discussed today, what do you think are the most important issues to consider or resolve regarding Scotland's environment?
PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW

Q8 Did you find today's venue suitable or not suitable?
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Suitable	Not suitable	Don't know
☐	☐	☐

If you found the venue unsuitable, why do you think it was not suitable? **PLEASE WRITE IN BELOW**

If you would like more information about the upcoming online discussion about Scotland's environment, please write in your email address below:

Thank you very much for the feedback.
Please hand your completed form to one of the moderators.