

# SEWeb: Public Engagement Evaluation Strategy

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## SEWeb: Public Engagement Evaluation Strategy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 [Scotland's Environment Web](#) brings together environmental data and reports from a variety of sources and aims to be the gateway to everything you want to know about Scotland's environment. This three year project, supported by funding from the European Union, will put Scotland at the global forefront of sharing environmental information, prioritising problems and involving citizens in assessing and improving their own environment.
- 1.2 One of the four main objectives of SEWeb is 'to provide high quality on-line information that provides a gateway to engaging the public, through better understanding of the environment, public debate on environmental priorities, public monitoring of the environment and public activity to protect and improve the environment.'
- 1.3 An evaluation strategy is needed to inform, guide and focus the development of SEWeb with respect to this objective to ensure that:
  - there is a transparent process in place to measure baseline information and the effectiveness of the SEWeb project with regard to i) providing information, ii) encouraging citizen monitoring activities and citizen action, iii) encouraging debate on environmental priorities and iv) to explain and transfer that learning to the European Union. Lessons learned should include insights on what works and what doesn't.
  - the current knowledge and future needs of key audiences inform and enable SEWeb to focus on key areas, developing SEWeb in such a way that it responds to both the needs of key audiences and the ultimate objectives of the project.
  - the SEWeb work programme is both ambitious but realistic in how and in which areas SEWeb can make a difference and also what it cannot achieve.

### 2. Evaluation Strategy 'Theory of Change' and Questions

- 2.1 This evaluation strategy outlines an overarching 'theory of change' and a set of questions that will inform the development and monitoring / evaluation of SEWeb.
- 2.2 A theory of change is a hypothesis about how change is going to be brought about by particular activity(ies). The theory this strategy seeks to test is as follows:
  - High quality on-line information about the environment (both in terms of what kind of information people need and how they need it presented) can act as an effective gateway to better understanding, and better engagement in debating environmental priorities, monitoring the environment and taking action to protect it.

- 2.3 Testing this theory of change will require a series of questions to be considered, as follows:
1. What is the existing public knowledge and understanding about the environment?
  2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of current environmental on-line information provision (particularly the SEWeb pilot)?
  3. What citizen science and citizen action<sup>1</sup> projects already exist?
  4. Where are the gaps for citizen science and action and what is needed to increase numbers involved?
  5. What are the existing opportunities for public debate on environmental priorities and how can some of these could be improved using SEWeb;
  6. Does better information lead to better engagement of the public?
  7. Does public involvement in environmental monitoring and action lead to changes in opinion and behavioural change towards the environment?

### 3. Activities

- 3.1 In order to gather information to help us answer the evaluation questions, a programme of activities has been devised. Table 1 outlines the evaluation questions against the activities planned and the information that will be gathered to help answer the questions. Annex 1 outlines how and when each activity will be delivered. The activities will include:

- Analysis of existing public survey data
- Targeted questions in Public Opinion Survey
- Analysis of current information enquiries to public bodies
- General public focus groups
- Young people focus groups
- Key users focus groups
- SEWeb Management group workshop
- Analysis of environmental information currently provided on-line
- Analytics of current SEWebsite
- SEWeb usability testing
- Survey of citizen science in Scotland (Scotland Counts)
- Qualitative research on opinion and behavioural change using interviews with a selection of those involved in existing citizen science and citizen action projects, those involved in new citizen projects stimulated by SEWeb and those involved in methods to trial public debate by SEWeb
- Behavioural change – translating theory into practice for SEWeb - a report and workshop for SEWeb partners

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<sup>1</sup> Citizen science is the observation or monitoring of the environment by individuals or networks of volunteers, many of whom may have no specific scientific training. Engaging the public in making observations and collecting and recording data about the environment increases the capacity for scientific research but it also provides a very powerful mechanism for increasing public understanding of their local environment. In the longer term, this active learning also upskills participants, motivates them to develop personal stewardship of the environment and empowers them to take environmental action.

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### 4. What evaluation probably won't be able to tell us about SEWeb

- 4.1 Disentangling the share of SEWeb in changing public attitudes and behaviour in general is not possible. This means that we will not be able to measure whether / how SE Web has itself changed general public attitudes and behaviours in Scotland.

### 5. Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 This evaluation strategy will be led by Rachel Harding-Hill with contributions from others from the SEWeb partnership. The evaluation programme and monitoring of this strategy will be done by a small steering group consisting of SEWeb partners particularly interested in this topic.

### 6. Managing Risk

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Level of risk (High/Medium/Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Resultant risk</b>
Not enough resources to run repeat surveys at end of project	Medium	Ensure resource requirement built in to revised costings in Bid Review	Low
Can project development wait for some of this info in order to move forward?	Medium	Ensure existing information is analysed first and information fed into project development Revise project time table in Bid Review to ensure project development informed.	Low
Non delivery by contractors	Low	SEPA procurement process followed and contract closely managed	Low
Programme proves too ambitious in terms of time	Medium	Regular review of research strategy and progress against activities - may need to adapt as project progresses.	Low
Programme too ambitious in terms of resources needed	Medium	Regular review of research strategy and progress against activities - may need to adapt as project progresses.	Low
Key personnel move post	Low	Regular review of evaluation strategy and written reports on progress, overseen by steering group – to enable continuity and	Low

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		project learning that can be retained if key personnel move post.	
Insufficient data available / found to answer key questions	Medium	Regular review of evaluation strategy and review of each activity as it delivers – if insufficient data found, steering group to advise on need to adapt and change of activities within resources available.	Low

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**Table 1: Key evaluation questions, associated activities and the information that will be gathered to answer the evaluation questions.**

<b>Evaluation question</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Information to be gathered</b>
1. What is the existing knowledge and understanding about the environment and environmental data?	Analysis of existing public attitude survey data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public's key environmental issues</li> <li>Public's priority environmental issues</li> </ul>
	Targeted questions within Scottish Opinion Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public's key environmental issues</li> <li>Public's priority environmental issues</li> <li>Public Level of interest and knowledge about key environmental issues</li> <li>Where public get information about the environment</li> <li>What issues public would like to know more about</li> <li>Public knowledge of SEWeb</li> </ul>
	Analysis of current information enquiries to public bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What issues the public ask for information on</li> </ul>
	Analysis of environmental information currently provided by websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What information is already presented on-line</li> </ul>
	General public focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public's key environmental issues</li> <li>Public's priority environmental issues</li> <li>Public Level of interest and knowledge about key environmental issues</li> <li>Where public get information about the environment</li> <li>What issues public would like to know more about</li> <li>Public knowledge of SEWeb</li> </ul>
	Young People focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How SEWeb can help and support young people to enjoy, understand, protect and improve Scotland's environment</li> </ul>
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of current environmental on-line information provision?	Key user focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key user knowledge of SEWeb</li> <li>Strengths and weaknesses of SEWeb from user perspective</li> </ul>
	General public focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public's key environmental issues</li> <li>Public's priority environmental issues</li> <li>Public Level of interest and knowledge about key environmental issues</li> <li>Where public get information about the environment</li> <li>What issues public would like to know more about</li> <li>Public knowledge of SEWeb</li> </ul>
	Young People focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How SEWeb can help and support young people to enjoy, understand,</li> </ul>

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		protect and improve Scotland's environment?
	SEWebsite usability testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of usability of current SEWebsite</li> </ul>
	Analytics on current site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How current site is accessed and journeys taken through site</li> </ul>
	Analysis of environmental information currently provided by websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in information presented on-line</li> </ul>
3. What citizen science and citizen action projects already exist?	Survey of existing citizen science and action projects in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of current citizen science projects</li> <li>• Potential opportunities for SEWeb from citizen science projects</li> </ul>
	Targeted questions within Scottish Opinion Survey Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of public involvement in caring for local environment and reasons if are involved.</li> </ul>
4. Where are the gaps and what is needed to increase numbers involved?	Survey of existing citizen science and action projects in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues for which there is little or no existing citizen science</li> </ul>
	Partners (management group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues for which information from citizen science would be helpful</li> </ul>
	Public focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of public involvement in caring for local environment and reasons if are involved (more indepth analysis of motivations than omnibus survey).</li> </ul>
	Targeted questions within Scottish Opinion Survey (Feb and Mar 2012 waves)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public perception that they can make a difference [need to do qual work with participants and beneficiaries – not just workshop / survey qs]</li> </ul>
	Behavioural change – translating theory into practice for SEWeb - Report and workshop for partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons and motivational factors for becoming involved in citizen science and action</li> </ul>
5. What are the existing opportunities for public debate on environmental priorities and how could these be improved using SEWeb?	Key user focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for improving public debate on existing plans and processes from key user perspective</li> </ul>
	general public focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public's key environmental issues</li> <li>• Public's priority environmental issues</li> <li>• Public Level of interest and knowledge about key environmental issues</li> <li>• Where public get information about the environment</li> <li>• What issues public would like to know more about</li> </ul>
	Young People focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How SEWeb can help and support young people in debating environmental priorities?</li> </ul>
	Partners (management group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing planning and processes where public engagement could be improved</li> </ul>
6. Does better information lead to better engagement of the public?	Survey sample of those involved in methods to be trialled by SEWeb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of perception/ evidence that better information leads to better engagement in a sample of those involved in methods to be trialled by</li> </ul>

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		SEWeb and evidence of where and why it has not
7. Does public involvement in environmental monitoring and action leads to changes in attitude and behavioural change towards the environment?	Survey of opinion change from selection of those involved in existing Citizen Science and Citizen Action projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of attitude and behavioural change of a sample of citizen science and action participants</li> </ul>
	Survey of those involved in new CS projects stimulated by SEWeb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of attitude and behavioural change of a sample of citizen science and action participants</li> </ul>



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### Annex 1: Table of activities and the mechanisms for delivery.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Delivery mechanism</b>
Analysis of existing public attitude survey data	Q1 2012	SEWeb staff time
Targeted questions in public opinion survey	Q1 2012 2014	TNS Scottish Opinion Survey
Analysis of current information enquiries to relevant public bodies	Q1 2012	SEWeb temporary contract
Analysis of environmental information currently provided on-line	Q1 2012	
Google analytics of current SEWeb site	Q1 2012	
SEWeb usability testing	Q2/3 2012	Tbd - External contract and/or partner contribution
Survey of existing Citizen Science and action projects	Q1/2 2012	BTCV – Scotland Counts survey and SEWeb temporary contract
Key users focus groups	Q2 & 3 2012	SEWeb staff time, partners
General public focus groups	Q2 2012	Contract
Young People focus group	Q1 2012	Contract – Space Unlimited
SEWeb Management Group workshop	tbd	SEWeb staff time, partners
Survey of opinion change from selection of those involved in existing Citizen Science and Citizen Action projects.	Q4 2012	tbd - External contract and/or partner contribution
Survey of those involved in new CS projects stimulated by SEWeb	2013, 2014	tbd - External contract and/or partner contribution
Behavioural change – translating theory into practice for SEWeb - Report and workshop for partners	Q1 & 2 2012	James Hutton Institute
Survey of a sample of those involved in methods to trial public debate by SEWeb	2013	tbd - External contract and/or partner contribution