

Putting the environment at the heart of prosperity and social inclusion

The Stirling Protocol

Scotland's Programme for Government 2019-20, Protecting Scotland's Future, sets out an ambitious target to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Meeting this objective will require policymakers, businesses and other organisations to reconsider how they operate, and make the transition to alternative, sustainable ways of working.

All too often, it can seem as if there is a conflict between the need to address climate change and demands for economic growth. Where solutions are put in place, they can often exclude certain sections of the population, or can be impractical or burdensome for smaller organisations to adopt. This complexity often leads to paralysis, leaving headline pledges to decarbonise unfulfilled.

This briefing paper overviews the Stirling Protocol, a simple framework which enables organisations to balance the demands of economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. As Scotland emerges from the economic shock of the global coronavirus pandemic, the Protocol will be relevant to all those with an interest in placing sustainable, inclusive prosperity at the heart of Scotland's economic recovery.

Protocol

The Stirling Protocol consists of three pillars that must be considered to put the environment at the heart of sustainable prosperity: Economy, Environment and Inclusion. Questions must be asked of all three pillars. Does the approach under consideration conserve and enhance natural resources? Will it deliver prosperity (broadly defined)? Whom will the approach inadvertently exclude? The framework can be used to analyse whether proposals, policies or practices meet these criteria equally. Where they do not, steps can be put in place to balance the different demands.

The framework can be adopted throughout organisations to analyse a range of activities, from procurement and recruitment to project planning and business development. The Protocol's flexibility means that it can be used to prompt and frame discussions around sustainability leading to new approaches being considered, or as a reference point by which to benchmark strategic decisions.

The Stirling Protocol

Economy	Environment	Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver prosperity • Promote the green & blue economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve & enhance biodiversity & natural resources • Progress towards carbonless society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise social inclusion • Enhance health & wellbeing

Application

Researchers identified several cases where the Stirling Protocol is actively helping to shape decision making, and drive more inclusive, sustainable outcomes.



Stirling Council installed a network of E-bikes with the aim of supporting economic prosperity and wellbeing by providing a carbon-free transport alternative for work and leisure. Reassessing the initiative using the Stirling Protocol, the local authority is considering discounted membership of the scheme for lower income families to ensure that the scheme is accessible, and does not exclude sections of the local population.



International real estate company Hollis worked with a large institutional investor to develop a process to decarbonise its property portfolio, delivering a pathway to net zero and setting measurable targets from portfolio level to individual asset level. Successful outcomes depend on first establishing a strategy that identifies and considers the views of all key stakeholders. Hollis has applied the Stirling Protocol to ensure that the process is fair and balanced and tackles the challenge of achieving economic growth while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and managing natural resources in a fair and equitable way.



Schneider Electric, an international company with 140,000 employees, providing decarbonisation and digitalisation solutions, further exemplifies the Protocol at work. Quarterly statistics are compiled to demonstrate how much CO₂ the company has saved its customers, compared to the CO₂ it takes to operate. Providing services and products that support the transition to a lower carbon future is not only good for humanity, but a core benefit for Schneider as it ensures that the company will be needed ever more in the future. The company is also recognized for its leadership in diversity and inclusion.

About this study

This briefing is based on research undertaken by:

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