SEWEB GENERAL PULIC RESEARCH

Research Report

Ipsos MORI

22 August 2012

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SEWeb General Public Research

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Supported by funding from the European Union (EU), Scotland's Environment Web (SEWeb) is a partnership that aims to *put Scotland at the global forefront of sharing environmental information, prioritising problems and involving citizens in assessing and improving their own environment.*

SEWeb brings together environmental data and reports from a wide range of organisations involved in environmental protection and improvement in Scotland. The website enables the public and specific user groups to access data and reports on a range of environmental issues affecting Scotland.

The SEWeb LIFE+ Project commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct qualitative research with the aim of exploring public attitudes towards the environment and informing the development of SEWeb.

Methodology

The study was conducted using qualitative techniques and comprised two focus groups among members of the general public, with follow up telephone depth interviews conducted among a selection of participants.

The focus groups were held in Glasgow and Pitlochry on 25 and 26 June 2012 respectively. The groups were stratified to allow for analysis by area (urban and rural) and socio-economic group: the Glasgow (urban) group comprised people from socio-economic groups C2DE, while the Pitlochry (rural) group comprised people from socio-economic groups ABC1. To ensure that a range of people were recruited to both groups, quotas were set on sex, age, working status and internet usage.

The follow up interviews were conducted between 4 and 26 July 2012. The aim of the interviews was to explore participants' perceptions of the 'Our Environment' section of SEWeb in greater detail.

Key findings from the focus groups

General attitudes towards the environment

The environment was considered to be an important issue, but was a lower priority for participants in comparison to other issues, such as the economy, inflation and unemployment. The environment was a very low priority for participants in Glasgow, who felt that issues such as crime, the NHS and unemployment were of greater importance, while those in Pitlochry considered the environment to be more important than these other issues. Still, participants in both groups perceived the environment to be something of an abstract issue that didn't necessarily impact on their day-to-day lives.

Although global and national issues were considered important, local environmental issues were often of greater significance to participants. However, there was a difference in the types of local issues discussed in the two groups. Participants in Glasgow identified issues that impacted on the cleanliness of their local environment, while those in Pitlochry were more concerned about developments on greenbelt land.

Environmental behaviours

The environmental behaviour in which participants most commonly engaged was recycling, which they did on a *daily* basis. However, there were differences in the ways the two groups framed their reasons for recycling. Participants in Glasgow tended to feel that they were *forced* to recycle, while participants in Pitlochry felt that recycling had been *made convenient* for them.

Some participants discussed reducing their car use and choosing to walk or use public transport, particularly for short journeys. However, the main motivation for this was reducing fuel costs rather than concern for the environment. Most participants said that they would like to reduce their car use, but were dissuaded from doing so due to a lack of viable alternatives.

Other environmental activities in which some participants engaged included improving energy efficiency in their home by using energy efficient light bulbs, switching appliances off when not in use and picking up litter. Again, however, the primary motivations for these behaviours were considerations of convenience and cost, rather than concern for the environment.

Barriers and facilitators to engagement in environmental behaviours

It was clear that participants' propensity to engage in environmental behaviours was influenced by five key factors: convenience; cost; level of interest; information; and perceptions around personal efficacy to influence environmental improvements.

Convenience was the key factor influencing participants' propensity to get involved in environmental behaviours. The main reason participants recycled their household waste was because it had been made convenient to do so, or because alternatives to recycling had been made too inconvenient. Conversely, participants were less likely to adopt, or be interested in adopting, behaviours that they perceived to be inconvenient.

Reflecting concerns about the economy and the impact of inflation on household budgets, cost was a key consideration for participants. Participants indicated that they would like to do more to help the environment but alternatives would have to be cheaper than they currently are.

Participants' level of interest was a key determinant of their likelihood to be involved in, or willingness to get involved in, environmental activities, particularly those requiring a greater amount of commitment. The minority of participants who *had* been involved in environmental monitoring or locally organised activities said they had done so out of interest generated from watching television programmes or to help their children with school projects. However, there was a clear sense in which those participants saw it as a "one-off" experience and not something they would do regularly.

A lack of information was considered to be particularly problematic in relation to environmental monitoring and locally organised activities. Specifically, participants felt they did not have enough information about: how to get involved; what they could do; and where and when they could get involved.

Participants were often unable to see how their actions could make a difference, given the scale of environmental challenges facing Scotland. Related to this, they often commented that, although they were happy to do "their bit", factors outwith their control often made their efforts appear futile.

Sources of information about the environment

Participants' primary source of information about the environment was the media, while parents said that they received information via their children who shared what they had learned about the environment at school. Most participants had never proactively looked for information about a specific environmental issue. When asked where they *would* look if they were seeking information, they tended to say the internet, particularly internet search engines, such as Google, and the websites of their local council, the Scottish Government, and other public bodies. The main reasons participants gave for considering these various sources were: trust; ease of use; and the provision of links to other websites providing more specific information.

Perceptions of SEWeb

Initial reactions to the SEWeb homepage were mixed. Most participants liked the look of the website, commenting that it appeared "professional", "clean", and "attractive" with clear headings and interesting sections. However, some participants were critical of the homepage, perceiving it as "boring" and too text heavy, which would discourage them from going further.

Participants in Pitlochry thought SEWeb offered a "refreshing" change from other environment websites and particularly liked being given facts about the environment that enable them to make up their own minds as to whether or not they needed to take action. However, participants in Glasgow felt that SEWeb should be aimed more at children, which was based on a belief that it is more important to educate children about the environment in order to promote behavioural change in the future.

There were three aspects of the website that particularly appealed to participants on initial viewing:

- the 'Latest News' section – participants liked this section because it appeared to be updated regularly, while the diversity of the news stories was also well received

- the 'What's in my backyard?' feature – there was a strong interest in this feature because it enable users to find information that was relevant to where they lived

- the range of links provided – participants liked using links as a direct way of finding information, either on other pages within a website or on relevant external websites

A prevailing view among participants was that raising awareness of SEWeb among the general public could prove difficult. Participants suggested the use of targeted campaigns to raise awareness, such as TV programmes that are watched by people with an interest in environmental issues or in magazines devoted to particular activities and interests, such as cycling, walking and fishing publications.

Key findings from the follow up depth interviews

On the whole, participants were very positive about the 'Our Environment' section. Particular mention was made of the way the pages were laid out and of the comprehensive range of topics covered. There was a consensus that the 'Our Environment' section had been created by environmental professionals, and this clearly engendered a great deal of trust the information provided.

Participants felt that the 'Overall Summary' section provided a useful overview of Scotland's environment and the main challenges it faces. The perceived the purpose of SEWeb was to: raise awareness of environmental issues; provide information about the issues affecting Scotland's environment; and involve the public in improving and protecting the environment.

Participants liked the way in which the layout of the pages appeared to follow the same template and the way in which the information was "layered" through the provision of a synopsis summarising the main issues, followed by clear links to more detailed information.

All participants felt that the information provided in the 'Our Environment' section was extensive and covered the whole "spectrum" of topics they would expect to find. Although some participants were very impressed by this breadth and depth of information, others felt that it provided "too much" information.

The language used was considered to be written in plain English and pitched at a good level. However, a couple of participants felt that the language was "too wordy" and suggested that the text should be shorter and "punchier" to make it both easier for readers to digest and generally more appealing.

There was a high level of trust in the information provided on the website, which reflected their perception that the partners involved in creating and developing SEWeb are "reliable" and "authoritative" sources. In addition, it was felt that the information was provided in a neutral way with an emphasis on facts.

Perceptions of the summary diagrams were mixed. Some participants were very positive about them, describing them as "easy to understand", "clever" and "concise", while others felt the diagrams were "boring", "confusing" and "difficult to interpret". All participants, including those who were generally positive about the diagrams, said that they had to read the explanation in order to understand fully the information being conveyed.

Conclusion

A number of recommendations for the future development of SEWeb flow from the research. These relate to: narrowing the initial target market for the site and raising awareness of SEWeb among that market; tailoring the content to reflect the way in which prospective users engage with environmental issues; and ensuring the design is as accessible, appealing and user-friendly as possible.

Introduction

The SEWeb LIFE+ Project commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct qualitative research with the aim of exploring public attitudes towards the environment and informing the development of Scotland's Environment Web (SEWeb).

Background

Supported by funding from the European Union (EU), SEWeb is a partnership that aims to *put Scotland at the global forefront of sharing environmental information, prioritising problems and involving citizens in assessing and improving their own environment.*

SEWeb (www.environment.scotland.gov.uk) brings together environmental data and reports from a wide range of organisations involved in environmental protection and improvement in Scotland, including the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Forestry Commission Scotland. The website enables the public and specific user groups (e.g. schools, academics and other stakeholders) to access environmental information, which is made available through an 'Our Environment' report, a publications library and interactive maps. These provide data and reports on a range of environmental issues affecting Scotland, such as air quality, natural resources, water quality and wildlife.

The pilot SEWebsite was launched in November 2011, establishing the site as a comprehensive online source of information about Scotland's environment. Phase 2, for which the partnership has secured €4.9 million through the EU LIFE+ funding programme, aims to develop the existing website to provide a platform for collaborative working and the provision of more advanced data on Scotland's environment. As the website develops, the partnership also seeks to engage the public in understanding and protecting the environment.

Engaging the public in this way is likely to be a considerable challenge. Ipsos MORI research shows that concern about pollution/the environment among the UK public is lower than it was in 2005-2007 and is trending downward[1]. In addition, the Scottish Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Survey (SEABS) (2008) found that, while people were beginning to adopt environmental behaviours, participation remained low and considerable challenges remained in encouraging behaviour change[2].

Encouraging behaviour change has become a key priority for policy makers over the past decade, particularly in relation to issues such as adopting healthy diets, saving for retirement and quitting smoking. SEWeb aims to encourage behaviour change among members of the public to increase involvement in environmental monitoring and action by providing information and resources about Scotland's environment. To ensure that these aims are met, it was considered important to have a comprehensive evidence base to inform the development of SEWeb.

Accordingly, the SEWeb LIFE+ project has initiated a series of research activities, including:

- a literature review of behaviour change theories and models[3]

- a baseline survey to measure attitudes and opinions among the Scottish population towards the environment and environmental information[4]

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[1] http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/Apr12IssuesIndexslides.pdf
[2] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/05145056/0
[3] Prager, K (2012) *Understanding behaviour change: how to apply theories of behaviour change to SEWeb and related public engagement activities,* James Hutton Institute
[4] TNS (2012) *Scotland's Environment Website: February and March 2012 population survey*

- a workshop among key stakeholders to explore theories of behaviour change and the implications of those for SEWeb

- qualitative research, incorporating focus groups and follow up depth interviews with members of the general public, to explore attitudes towards the environment and to gauge initial opinions of SEWeb

This report presents the findings of the latter research activity.

Research aim and objectives

The overall aim of the research was to explore the attitudes of members of the public towards the environment in order to guide the development of SEWeb. Specific objectives were to explore:

- general attitudes towards the environment

- participation in environmental behaviours and what would encourage and enable active engagement

- involvement in environmental monitoring and how future involvement can be encouraged

- engagement in debate on environmental priorities and how this can be increased

- use and perceptions of different sources of environmental data and information, and the extent to which demand for information is met

An additional objective was to obtain detailed feedback on the 'Our Environment' section of SEWeb and make recommendations for improving this section with respect to public engagement.

Methodology

The study was conducted using qualitative techniques and comprised two focus groups among members of the general public, with follow up telephone depth interviews conducted among a selection of participants.

The focus groups were held in Glasgow and Pitlochry on 25 and 26 June 2012 respectively and explored awareness and attitudes of the general public towards: the environment in general; the provision of environmental data and information; and participation in environmental monitoring and improvement. Initial reactions to SEWeb were also explored during the focus groups, following a short demonstration of the website.

The follow up interviews were conducted between 4 and 26 July 2012. The aim of the interviews was to explore participants' perceptions of the 'Our Environment' section of SEWeb in greater detail, once they had been given time to view and reflect on, the website for themselves.

Recruitment

The focus group participants were recruited face-to-face, door-to-door in their homes between 18 and 26 June 2012, using a questionnaire specially designed for this purpose.

The groups were stratified to allow for analysis by area (urban and rural) and socio-economic group[5]: the Glasgow (urban) group comprised people from socio-economic groups C2DE[6], while the Pitlochry

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[5] Ipsos MORI were commissioned to conduct two focus groups – one in an urban area and one in a rural area. The socio-economic stratifying criterion was selected to reflect findings from previous research.

(rural) group comprised people from socio-economic groups ABC1[7]. To ensure that a range of people were recruited to both groups, quotas were set on sex, age, working status and internet usage. Further, participants with varying levels of concern for the environment and involvement in a range of environmental activities were recruited as previous research has found interest in the environment to be important in understanding the extent to which SEWeb can support behaviour change[8].

The recruitment approach was designed to ensure a minimum of seven participants attended each group. In total, nine participants were recruited for the Glasgow group and ten participants were recruited for the Pitlochry group. All recruits attended the focus groups, and all were given £25 as a 'thank you' for their time and to cover any expenses incurred.

Participants were informed upon recruitment and at the end of each focus group that they would be re-contacted by Ipsos MORI a week after the groups and invited to take part in a follow up telephone depth interview. Eight participants agreed to take part in a follow up interview and each received a £10 Amazon voucher as a 'thank you' for their time[9].

Materials

Topic guides for use in the focus groups and depth interviews (provided in Appendix A) were designed by Ipsos MORI researchers with input from SEWeb project staff. Prompt cards and screenshots of SEWeb for use in the focus groups, along with an activity sheet for use during the depth interviews (which were distributed at the end of the focus groups) were designed by Ipsos MORI researchers (copies of all materials are provided in Appendix B).

Analysis

The focus groups were recorded and then transcribed with the consent of participants. The telephone depth interviews were also recorded with consent of participants and the interviewer took detailed notes using an analysis pro-forma.

At the end of the fieldwork, the moderator identified the top-level findings and implications, which led to the creation of a code frame of substantive themes and sub-themes. Transcripts 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.

This method ensured that analysis and reporting of the data was rigorous, balanced and accurate, and that key messages were brought out. It was also flexible enough to allow for links and connections across different pieces of data to be made, and for moments of interpretive insight and inspiration to be recorded.

Interpretation of qualitative findings

The findings presented in this report were derived using qualitative methods. The aim of qualitative research is not to generalise to the wider population in terms of the prevalence of attitudes; rather it is to identify and explore issues and themes relating to the subject being researched. When conducting qualitative research, the assumption is that issues and themes affecting participants are a reflection of

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[6] Social grades C2DE includes: skilled manual workers (C2); semi and unskilled manual workers (D); and casual or lowest grade workers, pensioners and others who depend on the state for their income (E)

[7] Social grades ABC1 includes: people in supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional positions (C1); intermediate managerial, administrative or professional positions (B); and higher managerial, administrative or professional positions (A).

[8] Prager, K (2012) *Understanding behaviour change: how to apply theories of behaviour change to SEWeb and related public engagement activities,* James Hutton Institute

[9] Ipsos MORI attempted to re-contact ten participants for follow-up depth interviews. Seven participants were unable, or did not wish, to participate in the follow up depth interviews and four could not be reached within the fieldwork period.

issues and themes in the wider population. Although the extent to which these factors apply to the wider population or specific sub-groups cannot be quantified, the value of qualitative research is in identifying the range of different issues involved and the impact they can have.

Structure of the report

The next chapter presents the findings from the focus groups and depth interviews respectively. The final chapter summarises the key findings from both stages of the research and the implications of these for the ongoing development of SEWeb and related public engagement activities.

All aspects of the study were carried out to the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252.

Findings

Focus Groups

This section presents the findings from the focus groups. It begins by exploring general attitudes towards the environment, participants' engagement in environmental behaviours and the sources of information they had used to obtain information about the environment, before going on to explore initial reactions to SEWeb.

General attitudes towards the environment

To gauge the relative salience of the environment in participants' minds, the researcher presented them with a range of issues (as listed in appendix B) and asked them to rank these in order of personal priority. Both groups ranked the economy, inflation and unemployment as the most important issues. However, the relative priority assigned to the environment differed between the two groups. The environment was a very low priority for participants in Glasgow, who felt that issues such as crime, the NHS and education were of greater importance. However, in Pitlochry, the environment was considered to be more important than these other issues; in the main because the participants felt the high quality of education and healthcare, and low levels of crime in their area made these less immediate concerns. The fact that Pitlochry participants spent more time in the countryside than their Glasgow counterparts also had an important bearing on their ranking of the environment as an issue.

Still, participants in both groups perceived the environment to be something of an abstract issue that didn't necessarily impact on their day-to-day lives, whereas; for example, inflation has a direct impact on their household budget. There was a clear sense in which they felt the environment would only become a top of the mind concern for them if something happened in their local area, such as flooding or the announcement of a new development on greenbelt land.

> *"I think people aren't very aware of how big a difference our effort is making to the environment. For example, [by] separating rubbish, we don't really know… how much it is helping."*

> (Male, C2DE, Glasgow)

> *"Unless you saw a serious degeneration of the environment, you don't really think much about it... If it involved a sudden discharge of sewage it becomes top of your priority list."*

> (Male, ABC1, Pitlochry)

Participants were asked to mention the first things that came to mind when they thought about the environment or environmental issues. Both groups began by mentioning global and national issues such as global warming, deforestation, flooding and pollution, before moving on to focus on specific local issues. However, there was a difference in the types of local issues discussed in the two groups. Participants in Glasgow identified issues such as dog fouling, fly tipping, litter and car fumes, which they felt had a major impact on the cleanliness of their local environment.

> *"The fumes are awful. That's the one thing that hits me on the motorways, I've got to shut my windows, the fumes are unbelievable. So what's that doing to my children?"*

> (Male, C2DE, Glasgow)

Participants in Pitlochry were more concerned about developments on greenbelt land. They were clearly proud of their local environment and wanted to maintain its natural beauty but felt that the construction of housing, shops and roads, as well as wind farms and hydro-electric power stations, was spoiling the look of the area. These developments were also perceived to have resulted in more people living in the area, and consequently to increased pressure on resources (e.g. schools, healthcare) and road traffic. There was also concern about the impact of developments on tourism, which participants saw as a vital part of the local economy.

> *"I've noticed going up to school [with my children] that, when we first came, it was really quiet and we would walk up, but now it's so busy because there is so much more building, so there is more car use and more traffic."*

(Female, ABC1, Pitlochry)

Environmental behaviours

In order to gauge current involvement in green behaviours, participants were asked, unprompted, what they did to help the environment. Similar to findings from previous surveys[10], the environmental behaviour in which participants most commonly engaged was recycling. Indeed, all participants said that they recycled on a *daily* basis. However, there were differences in the ways the two groups framed their reasons for recycling. Participants in Glasgow tended to feel that they were *forced* to recycle through the introduction of fortnightly bin collections and a lack of storage space for waste (in their homes). In contrast, participants in Pitlochry felt that recycling had been *made convenient* through the provision of bins for different types of waste, along with kerbside collection services and communal recycling facilities.

> *"If I didn't recycle, I wouldn't have enough room in my bin, so [I'm] forced into the situation. That's the only [environmental activity] I'm forced into doing."*

(Female, C2DE, Glasgow)

> *"I put out two brown [recycling bins] and two blue [recycling boxes] every fortnight and [the Council collect it], so there is no problem and [the bins] are free."*

(Male, ABC1, Pitlochry)

Some participants discussed reducing their car use and choosing to walk or use public transport, particularly for short journeys to shops or work. However, as the discussions progressed, it became clear that the main motivation for this was reducing fuel costs rather than concern for the environment. Most participants said that they would like to reduce their car use, but were dissuaded from doing so by a lack of viable alternatives. Public transport was considered too expensive, unreliable and inconvenient, while cycling was considered too dangerous due to a lack of safe cycling routes. Participants in Pitlochry also mentioned that living in a rural area meant distances between amenities and towns were much greater and using their cars made it easier, quicker and cheaper to get around.

> *"It's all right to say if you cycle but they need to make the road safer to cycle. I tell you, I wouldn't take a bike out on any of those roads."*

(Male, C2DE, Glasgow)

> *"Public transport is terrible up here. For the likes of going to Perth, I drive to Perth because it's cheaper than taking the train and the bus takes too long."*

(Male, ABC1, Pitlochry)

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[10] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/05145056/0; SEPA (2012) *Scotland's Environment Website: February and March 2012 population survey*

A small number of participants had used car sharing schemes. One participant was able to organise this through his employer who had created a section on the company website to encourage employees to car share, while another participant discussed car sharing with other parents whose children attended the same football training sessions. Participants were generally keen on the idea of car sharing and felt it should be encouraged. However, they also expressed concerned that it could have implications for their car insurance; for example, in the event that they were involved in an accident while giving others a lift.

Other environmental activities in which some participants engaged included improving energy efficiency in their home by using energy efficient light bulbs, switching appliances off when not in use and picking up litter. A small number of participants had explored the potential to install micro-renewable energy products at home. Again, however, and consistent with findings from the Scottish Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Survey[11], the primary motivations for these behaviours were considerations of convenience and cost, rather than concern for the environment.

Barriers and facilitators to engagement in environmental behaviours

Participants were presented with cards displaying six specific environmental behaviours – recycling; using energy efficient light bulbs; reducing car use; buying seasonal produce; getting involved in environmental monitoring; and getting involved in local community activities to protect the environment – then asked:

- whether they engaged in these already

- if not, whether they would be interested in doing so

- how they would go about getting involved

As previously discussed, all participants recycled and some had also used energy efficient light bulbs or attempted to reduce their car use. A minority had participated in environmental monitoring – mainly counting the number of birds in their garden – or had taken part in locally organised activities to protect the environment (e.g. community litter picks and cleaning up local riverbanks). No participants said they avoided buying food that was not in season.

It was clear that participants' propensity to engage in the behaviours was influenced by five key factors: convenience; cost; level of interest; information; and perceptions around personal efficacy to influence environmental improvements.

Convenience

Convenience was the key factor influencing participants' propensity to get involved in the behaviours. As discussed previously, the main reason participants recycled their household waste was because the provision of bins for different types of waste and kerbside collection facilities had made it easy to do so or because the alternatives had been made inconvenient. Conversely, participants were less likely to adopt, or be interested in adopting, behaviours that they perceived to be inconvenient. Specifically:

- they said they would not avoid buying food that is out of season because, due to the growth of imports and advancements in food transportation and storage, they now expect to be able to eat what they want when they want to and that it would be inconvenient to have to restrict their purchasing behaviour in the face of so much choice

- there was a reluctance among participants to get involved in environmental monitoring or local activities to protect and improve the environment due to the time commitment involved, which

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[11] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/05145056/0

they felt would have too much of an impact on their ability to fulfil their work, family and other commitments

Reflecting this, participants often commented explicitly that environmental behaviours had to be made as convenient as possible to encourage people to adopt them.

> *"[Activities] must be simple because if we don't simplify tasks for people [they won't do it]. People are selfish, we know that we don't do [tasks] for nothing."*

(Male, C2DE, Glasgow)

Cost

Reflecting concerns, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, about the economy and the impact of inflation on household budgets, cost was a key consideration for participants, particularly in relation to the use of energy efficient light bulbs and reducing car use. Participants considered energy efficient light bulbs to be a lot more expensive than standard light bulbs and didn't feel as though they saw any cost benefit to using them through lower electricity bills. Similarly, as mentioned previously, public transport was perceived to be too expensive to be considered a viable alternative to car travel. Participants indicated that they would like to do more to help the environment through these activities but alternatives would have to be cheaper than they currently are.

Level of interest

Participants' level of interest was a key determinant of their likelihood to be involved in, or willingness to get involved in, environmental activities. This was particularly the case in relation to activities that require a greater amount of commitment, with most participants saying that they would never be interested in getting involved in measuring aspects of the environment or in locally organised activities to protect or improve the environment. Their work and family commitments and their other interests were clearly higher priorities for them and took up most of their time.

The minority of participants who *had* been involved in environmental monitoring or locally organised activities said they had done so out of interest generated from watching television programmes, such as *the One Show* and *Country File*, or to help their children with school projects. Although these participants said that they had enjoyed getting involved, there was a clear sense in which they saw it as a "one-off" experience and not something they would do regularly.

Among most participants, there was a view that environmental monitoring, in particular, would mainly be of interest to children, either as part of school projects or through organisations such as the Scouts and the Girl Guides.

Information

A lack of information was another reason participants gave for not adopting environmental behaviours. For example, they often said that they do not buy seasonal produce because they do not know when particular foods are and aren't in season (in large part because they have become accustomed to being able to buy most food all year round). A lack of information was considered to be particularly problematic in relation to environmental monitoring and locally organised activities. Specifically, participants felt they did not have enough information about:

- how to get involved in these things – they often felt overwhelmed by environmental issues and simply did not know where to start or which organisations to contact to get involved

- what they could do – most did not know what they could do to measure the environment or where to submit any data collected, nor did they feel they had enough information about the type of local activities taking place

- where and when they could get involved – although some participants were aware of local activities, they did not know who was responsible for organising these or when and where activities take place

Efficacy

In addition to the themes outlined above, participants were often unable to see how their actions could make a difference, given the scale of environmental challenges facing Scotland. Related to this, they often commented that, although they were happy to do "their bit", factors outwith their control often made their efforts appear futile. For example, the minority of participants who had taken part in locally organised activities had become disheartened because the improvements they had made could not be maintained – one participant described how he had assisted in cleaning up litter on the banks of a river, only to return a few weeks later to find it was a mess again.

Sources of information about the environment

To provide context for discussions around SEWeb, participants were asked from which sources they currently receive information about the environment. Their primary source was the media, mainly TV, radio and newspapers. In addition, parents said that they received information via their children who shared what they had learned about the environment at school when they got home.

Most participants had never proactively looked for information about a specific environmental issue. When asked where they *would* look if they were seeking information, they tended to say the internet, particularly the website of their local council. Other online sources mentioned spontaneously by participants included Google, the Scottish Government website, the SEPA website or the websites of local organisations (e.g. Pitlochry in Bloom or local rotary clubs). A couple of participants said that they would look for information at their local library, GP's surgery or on local information boards.

The main reasons participants gave for considering these various sources were:

- trust – most participants felt that councils and public bodies were duty bound to provide factual information, which engendered a greater degree of trust in these websites

- ease of use – participants felt the websites cited – and particularly Google – were easy to use

- the provision of links – participants often used particular websites (especially their local council website and Google) because they regarded them as useful sources of links to other websites that would provide more specific information

A small number of participants in each group *had* proactively looked for information on a specific environmental issue, either out of personal interest relating to a hobby or because of an environmental issue that affected their home – for example, one participant sought information about the management of woodland used in the production of timber because he often went walking through forests and wanted to know how the land was managed, while another sought information about Japanese Knotweed, which had been growing on her property. Again, the first port of call for these participants was the internet, where participants either used Google to search for key terms or went direct to their local council's website and then used relevant links to find the information they were looking for.

Participants were presented with a list of public bodies, including some of the SEWeb partners, (the list can be found in appendix B) and asked whether or not they would consider these as potential sources of information about the environment. While almost all of the bodies were considered potential sources of information, participants did differentiate between them in terms of the type of information they would be able to provide. The Scottish Government, local councils and SEPA were considered as

sources of general information about the environment, while the Forestry Commission and SNH were considered as sources of more specific information relating to their respective remits. There was very little awareness of the British Geological Survey among participants.

Although participants said they would use the Scottish Government as a source of information, views were mixed around the trustworthiness of the organisation. Some participants felt that the Government could be trusted, but were careful to make a distinction between factual or technical information it might provide and public relations type materials, which they felt would be biased towards endorsing Government policy. Other participants did not trust the Scottish Government at all, believing it is corrupt and only provides information that suits its own vested interests. Trust in the other organisations was generally high.

Perceptions of SEWeb

Participants were given a brief demonstration of the SEWeb website, which included viewing the homepage and a selection of other pages within the site. They were encouraged to suggest sections of the website they would like to view.

Initial reactions

Initial reactions to the SEWeb homepage were mixed. Most participants liked the look of the website, commenting that it appeared "professional", "clean", and "attractive" with clear headings along the top of the page and interesting sections, such as 'Latest News' 'Citizen Science' and 'What's in my backyard?'. In relation to the 'Latest News' section specifically, participants commented that the website appeared to contain information that was current and updated regularly, adding that they often find it very frustrating when they visit a website only to find out of date information.

> "Sometimes you read something and there is no date on it. You think it was [from] yesterday but it's from two years ago. So the fact that [SEWeb] [has dates], if there was something you wanted to know, you would assume that if you went [to SEWeb] it would be there as the most recent thing."

(Male, ABC1, Pitlochry)

However, some participants were critical of the homepage, perceiving it as "boring" and too text heavy. They felt that the amount of information would discourage them from going further because they would have to spend a lot of time searching for the information they wanted. Furthermore, a small number of participants in Glasgow expressed a strong dislike for the colours used on the home page, particularly the green and blue text used in the 'Latest News' and 'Quick Links' sections respectively, which they found difficult to read.

> "They want something with a colour scheme in it but for a lot of people I would say that's a really bad website to go on… the text should be plain black."

(Female, C2DE, Glasgow)

Perceptions of SEWeb's target audience

The consensus among participants in both groups was that the website was primarily aimed at adults and secondary school children but there were differing views as to whether or not this was appropriate.

Participants in Pitlochry thought adults and secondary school children were an ideal target audience due to a perceived lack of alternative sources of information about the environment appropriate for this audience. It was felt that SEWeb offered a "refreshing" change from other environment websites because it does not appear to patronise users by "dumbing down" information or "preaching" about what they should be doing to help the environment. They particularly liked being given facts about the

environment that enable them to make up their own minds as to whether or not they needed to take action.

> *"It seems more [about the] natural environment. Quite a lot of what we were discussing earlier was round about saving money and money saving things. This doesn't really seem to be at all based along those lines."*

(Female, ABC1, Pitlochry)

However, participants in Glasgow felt that adults and young people were the wrong target audience for SEWeb and that it should be aimed more at children. This was based on a belief that it is more important to educate children about the environment in order to promote behavioural change in the future and that, in any case, parents often learn about the environment through their children. There was a suggestion that reducing the amount of text on the homepage and including games, competitions and videos would make the website more appealing to children.

> *"Most websites, environment sites, what they do is [have] the main information and normally have a section for kids, which is not [on SEWeb]. There's nothing there to say kids can go to learn about the environment. It's mainly aimed at adults, especially the writing, the way it's worded; there is too much on it."*

(Female, C2DE, Glasgow)

Aspects of the website participants liked most and least

There were three aspects of the website that particularly appealed to participants on initial viewing – the 'Latest News' section, the 'What's in my backyard?' feature and the range of links provided.

As mentioned previously, a feature participants said they looked for in a website is up-to-date news. As such, they were reassured that the 'Latest News' section contained news from the previous week, which showed that it was updated regularly. The diversity of the news stories, and particularly the inclusion of both national and local stories, was also well received.

Participants displayed a strong interest in the 'What's in my backyard?' feature and the ability to find information that was relevant to where they lived. Although there was interest in what was happening throughout Scotland, participants expressed a strong desire for local information on: environmental issues that affect their area; locations of particular interest (such as historic buildings or locations where particular wildlife could be found); maps and walking and cycling route guides; and local activities and initiatives in which they could get involved.

The range of links provided by SEWeb also appealed to participants. As mentioned previously, participants liked using links as a direct way of finding information, either on other pages within a website or on relevant external websites. The internal and external links on SEWeb were perceived by participants to be very clear and to offer an easy means of navigating around the website or of finding other websites that could provide additional information. Participants also felt it important that SEWeb should have a good search function to make it easy for people to navigate the website (there was insufficient time during the focus groups for participants to assess the search function fully).

A small number of participants in both focus groups felt that SEWeb was "trying to do too much" and appeared to lack focus. In particular, the breadth of topics covered led them to infer that the website was a "jack of all trades, master of none" and they struggled to work out who would use it. These participants went on to say that they would like to spend more time viewing the website in order to make a more informed assessment of it.

Suggestions for improving SEWeb and raising awareness

Participants found it difficult to provide suggestions for improvements based on their first impressions of the website. Instead, they considered aspect of other websites that they liked and discussed suggestions for features that could be incorporated into SEWeb, such as:

- interactive elements: participants felt that including a range of interactive elements would encourage people to spend more time on the website and help them engage with the information. Suggested interactive elements included:

  o a facility to input data and information collected through environmental monitoring activities

  o a function that would allow users to interact with experts in particular fields, such as live question and answer sessions or an FAQ section that was updated with users questions and responses from experts

  o blogs written by experts and people working in related industries, such as forestry and farming, to provide an insight into the day-to-day impacts of environmental problems and the ways in which these are being addressed

  o games and activities to encourage younger people to engage with the website and learn about environmental issues

- videos: participants suggested that videos might be an effective way of distilling some of the information provided on the website whilst providing visual stimulus that may make it easier for some people to gain a better understanding of environmental issues

- local news: participants felt that the website could include a section that provided local news, either based on regions of Scotland or local authorities, and that this should include news stories as well as information about local initiatives and activities, with relevant contact details, to encourage people to get involved

A prevailing view among participants was that raising awareness of SEWeb among the general public could prove difficult. While, media advertising was suggested as a way of raising awareness, participants felt that most people would just ignore advertisements. Instead, participants suggested more targeted campaigns to raise awareness, such as the use of TV programmes that are watched by people with an interest in environmental issues (e.g. Country File), or in magazines devoted to particular activities and interests, such as cycling, walking and fishing publications. Further suggestions included links from local council websites, partner websites (e.g. Forestry Commission and SNH), tourist information websites and the websites of environmental pressure groups. Participants also thought that, once people begin using the site, word of mouth would help raise awareness because users would share the information with others with similar interests.

Follow up depth interviews

At the end of each focus group, participants were asked to visit the SEWeb website in their own time, and particularly the 'Our Environment' section of the website and related sub-sections (the 'Overall Summary' and three 'Topic Sections' of their choice). They were given an activity sheet to record their immediate reactions to, and any other thoughts about, each of the sections. During the follow up interviews, the interviewers probed for these reactions and thoughts.

Overall perceptions of the 'Our Environment' section

On the whole, participants were very positive about the 'Our Environment' section and described the appearance of these pages as being "very professional", "attractive", "clean looking" and "bright". Particular mention was made of the way the pages were laid out – which was perceived to be very clear and user-friendly – and of the comprehensive range of topics covered. There was a consensus

that the 'Our Environment' section had been created by environmental professionals, and this clearly engendered a great deal of trust in the information provided.

Perceptions of the 'Overall Summary' and the key messages

Participants felt that the 'Overall Summary' section provided a useful overview of Scotland's environment and the main challenges it faces. Further, it was felt that the section made environmental issues appear more "interesting" and "engaging", with one participant moved to comment that there is "more to the environment than people think".

The key messages that participants took from the 'Overall Summary', and with which they were in broad agreement, were:

- Scotland's environment is a national asset and needs to be maintained

- there is a need to take a professional approach to improving Scotland's environment

- people across Scotland need to "do their bit" to help protect the environment

- people need to make better use of the environment

As a result, participants perceived the purpose of SEWeb as being to: raise awareness of environmental issues among the public; provide information about the issues affecting Scotland's environment; and involve the public in improving and protecting the environment. This suggests that SEWeb's intended function is being fulfilled and communicated effectively.

Still, one participant felt that the statement: (currently at the bottom of the 'Overall Summary' page) '*Over the next three years through this website we will be increasing the opportunities for you to get involved with Scotland's environment'*, should be moved to the top of the page to make the aims of the website clearer and to encourage people to get involved.

Perceptions of the Topic sections

Participants were asked to view three different 'Topic' sections of their choice. During the interview, the interviewer asked which topics they had viewed and selected one to focus on, ensuring that a range of topics were covered across the interviews. Participants were asked to comment on a number of aspects across each of the sections they viewed, including layout, content, and language. Perceptions around the trustworthiness and balance of the information were also explored.

Layout

As mentioned above, participants were impressed by the layout of the pages within the 'Our Environment' section. They particularly liked the way in which each of pages appeared to follow the same template, contending that this made it very easy to find information and added to the professional appearance of the site. They particularly liked the way in which the information was "layered" through the provision of a synopsis summarising the main issues, followed by clear links to more detailed information.

Participants said that the headings and sub-headings were very clear and helped to break the information down into manageable chunks. They also felt that the headings made it very easy to navigate around the website and quickly locate information they were interested in. Navigation was considered to be further aided by the available links, both in the navigation bar on the left hand side of the screen and within the text, which participants perceived to be very intuitive – although one person felt that the pages were missing a 'back' button to return to the previous page.

Content

All participants felt that the information provided in the 'Our Environment' section was extensive and covered the whole "spectrum" of topics they would expect to find. Some participants were very impressed by this breadth and depth of information, contending that it made the 'Our Environment' section a valuable resource for anyone looking for information on environmental issues. One participant said that he was "pleasantly surprised" to find so much information on a new website as he had expected to find sections that were "under construction".

However, other participants felt that the 'Our Environment' section provided "too much" information, which they found to be, "overwhelming", "too long-winded" and "distracting". They commented that it took too long to read the information provided, which would not be convenient for people with busy lives, and that the information could be provided in more "bite-sized" formats. Presenting information using bullet points, particularly in the 'Built Environment' section, was perceived to be a good way of breaking down text. One participant noted that the pages could have contained more images or charts to break up the text.

Participants felt that images used throughout the 'Our Environment' section were "attractive", "interesting" and "relevant" to the topics. The images were also perceived to aid participants' understanding of the topics and navigation throughout the section.

Language

Most participants described the language used throughout the 'Our Environment' section as "clear", "easy to understand", "highly readable" and "straight to the point". They felt it was written in plain English and pitched at a good level, as opposed to being too technical or, conversely, too patronising. One participant commented that the language was consistent throughout the section and appeared to follow a "house style". They felt this added to the "professional" feel of the site.

However, a couple of participants felt that the language was "too wordy" and "dry", reminding them of school textbooks. As a result, they suggested that the text should be shorter and "punchier" to make it both easier for readers to digest and generally more appealing.

One participant also thought that the font was too small and difficult to read.

Trust and impartiality

Participants had a high level of trust in the information provided on the site. This primarily reflected their perception that the partners involved in creating and developing SEWeb are "reliable" and "authoritative" sources. In addition, it was felt that the information was provided in a neutral way with an emphasis on facts. In particular, participants viewing the 'Air and climate', 'Built Environment' and 'Resources' sections commented that the provision of evidence to support statements increased their confidence in the information.

Perceptions of the summary diagrams

Perceptions of the summary diagrams were mixed. Some participants were very positive about them, describing them as "easy to understand", "clever" and "concise". They felt the diagrams explained "in a nutshell" how each aspect of the environment had changed over time. In contrast, other participants described the diagrams as "boring", "confusing" and "difficult to interpret". The arrows in the diagrams and, specifically, what these represented, appear to be the source of particular confusion.

All participants, including those who were generally positive about the diagrams, said that they had to read the explanation in order to understand fully the information being conveyed. Indeed, some participants commented that they had to read the explanation a number of times. Additionally, while most participants located the explanations relatively easily, some suggested that the links would be easier to locate if they were bolder or incorporated an icon.

Again, participants had a great deal of trust in the information provided in the summary diagrams, attributing this to: the overall professional look of the diagrams; the fact that each was substantiated by data; and the trustworthiness of the partners providing the information.

Some suggestions for improving the diagrams were made by participants, which included:

- converting them into bar charts, which were perceived to be easier to understand

- increasing the size of the scale to provide a clearer explanation of changes

- incorporating pop-up boxes for the explanations, that appear when users hover over the diagrams

Suggestions for improving the 'Our Environment' section

Beyond the improvements outlined immediately above, participants found it difficult to suggest any further improvements to the 'Our Environment' section. Suggestions that *were* made included:

- adding image galleries to the topic sections to enable users to gain a better understanding of the diversity of Scotland's environment. There was some suggestion that the galleries could include photographs submitted by users

- adding a section for weather forecasts and reports, particularly focusing on how weather is affected by climate change and locations where flooding is likely to be an issue

- utilising more videos to distil the information provided – it was felt that this would help some users understand the information more easily

Conclusion

A number of recommendations for the future development of SEWeb flow from the research. These relate to: narrowing the initial target market for the site and raising awareness of SEWeb among that market; tailoring the content to reflect the way in which prospective users engage with environmental issues; and ensuring the design is as accessible, appealing and user-friendly as possible.

Identifying a target market

Although the environment was considered to be an important issue, it was also a relatively low priority for most participants. As such, the partnership is likely to find it very difficult to get the general public engaged with environmental issues and actively involved in activities to monitor and protect the environment. Instead, and as Prager[12] has suggested, the initial target audience for SEWeb should be those members of the public who have a pre-existing interest in the environment or related issues. The Scottish Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Survey[13] found that among those most likely to fall into this category are people belonging to social class ABC1 and frequent users of greenspace. The findings of the present study reinforce these correlations. The partnership thus needs to find ways of raising awareness of SEWeb among 'predisposed' groups; for example, by placing links to SEWeb on other websites they are likely to use, including those focused around outdoor activities (walking, cycling and fishing etc) or by placing adverts in newspapers and publications that these groups are likely to read.

Increasing the online visibility of SEWeb would also help to raise awareness among target groups. The research suggests that people are most likely to use the internet when seeking information about particular environmental issues. Internet search engines, particularly Google, and trusted information 'hubs', such as the websites of local councils, the Scottish Government and other public bodies, are most commonly used in the first instance to find links to more specific information. Therefore, the partnership should:

- invest in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to ensure that the website appears near the top of relevant search result pages

- work closely with partners and other relevant organisations to ensure that links to the website are made available on partner websites.

In addition, making it straightforward for media agencies, such as national/local news providers and specialist publications, to use graphics and images from the website in their stories would increase the likelihood of SEWeb being featured in the media, which may lead more people to visit the website.

Tailoring the content of the website

Given the perceived abstract nature of many environmental issues and the scale of the challenges, participants were disinclined to engage with environmental issues and didn't understand how their actions could make a difference. However, there was a greater interest in local environmental issues compared to global and national issues, which suggests there may be scope to encourage engagement by tailoring the focus of SEWeb to a local level. Participants expressed a particular desire for information about local issues, which they were more likely to find relevant to them, and local activities that provide opportunities for involvement. This could be facilitated by adding regional

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[12] Prager, K (2012) *Understanding behaviour change: how to apply theories of behaviour change to SEWeb and related public engagement activities,* James Hutton Institute
[13] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/05145056/0

sections to the website or incorporating maps that enable users to click on their local area for information.

The findings from the research also suggest there is a (largely unmet) demand for *factual* information about the environment. Participants felt that, too often, environmental information is provided in a patronising way or aimed at 'preaching' to people. SEWeb, in contrast, was perceived to provide impartial, trustworthy information about Scotland's environment and it will be important to retain this focus in the future.

Given the importance of information, convenience, cost and perceptions around personal efficacy in determining participants' propensity to engage in environmental behaviours, the partnership should consider tailoring the website's content accordingly. Clearly, there is scope for SEWeb to provide information, particularly on: *how* people can get involved in environmental activities; *what* they can do to help the environment; and *where* and *when* they can get involved in activities. Beyond this the partnership should consider: highlighting environmental behaviours that are convenient and carry cost-savings, such as car-sharing schemes; and demonstrating the extent to which people's actions have made a difference to the environment, for example, by providing evidence of the extent to which a local river clean up has improved water quality

Ensuring the website is accessible, appealing and user-friendly

Perceptions of SEWeb were largely positive, particularly among participants who spent time exploring the website and the 'Our Environment' section. It was considered to be very professional and engendered a high level of trust in users. The 'Latest News' and 'What's in my backyard?' features were particularly popular because they appealed to participants' desire for relevant, up-to-date and local information. SEWeb was also perceived to be a good hub with links to relevant information and organisations. SEWeb should continue to focus on developing these aspects.

At the same time, there is some scope for improving or enhancing aspects of the website, namely:

- ensuring the website is accessible to a wide range of age groups by incorporating elements that would appeal to younger children, such as interactive elements and games

- increasing the accessibility of the information by breaking down text into smaller sections to make it easier for users to digest

- making better use of images, for example by incorporating image galleries and photos submitted by users, to aid understanding of environmental issues

- utilising more videos to distil the information provided, which may help some users understand the information more easily

- incorporating interactive elements to encourage people to spend more time on the website and aid their engagement with the information

- adding a section for weather forecasts and reports, particularly focussing on how weather is affected by climate change

- developing the summary diagrams further to make them easier to interpret by considering the use of bar charts, which were perceived to be easier to understand, increasing their size and scale to provide a clearer indication of changes, and making the diagram explanations easier to locate

The research has shown that the initial work involved in establishing SEWeb has created a strong foundation on which to develop the website. Further investment in improving the website, based on the recommendations outlined in this report, should go some way to helping the project achieve its objectives.

Appendix A

Focus group topic guide

SEWeb Focus Groups
Topic Guide
Final version

Introduction

Introduce self and Ipsos MORI

Explain: we have been commissioned to carry out some research on attitudes towards environmental issues and involvement in environmental activities. I can tell you a bit more about who the research is for and how it will be used later in the discussion. Stress that participants do not need to have any prior knowledge or understanding of environmental issues.

Stress that there are no right or wrong answers – we're just interested in hearing what people think

Emphasise confidentiality and anonymity

Obtain permission to record

Ask participants to introduce themselves briefly – name, where they come from and any hobbies they have.

<u>5 MINS</u>

Section 1: Environmental issues

> *Objectives of this section are to explore, without prompting:*
> *general attitudes towards the environment*
> *what participants consider to be environmental issues*
> *environmental issues that are of particular concern to participants*
> *how much of a priority the environment is to participants*

What are the first things that come into your head when you think about environmental issues or environmental problems? Anything else?
[RECORD ANSWERS ON FLIP CHART]

What about issues facing…
the world?
Scotland?
your local area?
[PIN UP FLIP CHART PAGES FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION]

Are any of these issues of concern to you personally?
>   [IF NOT] Why not?
>   [IF YES] Which? Why?

[CIRCLE ANSWERS ON THE FLIPCHARTS THAT ARE A CONCERN AND ASK PARTICIPANTS TO RANK CONCERNS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE]

In general, how much of a priority is the environment to you compared with other issues?
[ALLOW TIME FOR RESPONDENTS TO ANSWER SPONTANEOUSLY THEN INTORDUCE A RANKING EXERCISE – ASK RESPONDENTS TO SORT CARDS WITH DIFFERENT ISSUES INTO ORDER OF CURRENT PRIORITIES]

20 MINS

Section 2: Environmental behaviour

Objectives of this section are to explore:
>   *current environmental behaviours*
>   *factors that enable engagement in environmental behaviours*
>   *barriers to engaging in environmental behaviours*
>   *steps participants would take to engage in environmental activity*

What, if anything, do you currently do to help the environment? [REFER TO SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES/PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED AS CONCERNS IN SECTION 1]
>   PROBE FOR: recycling; energy efficiency; travel behaviour; eco-purchasing; environmental monitoring etc

Does anyone else in your family do anything to help the environment? What do they do?
>   PROBE: children; partners; parents; friends

How often do you/they do these things?
>   PROBE: regular/habitual; infrequent; rare

Why do you/they do these things?
>   PROBE: how did you/they first get involved?
>   PROBE: motivation; encouraged by advertisements/other information; convenience; and barriers (cost, time etc)

Are there any other things you would like to do to help the environment that you don't do at the moment?

[IF YES] What stops you from doing these things?
>   PROBE: barriers; time; costs; convenience; lack of information

What, if anything, do you think would encourage you to do more to help the environment?

15 MINS

[CARD EXERCISE] I have a list of different activities on these cards. I'd just like to go through them and discuss:

whether or not you routinely do any of these already?

whether or not you would be interested in doing any of these if you don't already and why/not?

what would stop you from doing any of these?

what might encourage you to do any of these?

AFTER DISCUSSING THE INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURS, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO RANK THE ONES THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO DO/WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IN DOING]

If you decided that you wanted to get involved in [INSERT EACH OF THE ACTIVITIES ONE AT A TIME] what would be your next step? PROBE ON:
- Whether they would need information and what sort
- From where/who they would anticipate getting this information
- If the effort involved in collecting information would prevent them from thinking about it any further.

20 MINS

Section 3: Sources of information and SEWeb

Objectives of this section are to explore:
sources of information about the environment
awareness and perceptions of Environmental organisations
awareness and perceptions of SEWeb
ways in which SEWeb can be improved

What are your main sources of information about the environment?
PROBE: TV; radio; newspapers; internet

Have you ever looked for information about a specific environment-related issue?
IF YES:
- what were you looking for
- where did you look? [PROBE ON INTERNET AND SPECIFIC SITES, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, TV ETC]
- why this source?
did you find what you were looking for?

IF NO:
- if you wanted information about a specific environment-related issue, where would you look? [PROBE ON INTERNET AND SPECIFIC SITES, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, TV ETC]
- why this source? [PROBE: trust; awareness; ease of understanding; type of information; way information is provided]

LAY CARDS WITH NAMES OF PARTNERS (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, THE RELEVANT COUNCIL, SEPA, SNH, FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND, BRITISH GEOLOGIAL SURVEY) ON TABLE.

Have you ever heard of any of these organisations? Which?
IF YES:

> would you consider them as a possible source of information? Why/not?

5-10 MINS

Have you heard of Scotland's Environment Web or SEWeb?
> IF YES: where have you heard about it?
> IF HAVE USED IT: what for? what did you think of it?

EXPLAIN WHAT IT IS TO OTHER PARTICIPANTS BEFORE DEMONSTRATING. WHEN DEMONSTRATING, ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO DECIDE WHICH PARTS OF THE WEBSITE THEY WOULD LIKE TO VIEW.

What are your first impressions of the website? What were the first things that came to mind when you first looked at it?
> PROBE: overall look; feel; layout; type and level information provided

Who do you think the website is aimed at? And why
> PROBE: general public; academics/researchers; professionals; people with interest in environment

What do you like most about the website? And why

What do you like least about the website? And why

EXPLAIN: THE WEBSITE IS VERY MUCH WORK IN PROGRESS AND THE CREATORS ARE KEET TO IDENTIFY WAYS OF MAKING IT BETTER FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU

What do you think could be improved to encourage people to use the website?

How likely do you think you would be to use this website? Why and what would increase this?

What, if anything, do you think this website would be useful for? At the moment and in its future development, what else could be on there.

What, if anything, do you think could be done to raise awareness of the website?
> PROBE: TV/radio/newspaper advertising; social media

What, if anything, do you think could be done to encourage people to use the website? Anything else?

20 MINS

Summing up

Thinking about everything we have discussed today, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank and close

Depth interview topic guide

**SEWeb Depth Interviews
Topic Guide
Final version**

Introduction

Thank participant for agreeing to be re-contacted

Reiterate that there are no right or wrong answers – we're just interested in hearing what people think

Reiterate confidentiality and anonymity

Obtain permission to record

Check they are in front of a computer and have the Our Environment pages open

Overview

Can I just start by checking, have you visited the Our Environment page?

What type of device did you use to access the site?
　　　PROBE: PC; laptop; tablet; smart phone

Roughly how long did you spend viewing the Our Environment page?
　　　PROBE: number of visits; time of day; what else they were doing at the time

Overall, what did you think of the 'Our Environment' pages?
　　　PROBE: like/dislike; interesting/uninteresting; appeal/don't appeal

When you first opened the Our Environment page, what were your immediate impressions of it?
　　　PROBE: overall look; feel; layout

Based on your first impression, where did you think the information on these pages had come from?
　　　PROBE: government; scientists; charities; environmental groups

In general, how easy or difficult was it to find your way around this page?
　　　PROBE: ease of finding pages; clarity of headings; suitability of images

Looking at the topic headings, what other topics, if any, do you think should be included?

PROBE: topic expect to be there but isn't; topics that are worded differently than expected

Summary page

Did you look at the Overall Summary pages?
PROBE: main overall summary page and pages within

What was your first impression of these pages?
PROBE: overall look; feel; layout

What did you think of the design and layout of these pages?

Is the content clear?
PROBE: headings; text; images; other features

How did you feel about the language that is used?
PROBE: technical; patronising; plain English; accessible

What did you think of these pages?
PROBE: like/dislike; interesting/uninteresting; appeal/don't appeal

What did you like most these pages?
PROBE: aspects that were: memorable; useful; interesting

What did you like least these pages?
PROBE: aspects that were: not useful; uninteresting; confusing

What would you say was the overall message or messages these pages conveyed about Scotland's environment?

Overall, what, if anything, would most improve the page?

Topic specific pages

Which topic pages did you choose to look at?

For the next few questions, I'd like to focus on the [INSERT ONE OF TOPICS LOOKED AT BY PARTICIPANT] pages. By that, I mean the main topic landing page and the pages within.

What was your first impression of these pages?
PROBE: overall look; feel; layout

What did you think of the design and layout of the page?

Is the content clear?
PROBE: headings; text; images; other features

How did you feel about the language that is used?
PROBE: technical; patronising; plain English; accessible

How did you feel about the language that is used?
PROBE: technical; patronising; plain English; accessible

What did you think of these pages?
  PROBE: like/dislike; interesting/uninteresting; appeal/don't appeal

What did you like most these pages?
  PROBE: aspects that were: memorable; useful; interesting

What did you like least these pages?
  PROBE: aspects that were: not useful; uninteresting; confusing

What would you say was the overall message or messages these pages conveyed about Scotland's environment?

Is there anything that could be added to help you interact with these pages?
  PROBE: videos; podcasts; interactive maps/apps; games

Do you ever listen to podcasts?
  IF YES: do you think podcasts about the information on these pages would be useful?
  IF NO: would you be interested in listening to podcasts about the information on these pages if they were available?

Diagrams

Did you notice any of the diagrams on the topic pages? IF PARTICIPANT HAS NOT NOTICED THEM, EXPLAIN WHAT THEY ARE AND DIRECT THEM TO AN EXAMPLE.

What did you think of the diagrams?

CHOOSE AN EXAMPLE TO FOCUS ON FROM THE TOPIC PAGE THEY HAD VIEWED OR FROM EXAMPLEGIVEN AT START OF SECTION

What do you think the diagram is trying to show?

Did you read the explanation of the diagram? REMIND PEOPLE WHERE THIS IS IF THEY ARE NOT SURE WHAT IS BEING REFERRED TO.
  IF YES: what did you think of the explanation? Was it easy or difficult to understand? Was it easy or difficult to find?
  IF NO: why not? PROBE ON WHETHER OR NOT THEY NOTICED IT AT ALL

Did the diagram help you understanding the environment in any way?
  IF YES: in what way?
  IF NO: why not?

Do you trust that the information provided by the diagrams is accurate?
  IF YES: why?
  IF NO: why not?

Do you think there might be a better way to display the information?
  PROBE: How?

Summary

Having used the Our Environment pages, what did you like most about them?

What did you like least about them?

Do you think the information provided on the website is impartial?
PROBE: what makes you say that?

How much would you say you trust the website?
PROBE: what makes you trust/not trust the website?

How useful would you say the Our Environment pages are?
PROBE: what makes you say that?

What types of people do you think would be most likely to find the Our Environment pages useful?
PROBE: academics; students; professionals; schools;
PROBE: what makes you say that?

Is there anything about the Our Environment pages you feel could be improved?

How would you describe the website to a friend?

How likely do you think you are to use the website again in the future?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank and close

Appendix B

Focus group and depth interview materials

Set of cards for first ranking exercise:

The environment

The economy

Inflation/prices

Unemployment

NHS

Crime/law and order

Education/schools

Poverty/inequality

War in Afghanistan

Scottish independence/ Scotland's constitutional future

Set of cards with different environmental behaviours on:

Use energy efficient light bulbs

Recycle household waste such as bottles, containers, paper etc.

Avoid driving because of concern for the environment

Avoid buying food not in season on the UK

Get involved in measuring aspects of the environment e.g. counting the number of birds in your garden

Take part in locally organised activities to improve/ protect the environment e.g. litter picks and river/beach cleans

Set of cards with different environmental organisations on

The Scottish Government

Glasgow City Council

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

Forestry Commission Scotland

British Geological Survey

Participant activity

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this follow up discussion. In the discussion group we had a very general look at SEWeb and got your first impressions of the website. What we would like to do now is take a closer look at some sections of the website. I would appreciate it if you could take some time to look at the website and complete the simple activities below ahead of our telephone interview. These should take around half an hour. There is space for you to record any thoughts, impressions or questions that spring to mind when completing the activities that you may want to refer to during the interview.

My colleague, David Myers, will be in touch in the next few days to arrange a suitable time to conduct the follow up discussion.

If you have any queries or problems accessing the website in the meantime, please contact me using the details below.

I look forward to speaking to you again soon.

Best wishes,
Chris McLean
0131 240 3264
Christopher.mclean@ipsos.com

ACTIVITY 1
Please visit the website http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/our_environment.aspx

View the 'Our Environment' page

Please use the box below to record your first impressions of the page and any other thoughts or questions you may have about this page.

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ACTIVITY 2

Click on the 'Overall Summary' heading and spend some time viewing the main 'Overall Summary' page and the three pages within this section.

Please use the box below to record your first impressions of these pages and any other thoughts or questions you may have about these pages.

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ACTIVITY 3

Go back to the main 'Our Environment' page. Please select **three** topic areas (e.g. air and climate, land, wildlife, water etc) and spend some time viewing and reading your chosen pages.

Topic 1: _____

Please use the box below to record your first impressions of these pages and any other thoughts or questions you may have about these pages.

Topic 2: _____

Please use the box below to record your first impressions of these pages and any other thoughts or questions you may have about these pages.

Topic 3: _____

Please use the box below to record your first impressions of these pages and any other thoughts or questions you may have about these pages.

After completing these activities, please have a look around the Our Environment pages and the rest of the website if you wish.

Please use box below to record any other thoughts, impressions or questions you may have.

THANK YOU

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